



## Press Release

**Date: 25 June 2019**

### **EU invests €35m to improve water quality in Carlingford Lough and Lough Foyle**

A major cross-border project which aims to improve water quality in Carlingford Lough and Lough Foyle through enhanced wastewater treatment was officially launched today in Derry/Londonderry.

The Shared Waters Enhancement & Loughs Legacy (SWELL) project, which has been awarded €35m under the EU's INTERREG VA Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body, will see the construction of new wastewater treatment works as well as upgrades to sewerage networks on both sides of the border to address wastewater pollution in Carlingford Lough and Lough Foyle.

The four-year project – which is being led by Northern Ireland Water working in partnership with Irish Water, the Agri-Food Biosciences Institute (AFBI), Loughs Agency and East Border Region - will culminate in the development of a unique environmental legacy model that can be used to achieve further improvements in water quality in these shared waters.

Paul Harper, Director of Asset Delivery at NI Water, said: **“Northern Ireland Water is pleased to be lead partner in this strategic EU-funded project which will improve wastewater treatment for an additional 10,000 people on a cross-border basis.**

**“The project provides a welcome opportunity for both water utilities to work collaboratively to prioritise and align projects in a coordinated way so as to make maximum positive impact on the shared waterbodies on the island of Ireland.”**

The work being carried out under the SWELL project will involve a total of eight wastewater infrastructure upgrades, as well as catchment studies and ecosystem modelling, within the Carlingford Lough drainage basin (within Newry, Mourne & Down and Louth council areas) and the Lough Foyle drainage basin (comprising Derry City & Strabane and Donegal council

areas). The improvements to the wastewater assets will help contribute to raising the current EU Water Framework Directive status of 'moderate' to 'good'.

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

Officially launching the SWELL project, Eoghan Murphy, TD, Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government in Ireland, stated: **“Without safe and reliable water and wastewater infrastructure, social and economic development cannot happen. So I am pleased to be here today to officially launch the SWELL project which will play an important role in improving water quality in Carlingford Lough and Lough Foyle through cross-border partnership working.”**

Denis McMahon, Permanent Secretary at the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, said: **“I am very happy to jointly launch this worthwhile project. The €35m funding will facilitate important work with the Republic of Ireland to improve water quality in both the Foyle and Carlingford catchments. The project will leave a lasting legacy through improved wastewater treatment for our border communities and will develop a new environmental model to help decision and policy makers make the difference in improving water quality.”**

Announcing the funding Gina McIntyre, CEO of the SEUPB which is responsible for the management of the EU's INTERREG VA Programme, said: **“Nature does not respect geographical borders between regions, therefore cross-border cooperation is vital if we are to help protect our shared environment. This project represents a significant and long-term investment from the European Union in the water quality of the entire region. It is a testament to what can be achieved when two jurisdictions work together to help address a common problem.”**

The unique ecosystem model being developed through SWELL, will link various aspects of environmental modelling such as urban drainage, river, coastal and ecology, undertaken in the catchments of the respective loughs over the lifecycle of the project.



Through extensive investigations and use of innovative modelling techniques, the SWELL ecosystem model will be able to track the pathways of nutrients and contaminants of wastewater, industrial or agricultural sources to determine their impact on the receiving waters. This legacy model will assist the water utilities and regulatory bodies on both sides of the border by identifying best approaches to achieving further improvement of overall water quality in the future.

- **Ends.**

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#### **Notes to Editor:**

The eight wastewater infrastructure projects that will be carried out under SWELL are:

- |             |   |  |
|-------------|---|--|
| Carlingford | - | Warrenpoint Wastewater Treatment Works |
| Lough       |   | Newpoint Wastewater Pumping Station    |
|             |   | Omeath Network                         |
| Lough       | - | Strabane Wastewater Treatment Works    |
| Foyle       |   | Donemana Wastewater Treatment Works    |
|             |   | Lifford Wastewater Treatment Works     |
|             |   | Killea Wastewater Treatment Works      |
|             |   | Carrigans Network                      |

Work on the capital projects (wastewater upgrades) will get underway in 2019 and will be complete by the end of 2021.

The 'legacy' ecosystem model will be fully developed by the close of the SWELL project at the end of 2022.

#### **SEUPB:**

- The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) 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. It is responsible for managing two EU Structural Funds Programmes, PEACE IV and INTERREG VA which are designed to enhance cross-border cooperation, promote reconciliation and create a more peaceful and prosperous society.



Northern Ireland - Ireland - Scotland

European Regional Development Fund



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

- The Programmes operate within a clearly defined area including Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and in the case of INTERREG VA, Western Scotland.
- The INTERREG VA Programme has a European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) contribution of €240 million and aims to address the economic and social problems which result from the existence of borders.
- For more information on the SEUPB please visit [www.seupb.eu](http://www.seupb.eu)