



Special EU Programmes Body
Comhlacht na gClár Speisialta AE
Special EU Schemes Board

AUTUMN 2022

YOUR EU!

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

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power of peer volunteers**

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FOREWORD

WELCOME TO THE AUTUMN EDITION OF YOUR EU

As the new PEACEPLUS is being prepared for implementation early in 2023, the team at the Special EU Programmes Body have been prioritising to bring the current Programmes and projects to their successful conclusions.

Gaining pace over the last few months has been the number of pre-application workshops hosted by the SEUPB.

For each thematic area we are hosting a pre-application event to ensure any potential applicants have the chance to find out as much information from SEUPB staff and government funders as possible.

These workshops have been hugely successful, with many selling out. If you have been unable to attend any of the sessions to-date, then each has been recorded and all are available to view on the SEUPB website.

We are continuing to plan these workshops for the rest of this year and into the next, for full details you can visit our website or sign up for PEACEPLUS emails later in this edition.

This is an abridged edition of Your EU, as the Peace IV and Interreg projects are reaching their conclusions.

The work undertaken by all projects over the last few years cannot be underestimated. On page five you will read the powerful story of Nigel Flynn, and how his involvement in the Onside Project gave him new skills and purpose in life. You can also read about the vital work the CANN and CABB projects have completed to preserve our environmental heritage. You will also find an update on the recent presentation on the Peace Programmes Learning Platform which collates over 21,000 project examples since the Peace Programme commenced nearly 30 years ago.

In the new year we will be able to reveal more about the new systems being put in place for PEACE PLUS; the Programme lifecycle, structure, and the different types of projects that will be funded. Crucially, you can discover how each aspect will be overseen during the life of the Programme.



Continuing from the last edition of Your EU, the work of the SEUPB team is highlighted with a profile of Acting Joint Secretariat Helen Donaldson.

Should you wish to get in touch about the content of this magazine, or suggestions for future editions, then please don't hesitate to contact our communications team at communications@seupb.eu.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gina McIntyre'.

GINA MCINTYRE
Chief Executive, the SEUPB



A fantastic example of collaboration between organisations in three jurisdictions to solve shared environmental issues.

Gina McIntyre, SEUPB CEO

KEY SPECIES PROTECTED THANKS TO CROSS-BORDER COLLABORATION



Habitats preserved for birds, butterflies and plants.

Over the last six years RSPB NI has been leading on the Co-operation Across Borders for Biodiversity (CABB) project. A three-country, six-partner conservation project, CABB has been working to improve habitats for birds, butterflies, and plants across several Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) in Northern Ireland, Ireland, and Scotland.

The project received funding of €5million and recently celebrated its conclusion. The SEUPB recently joined staff at the Garron Plateau to see first-hand the work that the project has undertaken over the last few years.

CABB has delivered eight Conservation Action Plans that will protect over 39,000 hectares of peatland, and associated species including curlew, marsh saxifrage and hen harrier. Peatland restoration work carried out across Ox Mountains near Sligo, Muirkirk in Ayrshire and Garron Plateau in Antrim has helped to lock away 4.5 million tonnes of carbon, helping to mitigate climate change. Drain blocking at Garron by NI Water, in partnership with RSPB NI, also

allowed sphagnum mosses and other species to recolonise, as well as delivering flood prevention and improving water quality.

Through working in partnership with Butterfly Conservation, CABB has been able to conserve habitats and key species such as the marsh fritillary butterfly at Montiahs Moss, Pettigoe Plateau and County Leitrim.

This has resulted in greater potential for breeding success, with adults visiting plug plants. The project has also successfully safeguarded homes for nearly 900 pairs of breeding waders in Lough Erne, Donegal and at Gruinart on Islay. Actions at key nesting sites, including predator-proof fencing installation and sea wall consolidation gives endangered breeding waders a chance for survival.

Caroline Marshall, CABB; Linda Lennon, Birdwatch Ireland; Roy Taylor, Northern Ireland Water; Rebecca Allen, Northern Ireland Water; Dr Anita Donaghy, Birdlife Ireland; Dymphna Gallagher, Northern Ireland Water; Sara McGuckin, NIEA; Joanne Sherwood, RSPB NI; Gina McIntyre, Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).



Funded by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Ireland.

ONSIDE VOLUNTEER DESCRIBES LIFE-CHANGING PROJECT



More than 2,400 disabled people helped to link to their communities.

The Onside project has helped more than 2,400 disabled people connect to both local and digital communities.

Launched in March 2020, just before Covid-19, this Interreg project proved to be a lifeline for hundreds of people isolated by lockdown.

The project aimed to improve the lives of disabled people by helping them become active citizens. Participants who received devices and training for digital connectivity could then go on to become peer volunteers – training others like themselves.

Onside peer volunteer Nigel Flynn lives in Ballymena. Following a complex brain haemorrhage five years ago, he is now a wheelchair user.

“I got involved in Onside through friends – they thought this was an opportunity that would suit me.

“I have only been in a wheelchair for five years – not since birth. I had time on my hands and was looking for something to fill it.

“People with a condition like mine can choose to stay in the house and disappear. It is common for them to stop

living, and once you stop living you start to die. That led me to think that I needed a purpose, to do something useful.

“Once you have a disability you can feel that there is no point to you, that you’re just waiting to die.

“I could give clichés about getting involved with Onside so I could give something back but to be honest it was for me, to give me a purpose. My brain still works – it is just the rest of me that does not.

“I used to work for the Housing Executive and I have certain skills that I thought would be useful for this. I went through the training with Onside first, and then went on to become a peer volunteer.

“The whole point is that you work with people like yourself, who are disabled and cannot do the same things as other people. I think the peer aspect of it is a vital part of this project – we are the ones who understand the barriers that we must face.

“At first there was a lot online – a lot of sessions on Zoom. Now that Covid has lifted a bit we have had more face-to-face meetings.

I needed a purpose, to do something useful.

**Nigel Flynn,
Onside peer volunteer**



Nigel Flynn, Onside project Peer Volunteer.

“Onside has been a stepping-stone for me to get involved with other projects. I have joined a Men’s Shed - men with similar issues as myself, we meet once a week.

“Through Onside I’ve met a lot of good people who I admire. It’s given me a foot in the door with an organisation I believe in.”

MATCH-FUNDING

Departments of Health Northern Ireland & Ireland.

SEUPB PRESENTS THE PEACE PROGRAMMES LEARNING PLATFORM IN BRUSSELS

On Wednesday 11th October the SEUPB held a showcase event demonstrating the PEACE Programme Learning Platform in the Northern Ireland Executive Office in the heart of the EU district in Brussels.

The Platform is a living archive of the work funded by the EU Peace Programmes over the last three decades.

The achievements of over 22,500 projects are now saved in a central location allowing users to find out more about the work completed on the continual integration of communities in post-conflict societies - not just in Northern Ireland but around the world.

Users can discover information about the EU peace and reconciliation projects and build a community to collaborate with others who have benefitted from PEACE funding. They can also learn about the techniques used and lessons learned from previous projects.

The event featured videos and speeches from special guests such as Elisa Ferreira, European Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms. There were also speeches from special guests; Ambassador Barbara Cullinane, Deputy Permanent Representative of

Ireland to the EU and Paul D'Silva, Head of Northern Ireland Team, UK Mission to the EU.

Paul Beattie, SEUPB Director, Managing Authority gave an informative demonstration of the Platform. This was followed by a short video from SJC Consultancy on how they collated the information and assets which were then sent to developers.

The SEUPB were also delighted to have Dr Martin McMullan, CEO of YouthAction NI at the event. Dr McMullan explained

why the learning platform is a great resource for a PEACE IV funded project to learn lessons from previous projects and how it is a vital tool for collaboration.

The SEUPB would like to extend a special thanks to The Office of the Northern Ireland Executive in Brussels for hosting this event.

For more information on the Peace Programmes Learning Platform and to register



Dr Martin McMullan, YouthAction Chief Executive.

CELEBRATING A MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVE

Habitats restored, and species protected by six-year collaborative project.

A major cross-border project - Collaborative Action for the Natura Network, or CANN, was acclaimed recently at a celebration event held in Newry, Co Down, attracting an audience from far and wide.

The €9.4 million project was funded by the EU's INTERREG VA Programme together with funding from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) in Northern Ireland and the Department for Housing, Local Government and Heritage in Ireland and NatureScot in Scotland.

The CANN project's closure celebration event, held at the Canal Court Hotel, was the culmination of six years' work which helped to restore natural habitats and protect endangered species across a range of project sites throughout **Northern Ireland, Ireland and Scotland.**

Throughout the CANN project, a team of leading scientists, researchers, local authorities, and charities from a partnership of 11 organisations across the three regions worked together to prevent a decline in peatland and wetland habitats. As a result, 26 Conservation Action Plans were produced across the three project regions.

The project was led by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and employed more than 30 project staff.

The CANN project team carried out direct conservation actions to improve the condition of these habitats, helping to protect vital species. They worked with local people and communities to manage these unique landscapes and iconic species. The project focussed on seven protected habitats, along with seven priority species, including birds such as the hen harrier, golden plover and red grouse and insects including the marsh fritillary butterfly, as well as freshwater species such as white-clawed crayfish.

The work done by CANN will have lasting effects for years to come and has significant potential for future collaboration locally and internationally.

***Gina McIntyre,
SEUPB CEO***

The project also delivered educational and outreach programmes and raised awareness of the significance of the habitats and species found on these sites, with the aspiration of safeguarding their conservation and ensuring their sustainability beyond 2022 and the lifespan of the CANN project.

The celebration event featured a keynote speech from Professor John Barry of Queen's University, Belfast who spoke passionately about the twin crises of biodiversity loss and climate change and their close interlinkages.

Staff at the CANN celebration following the project's success.



Funded by Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in Ireland

PEACEPLUS COMING IN 2023

The new cross-border funding Programme created to strengthen peace and reconciliation between Ireland and Northern Ireland is moving closer to implementation.

This Programme represents a strong partnership between the EU, the Governments of the UK and Ireland and the NI Executive.

Gina McIntyre, SEUPB CEO

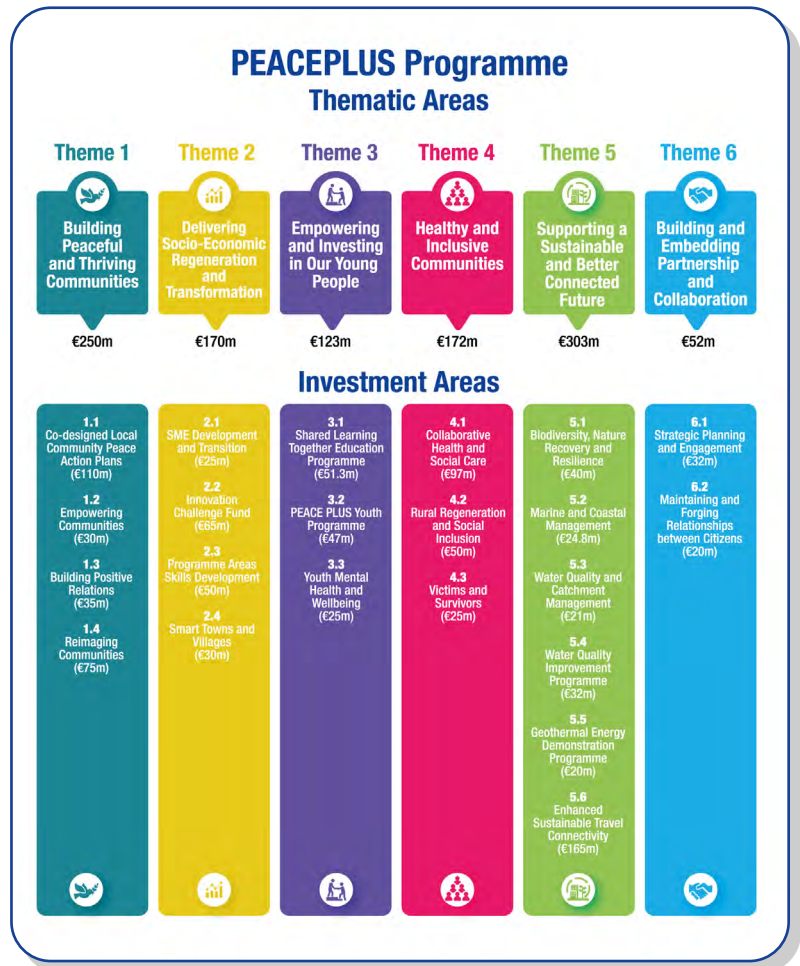
PEACEPLUS, the new European Union funding Programme, is designed to support peace and prosperity across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland, building upon the work of the previous PEACE and INTERREG Programmes. It is due to be launched in the next few months, and you can read more about it in the newly-updated PEACEPLUS Programme overview. The Programme features six key themes, each one with its own investments areas as displayed on this page.

[View the PEACEPLUS Programme overview](#)

At present, the financing agreement is being finalised by the Governments of the United Kingdom, Ireland and the European Commission.

The SEUPB is looking forward to launching the PEACEPLUS Programme and the opening of funding calls in 2023.

To keep up to date on the latest PEACEPLUS news and events, you can sign up to our newsletter by clicking on the link



PEACEPLUS PRE-APPLICATION SUPPORT WORKSHOPS

During Autumn, the SEUPB coordinated three in-person pre-application support workshops under the PEACEPLUS Programme. These workshops aim to provide potential applicants with an understanding of the specific Investment Area objectives, an overview of the PEACEPLUS Programme, as well as an opportunity to build knowledge through engagement with the consultants and Programme facilitators.

The three workshops, which took place in September, were based around the following PEACEPLUS investment areas:

- ▶ 1.1 Co-designed Local Community PEACE Action Plans
- ▶ 1.3 Building Positive Relations
- ▶ 5.5 Geothermal Energy Demonstration

Investment Area 1.1 Co-designed Local Community PEACE Action Plans took place at The Junction in Dungannon which was attended by almost 40 invitees.

Pre-application support workshops for Investment Areas 1.3 Building Positive Relations and 5.5 Geothermal also took place at The Junction in Dungannon.

Programme Director Declan McGarrigle delivering workshops 5.5.



These were separate in-person workshops and again, both were recorded. The videos were made available to watch on-demand via YouTube afterwards. The SEUPB provided an overlapping networking lunch to give both groups an opportunity to connect and discuss potential collaborations.

The SEUPB is now finalising details of the next workshops that will be held before the end of 2022 with the remainder due to be delivered by mid-2023. Full details of these will be shared on our social media channels and through email marketing. To receive updates on forthcoming events, including pre-application workshops and future news about the PEACEPLUS programme then just click on the link below to sign up for the newsletter.

STAFF PROFILE

Helen Donaldson



Job Title:
Interim Joint Secretariat Director



How long have you been at SEUPB and can you tell us a little about the roles you have held in the past?

I began working for SEUPB in 2009 as a Programme Officer within the Transnational Team. I managed the verification process for the Northern Ireland partners within the 2007 to 2013 Programme period for the Northern Periphery Programme, Atlantic Area, Northwest Europe, INTERREG IVC and Urbact II programmes. This gave me knowledge of how programmes run across Europe. In January 2016, I moved to the Joint Secretariat as Programme Officer to work on the assessments of the 2014-2020 INTERREG VA and PEACE IV Programmes. An opportunity arose in early 2018 and I gained promotion to Programme Manager for JS Belfast. Working across verification and Joint Secretariat roles gave me knowledge and experience of the workings of programme management and delivery. These assist with my current position as Interim Joint Secretariat Director, a role I took on in October 2022 and which is challenging but very enjoyable.

My current role

My current role is the Interim Joint Secretariat Director for the PEACE IV and INTERREG VA Programmes. Part of my job is to ensure that all programme outputs are met and to maximise EU receipts. There have been many challenges during the two programmes and associated projects over the past few years, not least Brexit, COVID and inflationary increases not seen for a long time. With a finite budget this has been very difficult to manage in recent months. However, the Joint Secretariat team have worked very closely with the projects to ensure activity could continue during COVID and assisted those that have faced substantial increases in costs. Projects have worked tirelessly to bring their work through to completion and we are now starting to see many conclude, having achieved all of their targets. I very much enjoy working with the project partnerships and seeing their achievements on the ground. It is very rewarding to know that our collective effort has such an impact for the future.

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).

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).

GET IN TOUCH

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