



# YOUR

An update on the European Union's  
PEACE and INTERREG Programmes

Summer 2020

# EU!



## Research and Innovation Project's Helping Turn the Tide Against COVID-19



Ireland's European Structural and  
Investment Funds Programmes  
2014-2020

Co-funded by the Irish Government  
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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. The Body was established on 2 December 1999, under the Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of Ireland (8 March 1999), which created the implementing bodies.

The Special EU Programmes Body's principal function is to provide the Managing Authority and Joint Secretariat functions for the PEACE IV and INTERREG VA Territorial Co-operation Programmes (2014-2020). It also has a signposting and supporting role for projects wanting to engage with the INTERREG VB Transnational and INTERREG VC Inter-regional Programmes.

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# Welcome to the Summer Edition of Your EU!

**These past few months have been the most difficult time that our PEACE and INTERREG funded projects have ever had to face. Never did we imagine that we would become so isolated and disconnected from one another. We are, without doubt, living in unprecedented times, the impact of which remains an unknown. I wish to acknowledge all those who have experienced great suffering, and those who selflessly continued to care for us all in maintaining front line services.**

I am incredibly proud of the tenacity and dedication displayed by so many PEACE IV and INTERREG VA projects, as they devise new and imaginative ways of delivering their much-needed work, under such difficult circumstances. In recognition of this we have provided comprehensive guidance on how projects can mitigate against the impact of COVID-19; which is being continuously reviewed and updated. Our staff are also working very closely with every project, on an individual basis, to provide as much support as possible.

I am very pleased to be able to share some of these unique approaches with you, such as the touching gesture of goodwill shown by PEACE IV participants to local Donegal residents. As part of the YOURS initiative, which is funded under Donegal County Council's PEACE IV

Action Plan, 7,000 care packs were distributed to local residents who were unable to leave their homes. A truly inspiring community effort and one that demonstrates positive relations across the Donegal area. (You can read more about this initiative on page 7).

Our NHS staff and care workers have been at the frontline of this outbreak and their heroic response to the virus has both moved and energised the nation into a sense of unity. Hundreds of staff involved in the delivery of four cross-border INTERREG VA healthcare projects were diverted to other essential services, however lead partner Co-operation and Working Together Partnership (CAWT) devised new plans to ensure the continuation of their delivery. (The article on page 13 outlines these plans).

I can also assure you that work did not stop on the development of the new PEACE PLUS Programme. Following our public information events at the beginning of 2020 we continue to work alongside the Northern Ireland Executive and the Irish Government to prepare a draft programme for the European Commission.

We were delighted to receive over 1,000 stakeholder responses as part of the public information events and have been busy collating and analysing this information. The development process will take us

right the way through to the end of the year and I look forward to updating you on its progress.

As with every edition, page 20 looks at the on-going work under the INTERREG VB/VC Programmes. In previous editions we mentioned the Belfast Met-led Gencomm project, and here we look at how it is responding to the COVID-19 virus and how it is continuing to address issues in energy and sustainability for North West European Communities.

I wish to re-state the message I set out in the Spring edition – we, at the SEUPB, are fully committed to supporting funded projects at this very difficult time. Should you have any queries or concerns please do not hesitate to contact us.

Please stay safe and well.



**Gina McIntyre**  
**Chief Executive, SEUPB**

# Research and Innovation Project's Helping Turn the Tide Against COVID-19

**Over the last few months the research and innovation projects under the INTERREG VA Programme have been busy developing and creating new technologies, preventative measures and diagnostic systems (among other things) to help turn the tide against COVID-19.**

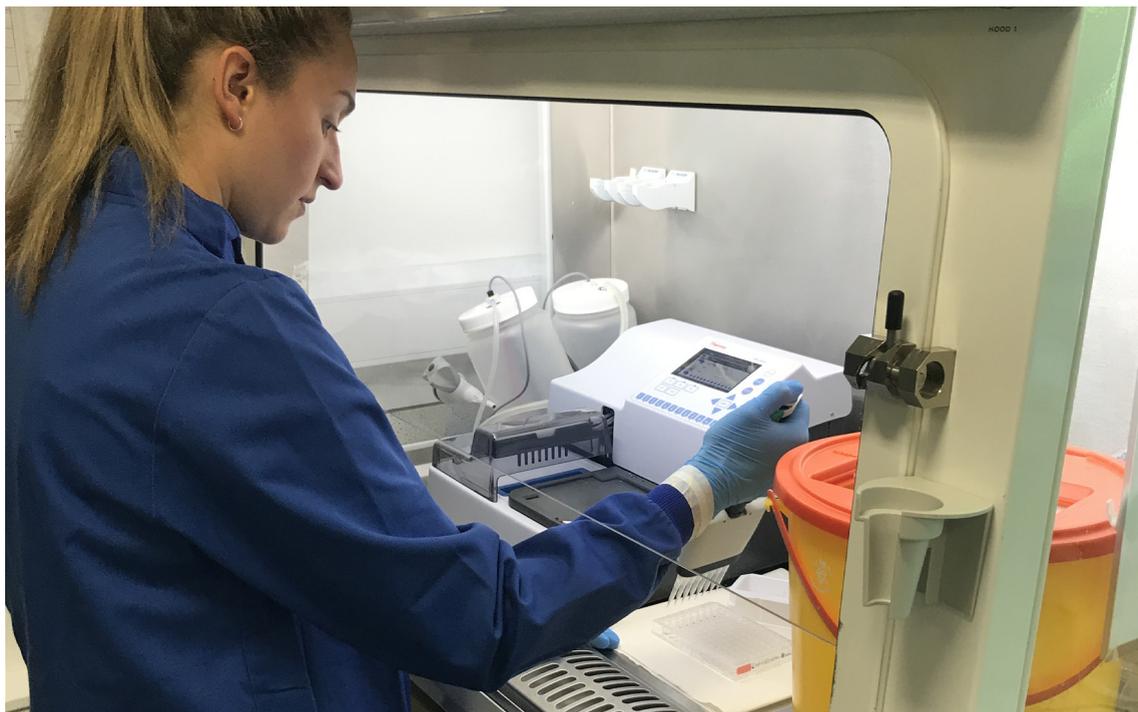
The €8.6m Centre for Personalised Medicine, Clinical Decision Making and Patient Safety project brings together a total of 14 cross-border partners from across Northern Ireland, Ireland and Western Scotland to address key challenges in heart disease; emergency surgery;

acute kidney injury; diabetes; and dementia.

CPM Lead Investigator, Professor Tony Bjourson, is chairing the COVID-19 Consortium (a partnership between the Western Health and Social Care Trust; The Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute and Queen's University Belfast). Together they are securing vital testing equipment, reagents and robotics – enhancing testing at the Western and Northern Trust. In a bid to scale up testing, Professor Bjourson and his team successfully raised over £112,000 through a crowd funded campaign to purchase a much needed piece

of equipment to increase COVID-19 testing output.

Dr Magda Bucholoc has developed an interactive web-based dashboard. Assisted by Dr Matthew Manktelow and Kevin Blake (LYIT) the tracker allows visualisation of reported COVID-19 cases in Northern Ireland and Ireland (<https://nicovidtracker.org/>). Updated on a daily basis, the dashboard illustrates the location and number of confirmed COVID-19 cases as well as mobility data. Two CPM researchers Dr Coral Lapsley Ulster University (UU) and Dr Andrew English (UU) are assisting on a Serological Epidemiology Study, which aims to



**CPM Research Associate for Biomarkers, Dr Coral Lapsley, working in the CATII labs at C-TRIC. As the research associate for biomarkers, Dr Lapsley is working with colleagues on a serological epidemiology study. She processes samples aimed at investigating the prevalence, risk of severity and antibody determination in community samples in Northern Ireland.**

detect the prevalence of COVID-19 in the general population, including the investigation of risk factors and antibodies. Dr Maurice O’Kane and David Porter (WHSCT) are working along with UU researchers on a COVID-19 Response Study which will investigate the genomic profile of hospitalised and non-hospitalised COVID-19 cases.

Another INTERREG VA-funded project leading the way forward in the fight against COVID-19 is the €6.5m Spire 2 project. The Storage Platform for the Integration of Renewable Energy project involves collaboration between lead coordinator Ulster University, along with three research institutes and 12 businesses and enterprises via a cross-border Virtual Research Graduate School. It’s exploring how homes and businesses can store renewable energy (RE) effectively, allowing very high levels of RE to be integrated into power grids globally, at the same time as maximising the benefits to consumers.

The project’s partner, Sunamp Ltd, (a battery technology pioneer) recently secured £50,000 in Government funding to support the development of a mobile handwash unit that could be used in the fight against COVID-19.

The company expects the units will be able to supply clean hot water, when required, to help people maintain the hand hygiene that can play a key role in slowing the spread of the virus. The company anticipates that the units can be used in a range of settings,



**ECME student Denise Burtenshaw (front left), Susan Harman (front right) and Eoin Corcoran (back right) from Professor Paul Cahill’s Vascular Biology & Therapeutics research group join work colleagues Kelly Dwyer, James Mangan and Caoibhe Hickey in the COVID-19 PCR testing labs at Enfer labs in Naas, Kildare.**

including the workplace, to ensure that standards are maintained as lockdowns are eased.

The €8.2m ECME project is improving healthcare pathways for cardiac related health conditions by carrying out fundamental research and developing commercially focused platform technologies. Project researchers are currently utilising advancements in technology to revolutionise healthcare delivery, reduce the time spent in hospitals, and support older people in their own home and community safely, independently and comfortably.

The project’s lead partner, Ulster University, recently joined the COVID-19 Antibody Test Consortium. As a leading medical research centre ECME, and its staff across the UK, found themselves playing a pivotal role in the national response to the pandemic. Working on the front line directly with patients, professors

answered the call to join the UK Government’s Rapid Test Consortium. They are assisting with developing antibody tests for COVID-19; and are involved in modelling of various aspects of COVID’s spread and impact. Furthermore, in April the project launched the ECME COVID-19 Mini Projects, receiving a large volume of applications from right across the UK. ECME invited proposals that aligned with the challenge areas identified by the World Health Organisation, including the provision of PPE equipment and the supply of rapid diagnostic kits. The application and contract process are still on-going, with successful applicants to be announced shortly. An update will be available on the projects website.

Match-funding for these projects have been provided by the Department for Economy, Northern Ireland and the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, Ireland.

# Over 65,000 School Children Engaged in Shared Education Project

**It's been three years since the €28.9m Collaboration and Sharing in Education project (CASE) embarked on a collaborative journey of Shared Education in Northern Ireland and the Border Counties of Ireland.**

A partnership between the Education Authority in Northern Ireland and Léargas, in Ireland, the project aims to engage 280 schools and 135,000 pupils in shared education by 2022.

The shared education concept is a fundamental element of the PEACE IV Programme, helping bring school children and teachers from different communities and backgrounds across the region together in a shared learning environment.

By November 2017, approximately 2,000 pupils were benefitting from their involvement in CASE, with 19 partnerships having been formed, comprising of 43 schools.

By February 2018, the number of schools involved had risen to over 200 with approximately 11,000 pupils. To date, the project has actively engaged 387 schools, surpassing the original target of 280, and has over 65,000 pupils involved.

The CASE project is based on sustainable curricular-based sharing, and provides opportunities for pupils and staff from schools of different management types to engage in collaborative and meaningful learning experiences. The reconciliation element in shared education is of vital

importance to a cohesive society, but the CASE project is also designed to deliver positive educational outcomes.

Another aspect of the CASE project is to train 2,000 teachers with the capacity to facilitate shared education. To date, over 1,200 teachers have delivered shared education and approximately 700 have participated in Teacher Professional Learning. In January 2020 the project held dissemination events with teachers, where extremely positive feedback was collected, as below:

*"It has given my small school an opportunity to engage in professional dialogue."*

*"I have another shoulder to lean on regarding ideas; strategies; support links; collaboration; and of course, shared education."*

*"The pupils have gained such a wealth of knowledge via all the different activities they have participated in - this is immeasurable! They have developed social skills, made new friends whom they are now in touch with outside of*



**The project will train 2,000 teachers with the capacity to facilitate shared education.**



**Pupils from Carrigans and Monreagh National Schools, Co. Donegal, enjoy their shared education experience.**

*school. They have fostered mutual respect for one another and embraced each other's culture."*

As in the lives of so many EU citizens, COVID-19 brought face-to-face activities to an abrupt end. However, like other PEACE IV funded projects, CASE adopted new ways of working to ensure it continued impacting the lives of so many school children. Some examples include Killygordon and Glencovitt National Schools, Co. Donegal, who worked together to prepare a digital message to send to the local community hospital for staff and patients, featuring poems, a poster and songs. Another example saw St Oliver's National School and St Brigid's Special School, Co. Louth, work together on a joint project looking at the frontline staff working in hospitals.

Match-funding for the project has been provided by the Department for Education Northern Ireland and the Department for Education and Skills, Ireland.

# PEACE IV Project Keeping Donegal's Cocooners Busy at Home

Over 7,000 people isolating in Donegal have been keeping busy with care packs, delivered through an initiative by Donegal County Council.

The packs, delivered safely to the doors of older people, contained activity sheets; quizzes; recipes; an exercise guide; seeds for gardening; motivational quotes; and a chocolate treat, all in the aid to promote positive well-being during COVID-19.

The Council initiative began through one of its PEACE IV funded projects – YOURS, a good relations intergenerational project, involving young people under the age of 18 and those over the age of 55. YOURS aims to promote greater understanding and respect between generations. Activities included weekly 'Walk and Ponder' events; a soccer initiative and shared skills classes.



The care packs were a real treat for those isolating.



Pictured delivering the care packs are, Sharleen Tinney (left) and Mary Clyde.

Project coordinator of YOURS, Sharleen Tinney, wanted to reconnect with participants at Easter and spent the time creating over 300 care packs.

With the initial packs being a huge success the idea expanded and Donegal Age Friendly (DAF) came on board to assist. In late April, Sharleen worked alongside Mairead Cranley from DAF, as well as Mary Clyde, PPN resource worker, and a variety of community resource groups to create 7,000 packs for people cocooning across Donegal, as well as Tory and Arranmore Island.

Speaking about the importance of these packs, Mairead Cranley said: "It's even more important than normal for older people to remain active while self-isolating, both mentally and physically. This simple

pack was designed to help get them back to their normal activities more quickly when restrictions lift."

The YOURS project is just one of the initiatives under Donegal County Council's €5.5m Local Authority Action Plan. This plan aims to build on the positive work accomplished in Donegal since the previous PEACE III Programme.

It will see the delivery of projects, interventions and initiatives that will continue to play an important role in reinforcing progress towards a more peaceful and stable society.

Match-funding for the Action Plan has been provided by the Executive Office in Northern Ireland and the Department for Rural and Community Development, Ireland.

# Thousands of Health-Care Visors to be Produced with Co-Innovate Funding

**The INTERREG VA funded research and innovation project, Co-Innovate, recently provided €300,000 worth of funding to a group of 18 cross-border firms to help set up the not-for-profit company Hero Shield Ltd, which will help to manufacture up to 70,000 face visors per week for health workers, on the front line of COVID-19.**

Led by InterTradelreland the Co-Innovate Programme is supporting over 1,400 SMEs and micro-businesses in western Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland. Support for businesses includes: collaborative project funding; workshops demonstrating how innovation can be brought to all aspects of the firm; business and innovation assessments; and one-to-one expert advice to develop innovation capabilities.

From an initial idea on 20th March, the cross-border partnership worked together to repurpose their manufacturing facilities and supply chains in order to prepare for production. None of the partners had prior experience of producing face shields. Among the 18 cross-border partners includes Northern Ireland companies Shnuggle Ltd; Crossen Engineering; Denroy Plastics; Minprint; and Ad-Vance Engineering, with support from Queen's University Belfast; and among the Irish cohort

includes Xtru Pak in Cavan and Glen Dimplex in Dublin.

Discussing their input into the initiative Adam Murphy, CEO of Shnuggle, said: "Hero Shield was born when we heard about the desperate need for PPE. We saw an opportunity to use our collective skills and knowledge of precision engineering, plastics and manufacturing to create a low-cost, fast-manufacture face shield. We wanted these to be distributed free of charge, or at low-cost. We will sell some product at a small profit to private companies, which will raise funds to make even more Hero Shields, allowing us to continue operating as a not-for-profit company. Funding from Co-Innovate certainly helped provide us with the financial support to keep this amazing venture running for the benefit of all in society."

Speaking about the provision of funding Neil Ryan, InterTradelreland's Director of Co-Innovate, said: "Our key role was not only to help bring the group together, but also providing a financial lifeline. The partners have been running at their own cost, as working capital is vital for keeping this operation going for as long as it's needed. Co-Innovate is providing €300,000 to help support their efforts and will continue to play a central role in coordinating the collective."



**Neil Ryan, InterTradelreland's Director of Co-Innovate.**

The project partners are making the design available to companies worldwide on an 'open source' basis so the product can be re-created wherever it's needed. Hero Shield needs to keep raising money to continue the supply of the face visors to the most vulnerable front-line workers for as long as possible during this COVID-19 crisis. Information on the project and details for donating can be found at [www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/facevisors](http://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/facevisors).

Match-funding for the Co-Innovate Programme has been provided by the Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland and the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation in Ireland.

# R&I Project Launches Life & Health Sciences Industry Survey Report

**Led by Catalyst, the €8.5m North West Centre for Advanced Manufacturing (NWCAM) is helping to create a new, cross-border, 'super cluster' within the Health & Life Sciences (LHS) sector, linking businesses to research experts.**

NWCAM is supporting 10 key Health & Life Sciences companies who are involved in 16 different research projects to develop new products and processes. Across its lifetime, the project will recruit a total of 26 PhD and post-doctoral researchers to work with the participating companies, creating up to 98.5 years' worth of PhD full-time equivalent research.

To support the growth of the LHS innovation ecosystem, NWCAM commissioned a survey of LHS-focused companies across the region. The survey's purpose was to obtain an understanding of current, and future industry R&D interests, needs and challenges; and to gauge awareness of Advanced Manufacturing – highlighting its potential as an enabling technology to enhance industry competitiveness, efficiency and productivity.

Key results indicated that:

- 78% confirmed that they would be interested in engaging in cross-border collaborative Advanced Manufacturing R&D;
- 97% agreed that there is an engineering skills shortage in the region;

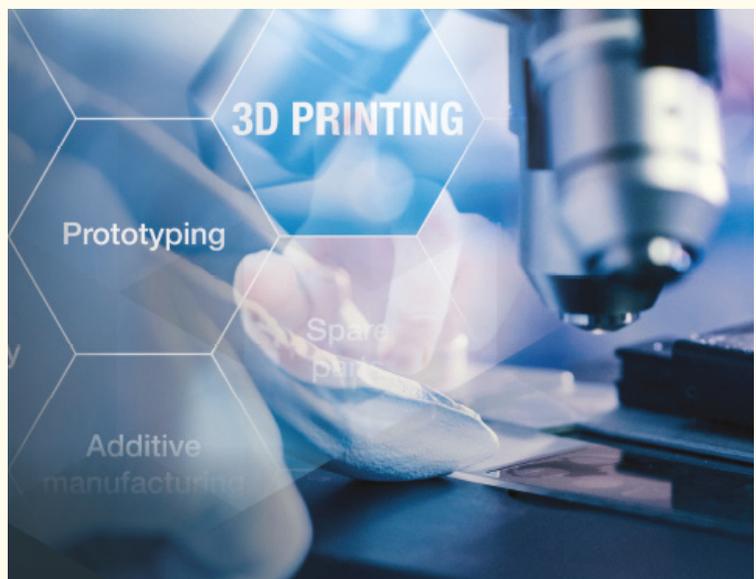
- 77% reported an awareness of Advanced Manufacturing as an enabling technology with the potential to improve commercial performance.

For a copy of the survey highlights please visit: [https://wearecatalyst.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/NWCAM\\_SurveyReport\\_v41.pdf](https://wearecatalyst.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/NWCAM_SurveyReport_v41.pdf)

Despite the survey being completed prior to COVID-19, it does provide a strong argument for continued investment into the LHS ecosystem, as Dr Oonagh Lynch (Innovation Broker at Catalyst) notes: "The LHS survey report acts as a strong voice for the sector, bringing to the attention of governments and industry leaders a need for more investment in cross-border R&D, innovation

and skills to allow LHS businesses to thrive. NWCAM exemplifies the key benefits to industry of engaging with advanced manufacturing and the report highlights a willingness by respondents to do so with the right support. The global COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the life-saving potential of 3D printing and precision engineering e.g. through ventilator and PPE manufacturing as well as scaling capability for vaccines and testing manufacturing. I would ask key stakeholders to consider the report's recommendations and invest in this critical capability."

Match-funding for the project has been provided by the Department for Economy, Northern Ireland and the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, Ireland.



**The survey was commissioned to support the Life & Health Sciences innovation ecosystem.**

# MEETING THE NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE DURING LOCKDOWN

Lockdown has changed the way we interact with each other. The way we live, teach, learn and work. For the children and young people projects, funded under the PEACE IV Programme, it brought a challenging dilemma - how to keep young people engaged. Restrictions called for alternative ways to invest time and support. Below is a snapshot of some of the innovative methods projects adopted to continue providing a support network to its young beneficiaries.

## 1. TRANSFORMING INTO HAPPY DAYS

The €2.4m TRANSFORM project adopted the Happy Days approach: Movie Mondays; Transform Tuesdays (a joint session with the Fermanagh group); Workout Wednesdays; Travel the world and learn a Trade Thursdays; and Fun Fridays (quizzes, music and raising awareness of local campaigns and fundraising).

## 2. THIRD SPACE DIGITAL STORYTELLING

The €3.9m Third Space project asked participants to make special photos; videos; pictures and animations, all tying into exploring personal well-being and citizenship. One interactive challenge saw participants attempt to put on a t-shirt whilst doing a handstand position against a wall / door.

## 3. CREATIVE YOUTHSCAPE

Creativity wasn't in short supply with the €3.9m Youthscape project, who used Nearpod as a tool to deliver lessons on a number of topics such as good relations and life skills; Zoom to play games of Skribblo; and positive affirmation jars, with young people filling jars with notes on what they will do post-lockdown.

## 4. AMPLIFYING SOLIDARITY

Young people on the €4.7m AMPLIFY project demonstrated solidarity for those impacted by suicide in their local communities by getting up at 5.30am. The cross-border participants also hosted virtual tours of sporting grounds, including Kingspan Stadium and Casement Park, Belfast and the Aviva Stadium, Dublin; and supported one another through the 355km challenge - running, cycling or walking.

## 5. STILL STRIVING

Online activities, mentoring and resource packs maintained the €3.9 million Strive programme. Social media became awash with daily challenges, from baking to sports and gardening. 'Expert by Experience' volunteers contributed motivational posts and excerpts from their lockdown diaries.

## 6. THE DIGITAL AGE WITH PEACE BYTES

The €3.8m Peace Bytes project utilised a range of digital resources, from Google classroom to setting challenges via social media like the 'Day in the Life' challenge - with young people creating short videos via TikTok.

## 7. EMBRACING THE FUTURE

Participants on the €3.2m Futures project discovered and nurtured new talents for singing; drawing; digital media; baking; and art & craft. Some used their time to gain work experience, volunteering with the NHS. With the success of the online sessions a new online programme will be a permanent fixture of the project from 25 May 2020.

## 8. STAYING CONNECTED WITH JOURNEYS

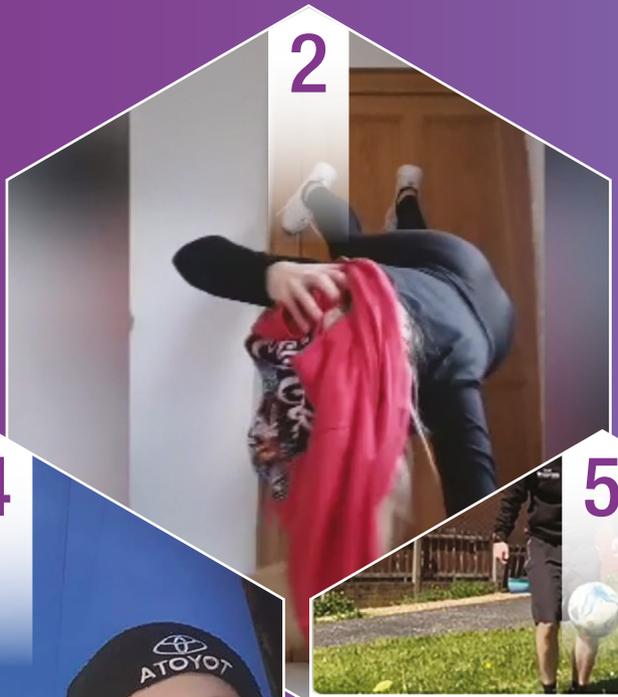
One-to-one telephone calls, online quizzes, Google classroom chats and daily challenges became the new norm for the €5m Journeys project. Games included 'stay home' scavenger hunts, 'This is Me' challenge and the Mexican wave.

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...estly, at the  
...the only thing  
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...t in this!"

TY MCBRIDE,  
YS PARTICIPANT

"I'm very proud of myself  
and I'm grateful to you for  
giving me the reassurance  
to keep going."

AMY,  
TRANSFORM PARTICIPANT

"It's been a way of  
bringing some normality,  
talking to one another and  
doing online courses."

KATIE,  
STRIVE PARTICIPANT

"It gave me something to  
do other than sleep and  
helped me keep a routine."

OWEN,  
FUTURES PARTICIPANT

# New Evidence of Migration Route of Young Salmon Leaving Ireland

Salmon play a key role in aquatic ecosystems, acting as indicators of the overall health of rivers and oceans, upon which we, and other fish and wildlife, depend. But environmental change and human impacts across the Northern Hemisphere are placing salmon at severe risk.

In 2019, The International Year of the Salmon (IYS) sought to bring people together to share and develop knowledge more effectively, raise public awareness of this issue and take appropriate action to help protect salmon from further decline.

As part of this year the €6m COMPASS project (Collaborative Oceanography and Monitoring for Protected Areas and Species) discovered, for the first time, the route taken by young Atlantic salmon (smolts) leaving the east coast of Ireland.

Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI), and the project's lead partner, Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI), tagged and tracked 100 young salmon with



Anglers from The Dundalk and District Brown Trout and Salmon Anglers releasing tagged smolts.

miniature coded transmitting acoustic tags in Castletown and Boyne rivers in County Louth last spring.

The findings proved that some young salmon leaving rivers on Ireland's east coast began their migration to the Atlantic by travelling north.

Until now, it was unknown if juvenile salmon leaving Ireland's east coast rivers headed around the north, or the south coasts, to get to their oceanic feeding grounds.

As well as taking a northbound exit route, the salmon also moved off-shore quickly, behaving very differently to young sea trout from the same rivers.

Again in another first, one of the tagged smolts was discovered to have travelled up to a staggering 250km in just one month! A finding which highlights a fast progression rate for these young salmon as they migrate through international waters to their distant feeding grounds in the North Atlantic.

Commenting on the findings, Dr William Roche, Senior Research Officer at IFI said: "As salmon populations are in decline across the Northern Hemisphere we urgently need to establish their migration journey and then we can identify any issues which may be negatively impacting survival along that route. This research marks an exciting milestone and will play an important role in supporting marine conservation efforts."

The COMPASS project is integrating the longest, continuously maintained, oceanographic monitoring stations in Europe within a network of new



Salmon route.

buoys. These buoys are equipped with oceanographic sensors, acoustic recorders and advanced fish tracking technology. The exciting and innovative project will build cross-border capacity for effective monitoring and management of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

Of course the impact of the coronavirus pandemic has been felt by the COMPASS project, with field work and much of the planned freshwater fish tagging coming to a halt. However the project is resilient in the face of such a challenge and is using the data collected by the receivers that were already in place in river mouths, estuaries and at sea to continue analysis of salmon and sea trout movements.

Synergies with other projects, particularly the INTERREG VA funded Sea Monitor project, offer the possibility of cross-project detections, where fish tagged by others pass within range of the COMPASS receivers, and where COMPASS tagged fish are detected beyond its own network.

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

# Cross-Border Healthcare Partnership Connects Communities and Services During COVID-19

In the last edition of Your EU we reflected on the significant progress that the cross-border healthcare Co-operation and Working Together (CAWT) partnership had made across its four INTERREG VA funded projects. What a difference an edition makes, as we quickly moved into uncharted territory with COVID-19.

Despite facing an increasingly challenging environment and resourcing pressures the CAWT partnership worked to support the needs of hundreds of cross-border patients, who were in direct receipt of one of their INTERREG VA projects. CAWT staff worked hard to adapt and re-design services through partnership working and creative use of technology.

The €5.2m Community Health Sync (CoH-Sync) project, which aims to help synchronise the efforts of the community, voluntary and statutory health sectors by creating locally based health and well-

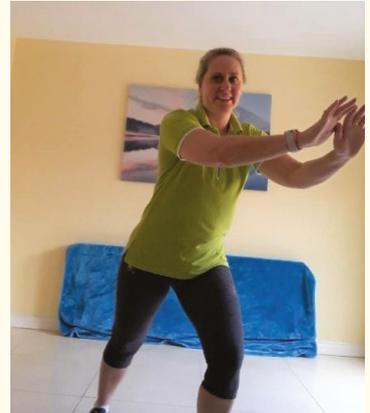


Information packs as part of the CoH-Sync response to COVID-19.

being community hubs, developed COVID-related information for the six border county community hubs. This information included updates, signposting to local support and bespoke resources such as isolation packs. Telephone support included friendly calls and effective use of social media to help facilitate online connections including: a virtual tea-break; cookery programmes; meditation; physical activity and Chi Me classes.

The €7.6m Innovation Recovery project, which provides educational courses promoting mental health and well-being recovery across 12 border counties, developed an online programme of 45 courses to support participants. Delivered via Zoom, the courses addressed many topics related to COVID-19 such as Mindfulness and Relaxation, The COVID Toolbox and Life after Lockdown. Training peer educators, with personal experience in mental health, shared tools to help maintain positivity.

The use of technology was increased to continue supporting the well-being of older people on the €8.7m mPower project. mPower aims to assist people in living well, safely and independently in their own homes, supported by a modernised infrastructure for healthy aging, particularly for older people living in isolated rural communities. CAWT is a project partner.



Faye Chisnall, CoH-Sync facilitator, leading a physical activity group.

Project staff maintained connectivity primarily via telephone and provided support by helping participants with online food deliveries, staying connected with family and using technology to keep active at home. The care homes in the Western Isles of Scotland now have access to *NHS Near Me*, a secure video calling platform, capable of connecting participants with family members and attending health appointments virtually. This is also being rolled out across other partner areas for care home use. The HSE mPower team are continuing to play an instrumental role in training for the national roll out of *NHS Attend Anywhere* within clinical settings, following a successful trial where they worked closely with NHS Scotland.

Match-funding for the CAWT EU INTERREG VA healthcare projects has been provided by the Departments of Health in Northern Ireland and Ireland.

# Council-led Project Continuing to Build Peace in Derry-Londonderry

**Derry City & Strabane District Council's £6.7m Local Authority Action Plan aims to foster a peaceful and shared society; where good relations are embedded, communities are inclusive and connected; and where all cultures and traditions are respected.**

Since the project began in 2016 there have been a number of significant developments within the Action Plan's three core themes: Children and Young People; Shared Spaces and Services and Building Positive Relations.

Examples include Creggan Neighbourhood Partnership's Changing Perceptions project, which offered a group of 20 cross-interface women a safe environment to share personal stories and discuss the issues that had affected their local communities, and those that continue to. In one of the Theatre of Witness workshops a group of women from the Creggan, Bogside and Fountain neighbourhoods watched a film with first hand testimony from police; army; paramilitaries; and victims and survivors. Three of the women who featured in the film were present during the workshop. One, a former member of the IRA; one, the wife of a civilian murdered by the IRA; and one, a woman who suffered domestic violence and mental health issues in a Republican family. Together, they

combined their healing journey and transformation. Reflecting on what the workshop offered the women Anne, the Theatre of Witness facilitator on the Changing Perceptions project, said: "You don't always hear the other side and you don't always hear the human story. See that re-humanisation? That empathy? That goes a long way. It opens a lot of doors. Most of us don't get a chance to use our voice or tell our own stories. Everybody's voice is important. It's about tackling paramilitarism as well, showing women how to empower themselves - that empowers their families, their communities. The ripple effect is immense."

Another example is the Beyond Tokenism project. Led by Lettershandoney and District Development Group, a conference, focusing on the topic of homelessness, was held in Strabane in late 2019. In attendance were group representatives including: Black and Minority Ethnic; Disability; LGBT; political ex-prisoners and victims/survivors. Participants discussed addiction; mental health; government policy; community spirit; and individual responsibility.

With lockdown restrictions the Council looked for new ways to deliver its Action Plan. Speaking about the Council's response PEACE IV Programme Manager, Sue Divin, said: "The COVID-19 crisis has hit our communities and our programme, but as always, in the Derry City and

Strabane District Council area we're inspired by the resilience, activism and community spirit. Communities across the council area are pulling together in the emergency efforts and many of our 65 projects have shown great creativity in going digital to complete their delivery and keep participants connected in these difficult times. In May, we held a cross-border networking meeting, *The Art of the Possible*, with Donegal County Council to bring all our projects together digitally. That same month, PEACE IV managers across all the district councils met online to provide advice and support about one another's activities. We're all in this together. Projects are determined to keep making a difference for well-being as well as peace and reconciliation."

Match-funding for the Action Plan has been provided by The Executive Office in Northern Ireland and the Department of Rural and Community Development, in Ireland.



**Participants attending the 'Beyond Tokenism' Homelessness conference.**

# Utilising the Latest Technology to Improve Cross-Border Conservation

Seals are extremely well adapted for life in the water. They have a streamlined body and powerful flippers for moving gracefully below the surface, and are capable of diving hundreds of meters in search of food.

Seals are also a protected species in the UK and Europe, but in certain regions, harbour seal populations are declining.

Part of the much-needed conservation effort is focused on rehabilitating abandoned or stranded seal pups for release back into the wild.

The €4.7m, INTERREG VA funded, Sea Monitor project is utilising the latest technology to track rehabilitated seals and better understand their behaviour, so as to improve conservation strategies on a cross-border basis.

Since November 2019, the project has tracked five rehabilitated common seal pups, post-release. "We use state-of-the-art tags glued to the seals' fur which drop off naturally during the seal's annual moult, but until then provide information on where the seals are going as well as their dive behaviour. This gives us unique insights into post-rehabilitation survival and how juvenile seals learn to forage successfully in the wild," Dr Mark Jessopp, lead scientist from University College Cork.

The tracked seal pups were rescued from beaches in Northern Ireland and cared for by the team at the Exploris



**Data produced from Ariel and Merida, the first seal pups to be released.**

Aquarium until healthy enough to be released.

The tags transmit data back to researchers via the mobile phone network and the tracking data has shown some of the seals travelling across the Irish Sea to England and Wales, much farther than expected.

One seal, affectionately named after the Disney mermaid Ariel, travelled to Scotland and then on to north Wales, where she spent most of her time feeding within an offshore windfarm. The exclusion of fishing vessels from windfarms likely results in increased fish abundances for the seals to feed on.

The Sea Monitor project plans to track a further ten rehabilitated seals in the coming year.

In addition to monitoring seal behaviour, Sea Monitor is currently delivering Europe's largest fish counter across the North Channel.

Studying the seas around Ireland, Western Scotland and Northern

Ireland, it is supporting the conservation of basking shark; cetaceans; salmon; seals and skate; and is informing the development of three Management Plans: one for skate in the area from Loch Sunart to the Sound of Jura, and two for salmon in both the River Foyle and Clyde estuaries.

The project is utilising the quarantine period of COVID-19 to continue its analysis of data from the tagged seal pups. Dr. Sam Cox, a senior postdoctoral researcher began her position with the project in April. Employed through partner University College Cork, Sam started working from her home in France, analysing the high quality and interesting data provided by Ariel. The project aims to produce a standalone publication on Ariel's residency in an offshore windfarm.

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



**Darby, Mulan and Esmerelda being released in February 2020. (Photo credit Mark Jessopp, University College Cork).**

# Environment Project Continues Success in the Erne and Derg Catchments

**An environmental INTERREG VA project has been developing new ways to communicate with farmers, teachers, volunteers and members of the public during lockdown, to ensure the continuation of its success.**

Known as Source to Tap, the project had made a number of significant advancements since launching in late 2017. In light of COVID-19 restrictions it quickly adapted to new ways of working to continue successfully delivering upon its outputs.

The fundamental aim of the €4.9m Source to Tap project is to protect river water quality in the cross-border catchments of the Erne and Derg areas – which are a shared source of drinking water supply.

Launched in July 2018 a cross-border farming scheme aims to give landowners, who farm in the part of the River Derg catchment upstream of the Derg Water Treatment Works,

grants of up to £20,000 for a farm business based in Northern Ireland; and €23,000 for a farm business based in Ireland. Such grants help farmers make small changes in farming practice so that it is more sustainable whilst also helping to protect water quality in the River Derg.

After a busy period of farm visits, the project decided to focus on areas within the catchment that were underrepresented. A series of information exchange events and drop-in clinics were held across counties Donegal and Tyrone to entice new applicants into the scheme. As a result, 72 farmers expressed either a new, or further interest in the scheme.

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, agricultural contractors remain active in the catchment following government guidelines around social distancing and safety precautions. Farmers who have already been given 'permission to start' letters are



**Source to Tap is still communicating with farmers, teachers, volunteers and members of the public, during COVID-19.**

proceeding with work such as stock fencing and weed wiping following the good weather in April.

Educational work also still continues. Outreach work was a large part of the project, with numerous school visits and educational workshops taking place the length and breadth of the Derg and Erne Catchments. To date, approximately 1,636 children have taken part in some form of educational aspect. In response to the outbreak the project took five of its educational units online, featuring teacher notes and instructional videos. The units cover: where does our water come from; how our rivers formed; what lives in our rivers; how do rivers get polluted; and how does water get from our rivers to our taps. These online resources can be found here:

<https://www.sourcetotap.eu/learn/>

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



**Project officer Lisa Stewart hosting a river workshop at Waterways Ireland, shortly before the COVID-19 lockdown.**

# Thousands of Parents and Children Benefitting from PEACE IV Project

Since June 2018, 2,200 children and 1,100 parents from across counties Derry-Londonderry; Donegal; Fermanagh; Leitrim; Sligo; and Tyrone have benefitted from taking part in the €1.3m Shaping Ourselves and Our Children (SOOC) project.

SOOC aims to support parents of young children to create a home conducive to good child social and emotional development, where inclusiveness and a respect for social and cultural diversity is developed.

The project is delivering 240 interactive parenting programmes, consisting of four sessions (delivered once a week) over a course of four weeks to groups of eight parents.

SOOC is available to mothers, fathers, grandparents, guardians and carers of young children. The course offers:

- Information on child social and emotional development;
- An understanding of how children develop self-esteem and confidence;
- Supporting children's understanding of others;
- Communication skills and behavioural management;
- Learning through play -interactive play day with kids (Day 4);
- Diversity -understand how biases and prejudices are shaped.

To ensure the continuation of communication with parents during the pandemic, the team devised a social media campaign - 'Parents Interactive Play Sessions at Home'. The campaign consisted of parents and children engaging in a task of interactive play. The key objective was to promote creativity, fun, and where possible, awareness for others through playing together. To encourage participation, a goody pack of books focusing on inclusivity, social and cultural diversity & child development were distributed to families who were deemed the most creative.

Match-funding for the project has been provided by The Executive Office, in Northern Ireland and the Department for Rural and Community Development, in Ireland.



**Since June 2018**

**1,100 PARENTS**  
Across Counties Derry, Donegal, Down, Fermanagh, Leitrim, Sligo and Tyrone have now completed SOOC.



**CHILDREN 2,200**  
now have someone in their life who better understand how a child's confidence, self-esteem and empathy for others is learnt at home.



**30 FACILITATORS**  
We have amazing facilitators who are fully supportive and love to meet and work with parents, grandparents and those who want to learn about child development and diversity.



**INTERESTED? 4 DAYS**  
Courses run over 4 days, help with babysitting costs, lunch/supper provided, booklets on attachment and bonding, communication, esteem, empathy, behaviour and play.



Get in touch for information on a SOOC starting near you in 2020  
Phone Sharleen or Mary on 028 71365363 NI or 048 71365363 ROI  
or email [sharleen.boyle@lifestartfoundation.org](mailto:sharleen.boyle@lifestartfoundation.org)

Project supported by the European Union's PEACE IV Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).

**Peace**  
Northern Ireland - Ireland  
European Regional Development Fund

# Poetry in Motion with PEACE IV Project

The €1.8m HEROES (Helping Equality, Respecting Others, Enabling Success) project recently wrote a special poem about life in lockdown, which was penned by its Fermanagh staff to reflect the work they have been doing with the young people.

HEROES is an inclusive, cross-community project that is supporting young people with, and without learning difficulties in personal

development, citizenship and good relations. It aims to develop confident, self-aware and engaged young people who are able to work, live and socialise with young people of different communities, backgrounds and abilities.

Match-funding for the project has been provided by the Department for Economy Northern Ireland and the Department for Children and Youth Affairs, Ireland.



## The COVID-19 lockdown

Shops and businesses are shutdown  
We are told to stay home to save lives  
If you must go out-hand sanitize  
Social distancing is essential  
As no one's invincible  
It's no surprise

There have been big changes to all our lives  
Heartbreaking headlines  
And strict government guidelines  
Are trying to keep us safe  
And our loved ones from early graves  
But we can't help feeling alone

When our only human contact is via the phone  
It's strange and worrying times for you and me  
But what about those with a disability  
Their routines have been turned upside down  
Is it any wonder they're having more meltdowns?  
Feeling confused and frustrated  
Being held captive and isolated  
Their stress and anxiety  
Without any normality  
Is excessively heightened

And they may not be able to communicate that they're frightened

**Peace IV** programmes like **the Heroes Project**

Have had to cease all face-to-face contact  
In an effort to keep young people connected  
From their homes where they are protected

**The Heroes Project** have went online

And provided the young people with a lifeline

Youth Workers reached out to young people from phase 1 and 2

To cheer them up when they were feeling blue  
Now twice a week we all meet  
Virtually from the kitchen, living room or garden seat  
In an attempt to keep the young people positive  
Heroes staff have got creative  
Designing online quizzes and challenges  
Adapting to digital platforms  
Tailoring 80s and 90s game shows  
Considering the ideas young people have proposed  
From the Price Is Right to Through the Keyhole  
To Scavenger Hunts and balancing loo roll  
All our young Heroes are having fun  
And their worries no longer weigh a ton  
Because we're all in this together  
A rollercoaster adventure  
United we are stronger  
So for now we'll simply ponder  
The advantages of working online  
Feeling blessed we're not on the frontline  
The digital world has no borders  
We've engaged young people from all corners  
Fermanagh, Sligo and Leitrim  
All staying home being good citizens  
Helping to stop the spread  
It's time to be positive and look forward to what's ahead  
Those simple things we've taken for granted  
Will be much more appreciated  
Safe safe at home, Remember you are not alone  
Together we will get through

**The Heroes Project** continues to be here for you!

# Update on Sharing from the Start Project

**The €4m Sharing from the Start project, which involves early year's settings throughout Northern Ireland and the Border Counties, is delivering a programme of Shared Education to children in the early year's sector.**

PEACE IV funding is being used to enable pre-schools to take part in shared education projects improving educational outcomes and cross-community cohesion, inclusion and diversity.

Since officially launching, the project has continued to bring positive attitudinal and behavioural change amongst children, parents, teachers and the wider community. Currently there are over 3,000 children involved, which is set to increase as the project continues.

Speaking about their involvement in the project, Paula Donohoe, Leader at Clever Clogs, in Ballyconnell in County Cavan said: "Sharing From The Start demonstrates that difficulties only exist where you put barriers and it's great if you can be seen to remove them. Working in collaboration is very visible in the community because we're out there going to the library, fire station and so on. It's wonderful to see that we can move forward with a project like this to build cross-community acceptance. Probably the greatest benefit of the project is looking at a generation of children that are being brought up to accept everyone. I think we're helping to form a better generation."

Just recently the project invited a number of parents from early year's settings to give their feedback on the impact of the project on their child. This feedback was derived from one-to-one interviews and focus group discussions.

In summary, all of the parents reported that their children had benefited greatly from participating in the project. One parent reflected: "I think this programme is great! Small children don't care about who a person is, or where they are from. As long as they can play and have fun together they are happy and I think as parents, we should embrace this completely and follow this on throughout our children's lives. I firmly believe that this generation of children have the ability to make a change in Northern Ireland and I feel

that it's up to us, as parents, not to teach them the old prejudices that have held us back so long."

An integral part of the project is the provision of mentoring and training to preschool practitioners/teachers that develops capacity to facilitate shared education. During lockdown, the project has sought to maximise this level of engagement virtually, utilising online platforms such as Teams and Zoom to host partnership meetings between practitioners within the settings.

Match-funding for the project has been provided by the Department for Education Northern Ireland and the Department for Education and Skills, Ireland.



**Currently there are over 3,000 children involved in the Sharing from the Start project.**

# Managing an International Project through Lockdown

**Coordinating a €9.4m international project, with 10 partners across Europe, can be difficult at the best of times. However, in the COVID-19 crisis it takes on an entirely new dynamic, with multiple challenges placed upon project delivery.**

To meet such challenges the GenComm project team worked together in unison to create an eight-stage crisis management plan. The stages in the plan were developed non-sequentially, with each having a workaround, if required by the partners to ensure continuity. The Plan A, B and C approach would ensure that the project would continue to find alternatives to deliver upon its aims.

The plan involved: triage; adjust; stabilise; sustain; move to a new normal; align; design; transform; and amplify.

Project partners worked together to close off all non-essential work and developed new project specific requirements, communicating these both internally and externally. A remote working strategy covered all bases, from dates and deadlines to allocated team responsibilities. Temporary work changes were implemented, challenges and opportunities were addressed; and protocols were designed and applied in order to sustain the project. One of the aims is to develop the training programmes for the H2 and Low Carbon engineers, technicians

and electricians. This is critical as many employees were furloughed and could therefore access upskilling opportunities in the new low carbon economy.

Speaking about GenComm's Crisis Management Plan, Paul McCormack Programme Manager said: "By making critical decisions, taking a lead position, being proactive and responding quickly to the COVID-19 crisis we have maintained the spirit of agility, flexibility, and innovation that has driven GenComm successfully to date. Without doubt, there will be some areas of our emerging plan that will require modification and adjustments but the critical fact is, we have a plan, we have a sat-nav to maintain the project. This cannot be underestimated."

"By providing leadership and direction, we harnessed the strength and reinforced the team through resilience and vigour, developing new rapid reaction skills and abilities. Through this eight stage plan we are endeavouring to future proof and deliver the full socio-economic benefits of GenComm," he continued.

Funded through the EU's North-West Europe Programme, the GenComm project aims to address issues in energy and sustainability for North West European Communities. It is developing a sustainable, community-scaled, hydrogen (H<sub>2</sub>)-based, model that will use local renewable sources to supply electricity, heating and transportation fuels.



**GenComm 8 Stage Project Crisis Management Plan**

# Programme Summaries and SEUPB Contacts

## PEACE IV

The €270m PEACE Programme 2014-2020 is a unique Structural Funds programme aimed at reinforcing progress towards a peaceful and stable society in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland.

The Programme's key objectives are:

- Shared Education
- Children & Young People
- Shared Spaces & Services
- Building Positive Relations

The eligible area for the Programme is Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland (counties Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Louth, Monaghan and Sligo).

### For further information on the PEACE IV Programme contact:

Joint Secretariat Omagh,  
Tel: +44 (0) 28 8225 5750  
E: omagh@seupb.eu or Belfast,  
Tel: +44 (0) 28 9026 6660  
E: info@seupb.eu

## INTERREG VA

The €283m INTERREG Programme 2014-2020 has been designed to address many of the developmental problems which are exacerbated by the existence of borders, in order to build upon opportunities for enhanced economic and social development across the region.

The Programme's key priorities are:

- Research & Innovation
- Environment
- Sustainable Transport
- Health

The targeted eligible area is Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland (Counties Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Louth, Monaghan, and Sligo) and Western Scotland (Lochaber, Skye & Lochalsh, Arran & Cumbrae and Argyll & Bute, Dumfries and Galloway, East Ayrshire and North Ayrshire mainland, and South Ayrshire).

### For further information on the INTERREG VA Programme contact:

Joint Secretariat,  
Monaghan.  
Tel: + 353 (0)47 77003  
E: monaghan@seupb.eu or

Caroline Coleman, National Contact Point for Scotland, Scotland  
Europa, 150 Broomielaw,  
Atlantic Quay, Glasgow G2 8LU.  
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## INTERREG VB Transnational Programmes

The SEUPB has a role supporting the development of projects submitted to any of the INTERREG VB/VC Programmes.

These programmes are:

### The Northern Periphery and Arctic (NPA) Programme

This €56million ERDF programme aims to help peripheral and remote communities in the northern regions of Europe to develop their economic, social and environmental potential. The programme area involves parts of Finland, Ireland, Sweden, Scotland, Northern Ireland in cooperation with the Faroe Islands, Iceland, Greenland and Norway. SEUPB is the Regional Contact Point for Northern Ireland.

### The North West Europe Programme

This €370 million ERDF programme aims to help make this new region more competitive, environmentally friendly and cohesive by improving access to more and better jobs, enhancing the environmental qualities of the region, improving accessibility and ensuring that cities and rural areas are attractive and sustainable. The programme area is France, the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, Ireland Luxembourg, Belgium, and Switzerland. The SEUPB works in an advisory and signposting role.

## The Atlantic Area Programme

The programme aims to achieve progress on transnational co-operation that is geared towards cohesive, sustainable and balanced territorial development of the Atlantic Area and its maritime heritage. The programme region covers all of Ireland and Northern Ireland, and those regions within Portugal, Spain, France and the UK that border the Atlantic Ocean. The SEUPB works in an advisory and signposting role.

## INTERREG EUROPE Programme

The €359 million ERDF INTERREG VC Inter-regional Programme is aimed at local and regional authorities. It focuses on the identification, analysis and dissemination of good practices by public authorities in order to improve the effectiveness of regional and local policies. Co-operation projects are eligible across all 28 EU states, plus Norway and Switzerland.

### For further information on VB and VC Programmes, contact:

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