

## **BUILDING POSITIVE RELATIONS – REGIONAL LEVEL PROJECTS**

### **1. The Peace Programme**

The EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation 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. It represents the European Union's commitment to supporting the peace process across the region and was initially launched in 1995.

The PEACE IV Programme 2014-2020 represents a European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) investment of €229m and will provide support to projects that contribute towards the promotion of greater levels of peace and reconciliation. The Programme will also place a strong emphasis on promoting cross-community relationships and understanding in order to create a more cohesive society.

The core objectives of PEACE IV will be to support actions that will develop and deepen reconciliation between divided communities; increase tolerance and respect, promote increased community cohesion and contact, enhance cross-border cooperation and address the legacy of the past.

### **2. Summary of call**

There has been a significant and sustained reduction in the overall level of violence directly related to the conflict. However, there is evidence of continued high levels of sectarianism and racism. The increasing levels of ethnic diversity alongside relatively high levels of socio-economic deprivation in some areas presents new challenges for achieving greater integration and citizenship within society. Due to the history of the division in Northern Ireland and the Border Region, some sections of society have not yet developed the capacity to deal positively with diversity and difference.

The theory of change which underpins the projects supported emphasises the importance of contact at an individual and community level. Projects supported will provide opportunities for sustained, meaningful and purposeful contact between individuals and groups of different backgrounds and on a cross border basis. Through this contact the projects supported will result in a reduction in isolation, polarisation, division, prejudice, sectarianism, racism and stereotypes between / among groups.

Projects supported will pay particular attention to minority groups and groups who traditionally have been marginalised in society so that opportunities will be created that allow for a greater degree of participation and integration in society.

The PEACE IV Programme is making a call for applications for regional projects under the specific objective:

**To promote positive relations, characterised by respect, and where cultural diversity is celebrated and people can live, learn and socialise together, free from prejudice, hate and intolerance.**

A total value of €16.4 million (ERDF: €13.9 million) has been allocated to this call. The SEUPB is seeking to award funds to a range of ambitious project proposals that impact on a regional basis i.e. across the entire eligible area of Northern Ireland and the border counties. Proposals in value from EUR €0.5m and €2.0m are encouraged. This will allow for the specific challenges to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude the submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

- Opening Date: 24 March 2016
- Closing Date: **29 September 2016 (15:00)**
- Steering Committee Date: no later than 10 November 2016
- 1<sup>st</sup> Workshop Date: 5 April 2016 2<sup>nd</sup> Workshop Date: date to be agreed

#### **The result indicators:**

Three indicators have been identified that will indicate progress towards increased good relations and respect:

- An increase in the percentage of people who think relations between Protestants and Catholics are better than they were five years ago from 45% to 52%.
- An increase in the percentage of people who think relations between Protestants and Catholics will be better in five years' time from 40% to 48%.
- An increase in the percentage of people who know quite a bit about the culture of some minority ethnic communities from 30% to 38%.

These result indicators will be monitored from information collected by the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey.

**The output indicator (to be achieved by 2021):**

- **20 regional level projects** that result in meaningful, purposeful and sustained contact between persons from different communities.

**3. Essential information**

The call for applications should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Cooperation Programme and associated Citizens' Summary
- The Programme Rules
- Guide for Applicants
- European Commission Guidance for the Simplified Cost Options (including unit costs)

Please consult these documents before completing the application form as they contain essential information to assist you in making the best application possible.

Applicants may also find it useful to consult the 'Impact Assessment Toolkit for Cross Border Cooperation'. This toolkit has been developed by the Centre for Cross Border Studies, as part of an INTERREG IVA funded project and is intended to be a practical guide to assist with planning cross-border projects. A copy of the toolkit can be downloaded from our website: [www.seupb.eu](http://www.seupb.eu)

**4. Project Selection Criteria**

The following selection criteria will be used:

(a) Each operation will have to demonstrate how they contribute to the results and outputs of the themes.

- Particular focus will be given to the direct contribution to peace and reconciliation.
- Projects will have to demonstrate that they are creating opportunities for sustained meaningful and purposeful contact between people and groups of different backgrounds and in so doing contribute to the result and outputs of the call.

- Projects have to demonstrate their essential regional characteristics, including the rationale for regional implementation and regional impact (as opposed to local implementation and local impact);
- Projects should address strategic and policy issues of relevance to the region and should not be engaged in widespread service delivery at the local level.

(b) Quality of the project design

- Projects will have to demonstrate a direct link between their proposed activities and the proposed impact of the project.
- Particular attention will be given to measures to ensure the inclusion of the marginalised or other target groups.

(c) Quality of the project team, partnership and implementation arrangements;

- Demonstration of a regional based structure which has the right skills and experience to lead the project, and that the project structures will be able to deliver on the peace and reconciliation outputs.

(d) Value for money;

(e) Quality of cross community and cross-border co-operation with demonstrable added value;

- It is expected that regional projects should impact on the programme area. Cross border co-operation will be encouraged through the development of appropriate partnerships and implementation arrangements where these add value to the delivery of the Programme. The project will have to demonstrate how they will effectively ensure participation from all communities in their activities. Whilst single jurisdiction projects are eligible under this call, a strong rationale would be required to explain why the project was not being implemented across the programme area.

(f) Contribution towards sustainable development;

- Applicants are required to consider how their activity can be designed to positively contribute towards this horizontal principle.

(g) Contribution towards equality.

- Applicants are required to consider how their activity can be designed to positively contribute towards this horizontal principle.

## 5. Eligible Region

The eligible area for the PEACE IV Programme is:

- Northern Ireland;
- The Border Region of Ireland (Counties Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Louth, Monaghan and Sligo).

This is a cross-border Programme and all projects will be funded on a cross-border basis.

## 6. What is the theme “Building Positive Relations at a Local level – Regional Level Projects” going to achieve?

Some issues and target groups can be better accommodated through regional level initiatives that transcend local authority boundaries. These regional initiatives will also facilitate cross-border co-operation. The Programme will pay particular attention to minority groups and groups who traditionally have been marginalised in society so that opportunities will be created that allow for a greater degree of participation in society.

The Programme will support groups particularly impacted by the legacy of the conflict such as victims and survivors and those communities with low social capital as well as those identifiable groups and networks dealing with specific legacy issues such as young and older people, women, the faith community, those suffering from physical or mental disability arising from the legacy of violence, ex-prisoners, displaced persons and former members of the security forces.

In all cases, projects will be inclusive in nature and will ensure meaningful, purposeful and sustained contact between people of different backgrounds, and which have the capacity to change attitudes and behaviour. Initiatives should evidence a direct commitment to tackling real and complex issues, such as sectarianism and racism.

## 7. Anticipated Actions

It is anticipated that the Programme will fund the following types of actions under this specific objective:

- Projects to reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society through the promotion of reconciliation amongst all communities;
- Projects which build, improve and sustain relationships between communities by addressing issues of trust, prejudice and intolerance.

The regional projects will support actions to facilitate involvement from people from diverse backgrounds; in particular, cross-border activity will be supported and facilitated.

## 8. Budget and co-financing rate

A total value of €16.4m (ERDF: €13.9 million) is available under this call.

The level of grant aid may also be adjusted to take due account of state aid and/or anticipated future revenue streams. Please consult the Programme rules for further details.

Grants and payments may take any of the following forms:

- (a) Reimbursement of eligible costs actually incurred and paid;
- (b) Standard scales of unit costs;
- (c) Flat-rate financing, available for overhead costs or salary costs.

The above options may be combined only where each option covers different categories of costs or where they are used for different projects forming a part of an operation or for successive phases of an operation.

For planning purposes applicants are to use an exchange rate of £1 = €1.31.

A successful project, where there are cross-border partners, will be issued with a Letter of Offer in Euro. A successful project that has Northern Ireland partner(s) only, may request a Letter of Offer in Sterling.

## **8.1 Simplified Cost Options (SCO)**

In order to simplify the administration of grant aid, the SEUPB would propose to use simplified costs options for the administration of this theme. Simplified costs will be established at Stage 2 of the application process in consultation with the successful applicant and in accordance with the European Commission's guidance. It is envisaged that the relevant simplified cost options will include both flat rates and unit costs, as outlined in the Programme Rules.

## **8.2 Flat Rate**

Office and administration costs (overheads) will be funded at a flat rate of 15% of direct salary costs. No justification is required.

## **8.3 Unit Costs**

The use of unit costs, where applicable, is desirable in this area of the programme and, accordingly, applicants are encouraged to present unit costs. Where applicants take this opportunity, unit costs are to be presented and evidenced in accordance with the European Commission's guidance for the preparation on unit costs.

Unit costs must be:

- Fair – based on reality, not excessive or extreme
- Equitable – it does not favour some beneficiaries or projects over others
- Verifiable – determination of flat rates, standard scales of unit costs or lump sums should be based on documentary evidence which can be verified.

Applicants must document as a minimum:

- The description of the calculation method, including key steps of the calculation
- The sources of data used for the analysis and the calculations, including an assessment of the relevance of the data to the project(s), and an assessment of the quality of the data

- The calculation itself to determine the value of the Simplified Cost Option (unit cost).

The Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) specifies that the following may be used in evidence to support Simplified Cost Options:

- 'Statistical' data or other objective information
- The verified historical data of individual beneficiaries
- The application of the usual cost accounting practices of individual beneficiaries.

When providing calculations of unit costs, applicants must provide accounting data over at least three years so as to identify any potential exceptional circumstance which would have affected costs in a specific year as well as the tendencies in the cost amounts.

Where unit costs are presented, applicants will be able to suggest modifications to the overall financial allocations.

## 9. Application process

A two stage process will be in place for this call as detailed in the Guide for Applicants. Full details of the assessment process, including admissibility criteria is also available in the Guide for Applicants.

Completed applications should be submitted to [applications@seupb.eu](mailto:applications@seupb.eu) or SEUPB, EU House, 11 Kevlin Rd, Omagh, Co Tyrone BT78 1LB

## 10. Contact Us

For general enquiries about this call please contact the SEUPB on: Tel: + 44 28 8225 5750.

**Contact Name:** Oonagh Bradley

Special EU Programmes Body

**Email:** [oonagh.bradley@seupb.eu](mailto:oonagh.bradley@seupb.eu)