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Strand	Strand A: CB Cross-Border Cooperation Programme (ETC, IPA III CBC, NDICI-CBC)

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1. Joint programme strategy: main development challenges and policy responses

1.1. Programme area (not required for Interreg C programmes)

Reference: point (a) of Article 17(3), point (a) of Article 17(9)

The Programme area is illustrated in the appendices and consists of all of Northern Ireland and the Border Counties of Ireland Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Louth, Monaghan and Sligo.

Northern Ireland (NI) is a region of the United Kingdom (UK) that shares a land border with Ireland. It is located on the North-West periphery of Europe. According to statistics from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), NI's population stands at just over 1.88 million people (June 2018), representing 2.8% of the UK total population. Almost a fifth (18%) of NI's population live within the Belfast Local Government District (LGD), followed by Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon LGD (11% total).

The Border Counties of Ireland consists of the geographical area of Counties Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Louth, Monaghan and Sligo. It encompasses an area of 12,156 sq. km. from the Atlantic Ocean on the west coast to the Irish Sea on the east coast. The population of the Border Region is 523,200 (2016 Census). This is equivalent to 11% of the Irish population.

The Border Counties of Ireland and Northern Ireland have a largely young population. In 2016 the proportion of people aged 0-24 in the Border Counties of Ireland was 33.9%, with the corresponding figure in Northern Ireland being 31.9% (June 2018). The proportion of the population aged 65 and over in Northern Ireland was 16.4% in June 2018, with the corresponding figure for the Border Counties of Ireland being 14.6% (2016).

The Programme area encompasses a number of urban areas, as well as some larger rural areas. The area is characterised by an attractive natural environment and habitat including mountainous terrain as well as an attractive coastline, which is a valuable resource for the tourism industry and has further future potential for this sector.

In addition, the natural habitat of the Programme area and the extensive coastline and neighbouring marine area also represent a potentially valuable resource in terms of the green economy and the generation of renewable energy.

1.2 Joint programme strategy: Summary of main joint challenges, taking into account economic, social and territorial disparities as well as inequalities, joint investment needs and complimentary and synergies with other funding programmes and instruments, lessons-learnt from past experience and macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies where the programme area as a whole or partially is covered by one or more strategies.

Reference: point (b) of Article 17(3), point (b) of Article 17(9)

PEACE PLUS Programme Strategy

Context

The overall objective of the PEACE PLUS Programme will be to **build Peace and Prosperity** and ensure that this Programme will leave a lasting and tangible legacy.

The first PEACE Programme was agreed in 1995 as a direct result of the EU's desire to make a positive response to the opportunities presented by developments in the peace process during 1994. As the peace process has evolved and matured, the PEACE Programmes have played an important role in reinforcing progress towards a more peaceful and stable society. There has been significant progress since the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement (1998) and St Andrews Agreement (2006). However, divisions between communities are still very evident with low levels of trust and high levels of residential and social segregation. Issues around the expression of identity often result in community tensions and increased polarisation. Within this context there still remains a real need to address a number of key issues in order to support the overall peace process.

The Programme's strategy is to continue to take the opportunities and address the needs arising from the peace process in order to boost economic growth and stimulate social and economic regeneration and secondly, to promote social inclusion, particularly for those at the margins of economic and social life.

The Programme will help to address long standing social and economic challenges which have, and continue to, impact on communities, particularly those in rural border areas as well as ongoing challenges that exist in urban settings. It will also recognise the devastating impact of Covid-19 on society and the risks associated with the UK's exit from the EU. The Programme has been developed within the wider political, economic, social and environmental context.

The Programme has also been developed with the UN Sustainable Development Goals in mind. The UNSDGs were adopted by Member States in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which set out a 15-year plan to achieve the Goals [ref. 1].

The European Green Deal is the European Union's new growth strategy with the aim of creating a carbon-neutral Europe by 2050. All EU actions and policies, including the PEACE PLUS Programme are required to contribute to the European Green Deal objectives.

The European Green Deal is the roadmap for making the European economy sustainable in which there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050, economic growth is decoupled from resource use and no person and no place is left behind.

The PEACE PLUS Programme will contribute to the Green Deal:

- Through cross border added value including renewable energy, innovative technologies and smart infrastructure to help transition to climate neutrality and clean energy transition at affordable prices; and protecting biodiversity rich land and sea areas, building on the Natura2000 network;
- By increasing our research and innovation efforts through increasing new technologies, sustainable solutions and disruptive innovation; large-scale deployment and demonstration of new technologies across sectors;
- Building new innovative value chains; and ensuring synergy with Horizon Europe. SEUPB will seek representation (observer status) from Enterprise Ireland representatives on the PMC to ensure coordination. In addition, SEUPB will engage with Enterprise Ireland where appropriate during the application process along with applicants to ensure that there is adequate assessment of complementarity during the assessment process by the Joint Secretariat; and
- In the development and implementation of the PEACE PLUS Programme that is ‘greener’ and climate focused.

A green and climate neutral Europe can only be achieved if we work in cooperation with all sectors of our economy.

The New Leipzig Charter [ref. 2] provides a policy framework for sustainable urban development that has been incorporated into the development of the PEACE PLUS Programme. It emphasises the transformative power of cities for the common good, built on a partnership approach and through the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, as well as through just, green and productive dimensions. Combined in a balanced and integrated manner, these dimensions will contribute to developing resilient cities that can deal with social, economic and ecological challenges, aiming to guarantee a high quality of life for everyone.

Political Context

Whilst much progress has been made in relation to peace and reconciliation in the last 20 years, a number of political issues have had an impact including the result of the UK referendum on membership of the European Union in 2016.

During the 2014 – 2020 Programme period, in an effort to deal with some of the most long running difficult issues or outstanding commitments, successive rounds of talks were held between the UK and Irish Governments and the political parties in the NI Executive. The Stormont House Agreement 2014 reached consensus on a number of issues including welfare reform, flags, parades, the past, budgets and the reform of political institutions.

Further all-party talks, focused on the full implementation of the Stormont House Agreement and measures to deal with the impact of paramilitary activity were also held. The talks concluded in November 2015 with ‘A Fresh Start: The Stormont Agreement and Implementation Plan’. This document set out proposals for addressing some of the most challenging issues in our society.

Following a period of political instability, the ‘New Decade, New Approach’ deal [ref. 3] was reached and published on 9 January 2020, providing the basis for the re-establishment of the NI Executive. The ‘New Decade, New Approach’ outlines provisions relating to health, public services, infrastructure and funding,

some of which include:

- Transforming public services - support for the education of young people from different backgrounds together;
- Investing for the future – a balanced economy, developing an enhanced approach to careers advice, curriculum, training and apprenticeships to enhance employability and support economic growth; and
- Delivering a fair and compassionate society – commitment to tackling paramilitarism, ending sectarianism, prejudice and hate and publishing a childcare strategy.

In addition, draft Assembly legislation was published concerning language and culture. The legislation proposes establishing: the Office of Identity and Cultural Expression; an Irish language Commissioner; and a Commissioner focusing on Ulster Scots and Ulster British language, arts and literature.

2020 has also seen the formation of a new coalition government in Ireland with Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and the Green Party as the partners in Government.

In October 2020, the Irish Government announced a Shared Island Fund [ref. 4] which provides €500m in capital funding over the next five years, ring-fenced for investment on a strategic basis in collaborative North/South projects that will support the commitments and objectives of the Good Friday Agreement and strengthen links across society on both parts of the island. The funding will be disbursed to Government departments and agencies in line with Programme for Government priorities for cooperation with the Executive and UK Government. The Irish Government is working in partnership with the Executive through the North South Ministerial Council to progress key cross border investment projects which are part of the commitments on a Shared Island in the Programme for Government.

Good Relations

Devine and Robinson (ARK, 2018) [ref. 5] analysed Northern Ireland Life and Times survey data on community and good relations collected over the past 20 years and highlighted the following key issues:

- The development of positive relationships has been neither steady nor consistent. There are peaks and troughs reflecting the impact, positive and negative, of contemporary events.
- Half of respondents in 1998 and 2017 thought that relations between Catholics and Protestants were better than the previous 5 years.
- In 1998, 62% of respondents were optimistic that community relations would improve in the next 5 years; only 43% thought this in 2017.
- There has been an increase in the proportion of respondents expressing a preference for mixed-religion neighbourhoods, workplaces and schools – in 2017 these figures were 78%, 90% and 68% respectively.
- Feelings of being intimidated by loyalist or republican murals, flags and kerb paintings has decreased since 2004, although a higher proportion of respondents feel annoyed by these.
- Attitudes and perceptions reflect contemporary events.
- 18% of respondents in 2001 thought that lesbian, gay or bisexual people were treated unfairly, this rose to 50% in 2016.

Young People and Community Relations

The Young Life and Times survey has raised concerns with regards to the negative or ambivalent views of young people in relation to improvements in community relations. The survey data shows young people's attitudes have generally been more negative than those of adults (ARK, 2018) [ref. 6].

Sectarianism in Northern Ireland: A Review (Morrow, 2019) [ref. 7] notes that the high rates of economic inactivity and high numbers of young people who are not employed or in education or training, has the effect of reinforcing social and economic divisions:

“Combined with political segregation this has a significant impact on change, and on approaches to both the past and the future.” (Morrow, 2019)

The NI Executive's 'Together: Building a United Community' (T:BUC) Strategy [ref. 8], published on 23 May 2013, reflects the Executive's commitment to improving community relations and continuing the journey towards a more united and shared society.

The strategy outlines how government, community and individuals will work together to build a united community, based on equality of opportunity and the desirability of good relations and reconciliation and will achieve change against the following key priorities:

- our children and young people;
- our shared community;
- our safe community; and
- our cultural expression.

New Communities

There has been an increase in **'new communities'** and the number of minority ethnic groups in the last two decades. In 2011, the NI Census showed that 1.8% or 32,400 of the resident population belonged to minority ethnic groups, which is double the 2001 number – the majority of which were Chinese, Indian or 'Mixed' [ref. 9]. There has been a similar increase in the number of ethnic minorities and new communities living in the border counties of Ireland, with an increase of over 25% in the *Black or Black Irish - any other Black background* in the border counties of Ireland which is approximately 20 percentage points higher than the overall Irish equivalent. There has been a similar increase in the *Asian or Asian Irish – any other background* population of over 25% in the border counties of Ireland.

An evaluation of the 2018 Northern Ireland Life and Times survey data concluded that 54% of respondents felt that levels of immigration should not change (Michael, 2020) [ref. 10]. 72% of respondents thought that migrant workers were good for the economy and between 2008 and 2018, there has been a fall in the number of respondents who feel that migrant workers put a strain on the NHS, housing and schools. It is notable that 63% of respondents believe perceptions of migrant workers are tainted by the media. A positive finding is that 81% believe migrant workers make us open to new ideas and cultures.

Economic Context [ref. 11]

The economic context is dominated by the Covid-19 outbreak which was declared as a pandemic in March 2020. Its impact has been wide-ranging, affecting the economy, general society, politics and other areas. As of 9th November 2020, over 50.4 million cases have been confirmed worldwide, with over 1.25 million deaths attributed to the virus [ref. 12].

Northern Ireland

Economic Growth

Economic growth rates coincide with periods of imposing and relaxing lockdown restrictions in response to Covid-19. Q2-2020 featured the strictest lockdown restrictions resulting in the Northern Ireland Composite Economic Index (NICEI) [ref.13] dropping to an all-time low.

The most recent headline results for the NICEI Q1-2021 [ref. 14] are as follows:

- There has been a significant decline in **economic output** between 2020 and 2021 for Northern Ireland [ref. 15].
- Over the **shorter term** (i.e. quarter), the decrease in the NICEI was driven by the Services sector (-1.1 pps), with the Construction and Production sectors contributing -0.6 pps and -0.2 pps, respectively. Over the **medium term** (i.e. annual), the reduction in the NICEI was driven by a reduction in the Services sector (-1.7 pps) which was offset by positive contributions from the Construction (0.5 pps), Production (0.4 pps) and the Public sector (0.2 pps).
- **Comparisons with the GDP** show NI output reduced at a lower rate of 0.6% over the year, compared to the UK 6.1%.

The NI Chamber of Commerce and BDO Quarterly Economic Survey [ref. 16] for Q2-2021, also reports NI's economic recovery strengthened with signs of **confidence** returning to both the **manufacturing and services sectors**. Nonetheless, **recruitment difficulties** emerged as a significant issue and **price pressures** are the highest on record with rising raw materials costs.

Labour Market

With regard to **employment**, the latest estimates from the Labour Force Survey April-June 2021 [ref. 17] indicate the following:

- **The employment rate** increased over the quarter (0.9pps) and was unchanged over the year at 71.1%. The employment rate remains 1.2pps below the pre-pandemic rate.
- **The total weekly hours worked** increased by 4.8% over the quarter to an estimated 27.5 million hours per week. This was 18.6% higher than the same period last year and 5.6% below the pre-pandemic level.
- **The payroll employees** were 1.1% higher than the previous month and 3.1% higher than July 2020. The number of employees has increased for eight consecutive months and are now at their

highest level on record.

Estimates calculated from the Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) [ref. 18] indicate **employee jobs** in NI increased over the quarter but decreased over the year to 771,410 jobs in March 2021. The UUEPC [ref. 19] warns it may be 2024 before all jobs lost during Covid-19 are replaced.

Self-employed workers dropped by 45,000 since the start of the pandemic, leaving a total of 91,000 at the end of June 2021. This is the lowest in 22.5 years [ref. 20].

Estimates from the Labour Force Survey April-June 2021 [ref. 21] indicate:

- **The NI unemployment rate** increased over the quarter (0.4pps) and over the year (1.2pps) to 3.8%. The unemployment rate is 1.5pps above the pre-pandemic rate. The percentage **unemployed for one year or more (long-term)** was 33.8% in NI. The **youth (16-24) unemployment rate** was 12.0%.
- **The NI economic inactivity rate** decreased over the quarter (-1.3pps) and over the year (-0.9pps) to 25.9%. The NI economic inactivity rate is 0.1pps above the pre-pandemic rate. The NI economic activity rate remains above the UK rate (21.1%) and is the highest of the twelve UK regions.
- The experimental **Claimant Count** decreased over the month by 8,000 to 50,000 (5.1% of the NI workforce) in July 2021. This is 22% less than the recent peak in May 2020; and 64% more than the pre-pandemic count in March 2020.
- There were 250 **confirmed redundancies** in July, a decrease of 18% compared with the last month, taking the annual total to 5,750, taking the annual total to 5,750. This total was 81% higher than the previous year.

The **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS)** has supported employers in paying their employees during the pandemic. A cumulative total of 286,500 jobs have been supported [ref. 22]. Despite the winding down of the furlough scheme, the UUEPC [ref. 23] was reasonably optimistic this would not lead to a big spike in unemployment.

The **Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS)** was introduced for those self-employed or a member of a partnership who have lost income due to the pandemic. Since the scheme's start, a total of 280,000 claims have been made with the total value of claims £754m [ref. 24].

Ireland

Economic Growth

The Quarterly national accounts estimates for Ireland released by the CSO [ref. 25] show that **GDP** increased by 6.3% in the Q2-2021 relative to Q1-2021. As a result, the level of GDP was 22% higher year-on-year. However, caution should be exercised when interpreting annual changes in the Q2, as the comparison is with an exceptionally low base from a year ago, during the first lockdown.

In line with the re-opening of the economy, **Modified domestic demand (MDD)** – a proxy for the domestic economy – grew by 8.4% quarter-on-quarter, with personal consumption up by 12.5% and

modified investment up by 6%. As a result, the domestic economy has surpassed the level immediately preceding the pandemic (Q4-2019) for the first time since the start of the crisis.

On the external front, exports grew by 6.5% quarter-on-quarter with strong contributions from both goods and services. While the multinational sector drove **growth in exports**, the traditional sector also recorded significant growth in the quarter. Imports were up 5% in the second quarter, with contributions from goods and service imports reflecting inter alia the recovery in MDD and continued increase in royalty imports by the multinational sector.

On an **international basis**, the economic recovery in Ireland has been much quicker than in other countries. The overall GDP of the European Union only grew by 2.1% while Irish GDP grew by 6.3% relative to the previous quarter [ref. 26]. We must be cognisant however, that GDP does not provide an accurate representation of what is going on in the domestic economy, given the size of the multinational sector.

The recovery in the domestic economy is expected to continue in the third quarter, although at a more modest pace. Following the sharp rebound in retail sales activity in the second quarter, **retail sales volumes** [ref. 27] decreased by 1.7% in July compared to June, while a range of ultra-high frequency indicators (e.g. payments data) showed positive but easing rates of growth in spending in August.

While strong GDP growth is likely for this year, it will be driven **increased exports** linked to “contract manufacturing”, with limited impact on domestic value-add in Ireland.

In the **Stability Programme Update (SPU)**, MDD growth of 2.5% was projected [ref. 28]. There will likely be an upside to this projected growth as a result of the successful vaccination programme and the earlier than anticipated re-opening of the economy. MDD growth of 7.5% was forecast for next year, as pent-up consumer and business demand is released, along with an unwinding of a portion of the excess household savings built up during the pandemic. However, this is likely to ease if the growth rate for this year turns out to be higher than expected.

Labour Market

The CSO’s upper-bound **unemployment rate** (covid-adjusted) for August estimated an unemployment rate of 12.4% [ref. 29]. The Stability Programme Update (SPU) forecasts unemployment to fall to around 11% by the end of the year and to around 7.25% by 2022. These forecasts will be updated with the publication of the Budget 2022.

The latest data shows around 140,000 people are receiving support through the **Pandemic Unemployment Payment** (as of 6th September) [ref. 30], a decrease of approximately 3,500 from the previous week. The number of recipients of the PUP has fallen by just over 70% from the 2021 peak of around 485,000 in early February, with large declines seen throughout June and July, though this moderated sharply in August. As of 6 September, approximately 625,000 people received some form of state income assistance, which is around half of the 1.2 million peak on 5th May 2020 [ref. 31].

State income supports will begin to wind down from mid-September, when full-time students exit the PUP scheme. Other cohorts will commence transition from the PUP from October this year through to February 2022. Persons leaving the PUP will transition to either employment, unemployment benefit, or inactivity.

Sustainable Prosperity

Both jurisdictions are now currently embarking on an ‘energy transition’, which involves a significant reduction in **carbon emissions** and a shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources. In 2019, the UK became the first major economy to pass laws to end its contribution to global warming by 2050, requiring it to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050. Similarly, Ireland has committed to key targets for reducing emissions. Ireland set itself a 2030 target for greenhouse gas (emissions not covered by the EU Emissions Trading System (non-ETS), of -30% compared to 2005 levels, a renewable energy contribution to the EU target of at least 34.1% and a contribution to the EU level target of 62 171 GWh of primary and 56 159 GWh of final energy savings by 2030. Ireland also supports the EU 2050 target of net climate neutrality. However, neither jurisdiction is expected to achieve their respective 2020 targets which are extremely challenging.

As identified in the PEACE PLUS socio-economic profile, in both jurisdictions, the sectors which produce the largest greenhouse gas emissions are agriculture, transport and energy supply. Most sectors have seen gradual reductions in their emissions, however agriculture and transport have seen emissions output increase in recent years. The meat and dairy industries are particularly important to both regions in terms of trade and employment. Increasing emissions in the transport sector have been driven by increasing population and associated demand for transportation.

Shifts in economic activity to reduce aggregate production emissions are likely to be concentrated in the high emissions sectors, which are concentrated in three broad NACE sectors in Ireland: Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, Industry and Transportation and Storage, with Agriculture and Fishing. As a result, jobs in these sectors are considered to be the most vulnerable in the transition to a low carbon economy. This is likely to disproportionately affect male employment in the border counties of Ireland.

Over the last decade, NI has been improving its generation of electricity from renewable sources. The contribution of **renewable energy** to the total supply of electricity over the period 2008/2009 to 2018/2019 has increased from 9% to almost 45%. In Ireland, renewable electricity accounted for over 60% of renewable energy used in 2017, sourced predominately from wind and hydroelectricity. While transport represents the single largest sector of energy use, it has the lowest share of renewables. This is also the case for heating and cooling.

Transport is crucial to the economy providing businesses with links to their customers and markets as well as providing individuals with access to employment and services such as education, health and leisure. There is a strong and continued reliance on cars for transport in the Programme area, with low public transport use. The reliance on private cars as a means of transportation reflects the predominantly rural nature of the eligible regions with lower population densities and limits the viability for greater public transport infrastructure. However, there have been some developments in motorway infrastructure in recent years in an effort to increase connectivity. Investment in roads via national road grants in the border counties of Ireland has amounted to €394m since 2012.

Energy efficiency data indicates that the vast majority of the housing stock in the Programme area is not energy efficient, a factor which is likely to be affecting demand for energy and increasing energy costs to heat homes. Most homes in all 11 council areas in NI have a poor Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of D, with only 0.14% of the housing stock having a good EPC rating of A. Most of the border counties of Ireland housing stock has a low C Building Energy Rating (BER) score. Housing stock in Leitrim has the poorest energy efficiency ratings, with 23% of houses in the county having an F or G BER

score.

Protecting **biodiversity** is essential for sustaining the natural environment. Biodiversity and variety of life in both jurisdictions and elsewhere on earth is decreasing at an alarming rate. Regional studies indicate that there is continued and significant loss of priority habitats and species. While improvements have been made in designated site conditions, overall, the current status of approximately 80% of habitats across the Programme area are considered to be in unfavourable / bad conservation status. There is an increasing understanding of the key role of biodiversity to help address fundamental societal issues. These include climate change and population health, in addition to enhancing economic performance. As such, it is important that the goal of improving standards of living is aligned with the goal of protecting the natural environment that underpins the economy, and that decision making takes into consideration all societal as well as private costs.

The Programme area also boasts an attractive natural landscape. The border area of Ireland is the source of Ireland's two longest rivers, the Shannon and the Erne and has a considerable coastal area and unique mountain ranges. Along with its strong cultural and heritage assets, this makes it suitable for a strong tourism base. However, a balance must be struck between attractiveness from a tourism perspective and ensuring that these areas of natural vibrancy remain viable into the future.

SWOT Analysis

The **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats (SWOT)** analysis outlined below, broadly represents the key conclusions drawn from the socio-economic profile commissioned by the SEUPB at the start of 2020 and taking account of an addendum prepared in late 2020 on the impacts of Covid-19 which has exacerbated many of the threats and weaknesses.

Strengths

Despite the challenges that exist, the Programme area has many strengths which can be built upon. Between 2008 and 2018, total Research and Development expenditure in NI has more than doubled. In addition, 25% of households have access to full fibre broadband internet services, the highest rate of any Devolved Administration. Pre-COVID-19, there were low unemployment levels and declining poverty rates in the Programme area, however this is something which will be impacted significantly in the short term. There are a decreasing number of graduates unemployed after 6 months in the Programme area and SME export intensity compares well with the Irish average. Again, at the start of 2020 before the impacts of the pandemic were felt, there were a decreasing number of young people who are Not in Employment Education or Training (NEETs) in the Programme area.

The Programme area also sees increased levels of educational attainment with high levels of enrolment in STEM subjects at Higher Education Institutions in NI. We can also note that there is an established Social Enterprise and Community/Voluntary Sector in both jurisdictions providing services and support across a range of areas.

There has been a decrease in the number of crimes and incidents with a sectarian motivation in NI since 2005/06 coupled with an increase in cultural diversity in both jurisdictions. Increasing investment in road infrastructure has been noted and there is an increased life expectancy in the Programme area.

There are key areas of high importance for biodiversity in the Irish counties in the border area including

natural habitats, native woodland and clean waters.

It is also noted that there has been a growth in the generation of electricity from renewable sources in NI with waste recycling at the highest rate ever recorded. Whilst high air quality and drinking water quality in the Programme area has been recorded, more can be done to protect human health and the environment.

Finally, there has been a significant decrease in the number of security-related incidents in NI over the last decade.

Weaknesses

Whilst progress has been made developing, promoting and supporting good relations, significant segregation remains and a large number of interface barriers still exist in NI.

The Irish counties in the border area has the lowest productivity out of all areas in Ireland and NI productivity lags significantly behind that of the rest of the UK. The Programme area is underrepresented in high value-added activities and the private sector is dominated by a large, indigenous SME base with few larger enterprises in this region.

NI has a high ratio of low-paid to high-paid jobs with high levels of long-term unemployment. This will likely be exacerbated by the ongoing pandemic. There are also high levels of economic inactivity, with a large proportion of people having no qualifications. Inactivity has been increasing in the Irish counties in the border area in recent years and labour force participation rates have not recovered since the previous financial crisis.

NI has the lowest number of business start-ups or 'births' as a percentage of active enterprises and lowest percentage of innovation active firms than any other region in the UK. It also has relatively fewer patent applications. The Irish counties in the border area have the lowest levels of overall export intensity in Ireland.

There are decreasing enrolments in higher level education institutes in the Irish counties in the border area. The Programme area has lower access to internet rates than in rest of UK and Ireland. Indoor 4G coverage in urban areas is significantly lower in NI than rest of UK.

Relatively low levels of overseas tourism in the Irish counties in the border area have been recorded, but again tourism and hospitality has been impacted significantly by the pandemic.

NI emissions from agriculture and transport are above UK average and are increasing.

There is an older age demographic profile with higher old age dependency ratios.

A number of health inequalities persist in NI, with the most deprived areas reported as having poorer levels of health and/or health outcomes. From a mental health perspective, suicide rates have been increasing since the year 2000.

There is a reliance on cars in NI and the Irish border counties area with limited public transport availability.

Many of the points outlined above will be impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Opportunities

Opportunities could enable more enterprises to become more export orientated and undertake Research and Development, including from appropriate linkages with the Programme's Functional Area. This in particular, would enhance the potential of high value added sectors of the economy.

There are also opportunities as part of the recovery process from the pandemic to build on the strong tourism performance and continue to take further opportunities to attract overseas tourism.

There are opportunities to continue to encourage cross border education cooperation across NI and Ireland to promote Shared and Integrated Education for children from different backgrounds.

There are real benefits in optimising skills via matching demand in the Programme area. There are opportunities to promote sports participation further in order to facilitate improved physical and mental health.

There are also opportunities to reduce segregation through the removal of interface barriers. Encouragement should be provided through further investment in emission reducing activities including energy saving alternatives, renewables and green economy.

Opportunities exist for nature-based solutions [ref. 32] to deliver for biodiversity, water quality, climate mitigation, job creation (high and low skilled) as well as mental and physical health.

Opportunities also exist for the agriculture sector to become less emission intensive and the marine area offers potential to generate more renewable energy.

Threats

The impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic already pose a significant threat both in the short term and longer term. The UK's exit from EU has many potential implications for cross -border activities, trade, economic performance and security/peace. The impact of this is likely to be most keenly felt in the border counties in Ireland. Global trade tensions pose threats to exports and environmental threats are increasing – NI is falling behind on UK emissions targets and Ireland has failed to reach its 2020 emissions targets, in addition to threats relating to biodiversity, floods, coastal erosion, and climate change.

Employment in a number of sectors is at risk as the transition to low carbon economy and increased automation threatens jobs. There are emerging skills shortages in sectors that could provide economic growth and jobs in both jurisdictions.

The threat to NI from terrorism remains severe. There is a rising number of incidents and crimes with a

racial motivation coinciding with an increased number of ethnic communities in the Programme area.

The Implications of the UK Exit from the EU

During the Stakeholder Consultation conducted by the SEUPB in late 2019 / early 2020, a number of threats were identified in relation to the implications of the UK's exit from the EU. These included:

- Social challenges such as the impact on community relations and disruption to community and social cohesion
- Economic challenges including for example, the impact on productivity and trade, the prices of goods and services and freedom of movement;
- Political challenges including the potential for destabilisation of the peace process, compromised good relations within Northern Ireland and between the two regions, greater polarisation on national identity issues, and potential for increased paramilitary and dissident activity; and
- Challenges such as the fear of the return of a hard border and legislative complexities around changing governance.

The challenges identified for the wider economic and territorial development of the Programme area also included Brexit and the associated political, legislative and economic challenges, particularly the uncertainty that exists about its potential impact across business and trade generally, the environment, tourism and labour market. Whilst this is an evolving process, at the time of the development of the PEACE PLUS Programme, the SEUPB has ensured that where relevant, the Programme can assist with these challenges as they may become apparent on a cross border basis.

The PEACE PLUS Programme has been drafted to allow for support for activities that will address these challenges and opportunities as they arise over the coming years. Specifically, there will be investment within the economic regeneration theme to include support for business and skills development, and further within the partnership and collaboration theme there will be support for strategic planning and cementing cross border collaboration at various levels between government (local and national), communities and citizens more generally.

COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic will have profound and lasting socioeconomic consequences. Therefore, it is vital that appropriate mitigation measures are incorporated within the PEACE PLUS Programme design.

A socio-economic profile of the Programme area for the PEACE PLUS Programme (2021-2027) was prepared by the NICS Economist Profession in the Department of Finance and the Irish Government Economic & Evaluation Services in the Departments of Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform. The issues and needs identified within the Socio-economic Profile will remain and many will be exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic from an economic and social perspective. With that in mind, the SEUPB has ensured the Programme is developed to assist, in part, to the recovery in the years ahead for people and communities. All areas of the Programme will provide investment opportunities for many sectors to address some of the known aftershocks of the pandemic.

The SME Development and Transition Programme will be designed to incorporate supports to enable businesses to adapt and thrive in the post COVID-19 economic environment.

Our young people, particularly those from disadvantaged areas, have been identified as the demographic group most likely to be impacted by the legacy of the COVID-19 pandemic. The education sector has been challenged by COVID-19 at all levels, including early childhood, primary and secondary.

The PEACE PLUS Youth Programme will build on the PEACE4Youth Programme and be further developed to include supports for barriers to engagement including childcare, language and disability access.

The extent of health inequalities has been further highlighted by the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. However, the pandemic also illustrated the potential for ICT to transform healthcare services. This learning will be incorporated within the Collaborative Health and Social Care Programme, to ensure a more resilient health and social care sector, which contributes to improved population health and wellbeing and reduced health inequalities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on many victims and survivors across the region. The Victims and Survivors' Programme will provide an opportunity to build upon the work of the Peace IV programme to further improve the lives of victims and survivors and create a more cohesive society.

Lessons Learnt from past experience

The primary purpose of the PEACE Programmes and Interreg Programmes has been to progress peace and reconciliation between communities and to promote economic and social cohesion in Northern Ireland and the Border Counties of Ireland.

Whilst there has been much progress over the last twenty years in relation to peace and reconciliation, there remain long running and difficult issues that continue to have an impact. Building positive relations is not a smooth journey as it is impacted by contemporary events, both positive and negative.

The need to engage and inspire the children and young people of the Programme area was to the forefront of the previous PEACE Programme and this remains significant in the context of the contribution to improved good relations and enhanced social inclusion.

The promotion of practical cross community and cross border contact has been fundamental to PEACE and Interreg programmes since their inception and critical to progressing economic and social cohesion and reconciliation between communities.

It is difficult to provide a single, summative comment about the impact of the current Programmes. However, impact evaluations across a broad range of objectives have demonstrated the relevance of project strategies (even in the changing context as a result of Covid-19) and many positive impacts have been recorded. A very broad range of target groups has been reached – for example, school children, young people, individual clients, academic organisations, businesses, individuals, community organisations.

Implementation evaluation has highlighted a number of issues on which the SEUPB should focus, including for example, the need for enhanced pre-application development support and implementation

support; the need to focus on capacity building training for project beneficiaries to develop skills to lead, manage and deliver projects; a greater focus on outputs-results indicators.

The SEUPB has sought to understand why organisations and groups within the Programme area who could benefit from PEACE and Interreg activity have either not become involved nor engaged fully in programme initiatives to date. The SEUPB wishes to ensure all sections from society can benefit from peace-building activity and that the design of PEACE PLUS should result in better levels of engagement and quality applications which support the delivery of outcomes and impacts within communities where there is need for intervention.

In conclusion, past experience has influenced the shape of the PEACE PLUS programme - affirming strategic direction, priorities for action and target groups. The Programme will continue to address the needs arising from the peace process and the remaining challenges to peace and reconciliation. The promotion of social inclusion will remain a focal point. North south collaboration on a range of territorial challenges will be strengthened. Collectively these elements of the Programme will build stability and prosperity within the Programme area.

Community Focus in the PEACE PLUS Programme

The SEUPB have developed the Programme on the basis of actions and initiatives which will **support, develop, engage and enable communities throughout the Programme area**. The SEUPB has created a Programme which requires meaningful community engagement and in particular, with statutory agencies to consider new innovative approaches to deliver community engagement at a local level.

The SEUPB has championed from the outset of the development work, the need for the Programme themes and structure to encompass civil society at all levels, in relation to the development and implementation of actions and initiatives to address societal and community challenges.

Programme Legacy

The Programme will focus on those communities and organisations best placed to deliver real and lasting impacts and critically within communities and groups that have been most affected by the legacy of the troubles/conflict. Communities will be encouraged to take pride in and promote an understanding of their culture, customs and heritage through initiatives funded by the Programme, particularly those associated with regeneration.

The Programme will continue to empower communities to work together, cementing relationships through initiatives which sustain peace and leave a legacy of friendship and understanding. Engaging those most marginalised in society to become involved in improving their physical and social environment, through activities that will regenerate local areas.

Investment in our young people providing opportunities for them to improve their life chances, skills, education, confidence building, creative and sporting activities and encouraging social entrepreneurship. The Programme will also focus on enhancing community leadership and ensuring that a new generation of leaders are appropriately skilled to deal with the challenges of sustaining peace and good relations.

Investment in the economy, providing support for SMEs, research and innovation in specific areas of

need, and targeted interventions in sectors most adversely affected by the impact of Covid-19. Support for the skills programmes diversification will be available. Investment in the Social Economy also has the potential to make a significant contribution to the economy and community, and therefore support will be offered to provide an ecosystem to underpin and grow this sector. SEUPB will ensure that there is complementarity with the Smart Specialisation strategies in Ireland including RIS3.

There will be a renewed focus on rural and border communities in particular, through initiatives which will support the regeneration and reimagining of rural areas which have been most affected from a lack of investment for decades and suffer in relation to geographic isolation and a lack of opportunity and access to services. Rural and border areas, which have been left behind, are suffering population decline and are going to encounter the most negative effects of Brexit have been considered, and actions that will encourage cross border activity for the mutual benefit of citizens and the economy have been incorporated into the Programme.

The delivery of iconic spaces, new and restored through the Programme will help to create new vibrant public realms in our cities, towns and villages and will leave a lasting and shared legacy.

Supporting a sustainable future on a cross border basis by enhancing nature protection, biodiversity and green infrastructure as well as mitigating and adapting to climate change, is critical to future economic and social development and will define the legacy left for future generations.

The legacy will be a lasting contribution to sustaining a peaceful and shared society, something which the Programmes have contributed to since 1995. However, now more than ever, the Programme will have the need for legacy to be at the core of the programme to respond to longer term challenges.

Programme area with Flexibility and Eligibility of Applicants from Outside the Programme area

The core Programme area includes Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland, namely Counties Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Louth, Monaghan and Sligo. This is the core Programme area, however there is also flexibility to include partners or activity outside the core Programme area if appropriate.

This new programme represents an exciting opportunity to continue to fund peace building interventions alongside activities which help to make the Programme area a more prosperous, healthier place to live through funding areas of mutual interest on a cross border basis.

Cross border collaboration is not strictly limited to the administrative borders of the Programme but has a flexible geography depending on the topic concerned. Using the concept of a **functional area** will allow for organisations and institutions not based in the core programme area to get involved in projects, by linking with partners within the core Programme area. For example, to have a good research project, the involvement of a university which is in the capital of the country may be necessary; to reduce the risks of floods project, it may be necessary to reintroduce wetlands or dams upstream of a river but outside the programme area; and to facilitate cross border health care/service it may be beneficial to develop a project with neighbouring regions and with national authorities. For some other interventions, the solution is purely local, corresponding to an area much smaller than the core Programme area.

Hence, problem-solving may be based on the functional areas rather than on the administrative boundaries defining the Programme. What matters is that the benefits of the project are significant for the Programme area. The location of the project or the location of the partners is not a defining matter. The use of

functional areas will be set out within detailed Call documents under each of the Investment Areas during Programme implementation.

Conclusion

The challenges and opportunities described require a Programme that will deliver impact, focused on the remaining challenges in regards to peace and reconciliation and also further cement north south collaboration on a range of territorial challenges, to build stability and prosperity within the Programme area.

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1.3. Justification for the selection of policy objectives and the Interreg-specific objectives, corresponding priorities, specific objectives and the forms of support, addressing, where appropriate, missing links in cross-border infrastructure

Reference: point (c) of Article 17(3)

Table 1

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
1. A more competitive and smarter Europe by promoting innovative and smart economic transformation and regional ICT connectivity	RSO1.1. Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies	Th2.1. Delivering Economic Regeneration and Transformation	Peace and prosperity are synonymous with one another, and peace is a necessary pre-condition for sustained economic growth. In turn, the prosperity arising from a stable and rising economy can help foster and embed peace. Conflict and peace both shape and are shaped by the economy, hence why this Policy Objective is selected for the PEACE Plus Programme and why delivering economic regeneration and transformation is a priority for the Programme area. Investing in the exploitation of knowledge and information plays an important role in economic development and contributes to the overall wealth of a country. Research and development plays an important role in the innovation process resulting in new or more effective processes, services and technologies which enables businesses to better position themselves to achieve and maintain a competitive advantage in an increasingly global marketplace. The Programme area experiences low levels of entrepreneurship and innovation generally, which in turn contribute to the high ratio of low to high paid jobs in the Programme area (a low level of added value sectors) and comparatively higher levels of unemployment. Investment in research, development and collaborative innovation is key to the economic development of the Programme area as it will deliver new products or processes and a correlated increase in Programme area productivity, export levels and sustainable employment. A more innovative culture is being fostered across the Programme area. Investment in research, development and innovation in NI more than doubled in the period 2008-2018, although UK and Irish levels of research and development expenditure significantly lag behind when compared internationally. There is an opportunity to build on this positive cultural shift by further developing and enhancing cross border research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies in a manner which will deliver economic regeneration and transformation. Given the size of the

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
			financial envelope, the specificities of Interreg programmes and the limited experience with financial instruments, PEACE PLUS will support operations using grants.
1. A more competitive and smarter Europe by promoting innovative and smart economic transformation and regional ICT connectivity	RSO1.3. Enhancing sustainable growth and competitiveness of SMEs and job creation in SMEs, including by productive investments	Th2.1. Delivering Economic Regeneration and Transformation	Peace and prosperity are synonymous with one another, and peace is a necessary pre-condition for sustained economic growth. In turn, the prosperity arising from a stable and rising economy can help foster and embed peace. Conflict and peace both shape and are shaped by the economy, hence why this Policy Objective is selected for the PEACE Plus Programme and why delivering economic regeneration and transformation is a priority for the Programme area. The Programme area is characterised by small to medium indigenous enterprises (SMEs), and as a consequence the SME base acts as a major source of employment in the Programme area and is an important foundation for economic growth. Economically, the Programme area experiences lower productivity compared to national and European levels, it is under-represented by high value-added sectors and has the lowest level of export intensity nationally. There is a need to provide continued strategic and structured support to the SME sector, particularly those entities with high growth and export potential. PEACE PLUS investment will encourage SMEs to operate at scale through clustering and cross border collaboration, to innovate, and to engage in the low carbon circular economy, while increasing competitiveness, productivity and export levels. Investment will enhance the sustainable growth and competitiveness of SMEs, against the background of p post Covid economic landscape. It will result in the development of a stronger Programme area SME base, which will deliver higher levels of productivity (and therefore higher profits and wages), exports and sustainable employment. Given the size of the financial envelope, the specificities of Interreg programmes and the limited experience with financial instruments, PEACE PLUS will support operations using grants.
2. A greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy and resilient Europe by	RSO2.2. Promoting renewable energy in accordance with Renewable Energy	Th5.1. Supporting a Sustainable Future	The UK and Ireland governments are committed to addressing climate change, climate change adaptation and resilience building. The Programme area must play its role in the development of a greener and resilient Europe. Supporting a sustainable future where businesses and people can flourish is a priority for the

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
<p>promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate change mitigation and adaptation risk prevention and management, and sustainable urban mobility</p>	<p>Directive (EU) 2018/2001[1], including the sustainability criteria set out therein</p>		<p>Programme area. Promoting energy efficiency and reducing Green House Gas (GHG) emissions can contribute to this priority. Reducing the reliance on fossil fuels and increasing the uptake of renewable energy sources is a global priority. The UK and Irish governments are committed to reducing GHG emissions to Net Zero by 2050. Heat production is a significant contributor to GHG emissions. In 2018, 39 % of Ireland’s energy expenditure was on heat and in both Ireland (92%) and Northern Ireland (>90%) fossil fuels were dominant in producing this heat [ref. 1]. Decarbonisation of heat is central to the EU, UK and Irish strategies to meet the 2050 net zero GHG targets. Research indicates this will require renovation and retrofit of energy efficiency measures and renewable heating in buildings, and increased use of energy from renewable sources [ref. 2]. Geothermal energy can provide consistent, sustainable and more cost-effective low carbon energy (for heating and cooling). It is proposed to build the knowledge, skills and capacity required to develop a policy framework and encourage Programme area investment in the geothermal technology sector. Increased usage of this renewable energy source will result in environmental, social and economic benefits for the Programme area. Cross border collaboration to progress the replacement of fossil fuels by indigenous renewable energy in the heat sector will render the economies of Ireland and NI less dependent on imports and will enhance the security of energy supply, in line with EU, Irish and UK policies. This will also make a significant contribution to the achievement of local, national and EU CO2 emission reduction targets. Given the size of the financial envelope and the specificities of Interreg programmes, PEACE PLUS will use grants. REF: [ref. 1] SEAI (2019) Energy in Ireland – 2019 Report. https://www.seai.ie/publications/Energy-in-Ireland-2019-.pdf [ref. 2] EC (2018) A Clean planet for all. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0773</p>
<p>2. A greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy and resilient Europe by promoting clean and fair</p>	<p>RSO2.4. Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience taking into account eco-</p>	<p>Th5.1. Supporting a Sustainable Future</p>	<p>The governments of the UK and Ireland are committed to addressing climate change, climate change adaptation and resilience building. The Programme area must play its role in the development of a greener and resilient Europe. Supporting a sustainable future where businesses and people can flourish is a priority for the Programme area. The promotion of climate change adaptation,</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate change mitigation and adaptation risk prevention and management, and sustainable urban mobility	system based approaches		<p>disaster risk prevention and disaster resilience can contribute to this priority. The marine and coastal environment is an important part of island society. Ocean processes play a key role in regulating our climate. Marine and coastal ecosystem services provide significant socioeconomic benefits - including waste assimilation, coastal defence, carbon absorption, recreational, heritage, fisheries and aquaculture. The marine and coastal environment in the Programme area is under pressure from both human activities and climate change, posing a threat to cultural and natural resources, coastal infrastructure and public assets. Similar challenges are being faced around the world and there is global recognition of the need to build resilience and accelerate adaptation to climate change at our coasts. Across the Programme area climate change is accelerating coastal erosion, impacting on the coastal environment, communities and infrastructure. Climate change and human activities are impacting on habitats and species, and there is particular concern around the impact on marine birds. Ocean acidification and rising temperatures are impacting on foodwebs and pelagic ecosystems. Also, there is increasing recognition of the need to protect coastal habitats such as sand dunes, salt marsh, seagrass, kelp and shellfish beds that provide nature-based solutions including coastal protection and carbon storage. Hence, investment to support a cross border approach to the protection of the marine and coastal environment and to the development of climate change adaptation and mitigation is proposed. These will result in improved knowledge and management of the transboundary marine and coastal environment which will increase the resilience of ecosystems, coastal communities, infrastructure and the marine economy. Given the size of the financial envelope and the specificities of Interreg programmes, PEACE PLUS will use grants.</p>
2. A greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy and resilient Europe by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the	RSO2.5. Promoting access to water and sustainable water management	Th5.1. Supporting a Sustainable Future	<p>The governments of the UK and Ireland are committed to addressing climate change, climate change adaptation and resilience building. The Programme area must play its role in the development of a greener and resilient Europe, as anticipated by the Policy Objective. Supporting a sustainable future where businesses and people can flourish is a priority for the Programme area. The promotion of sustainable water management can contribute to this priority. Water is a limited resource and needs to be carefully managed to protect human life and</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
circular economy, climate change mitigation and adaptation risk prevention and management, and sustainable urban mobility			<p>the natural environment. Water resources are a key environmental and economic asset within the Programme area and deliver significant benefits to society through ecosystem services. These include wastewater assimilation, angling, tourism and culture / heritage. The main pressures on the status of water bodies (and thereby water quality) are climate change and anthropological activities such as those pertaining to agriculture, urban development (waste-water impacts) and negative human behaviours. The INTERREG VA Programme has illustrated the benefits of adopting a cross border collaborative approach to adequately address the requirements of the Water Framework Directive, through a holistic approach to the management of water resources requiring the protection and restoration of the water environment, including rivers, lakes, shared waters, coastal waters and groundwaters. Further investment in these activities will improve the quality of transboundary and water bodies across the Programme area. There is now a better understanding of the role of nature-based solutions and sustainable catchment management and how these should be incorporated as part of the restorative measures. This includes facilities and technologies for waste water treatment. The transboundary nature of lakes and rivers and the shared waters across the Programme area presents an opportunity for strategic collaboration to improve water quality and promote sustainable water management across the Programme area through sharing of assets, resources, knowledge and expertise. Given the size of the financial envelope, the specificities of Interreg programmes and the limited experience with financial instruments, PEACE PLUS will support operations using grants.</p>
2. A greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy and resilient Europe by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate change mitigation and	RSO2.7. Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution	Th5.1. Supporting a Sustainable Future	<p>The UK and Irish governments are committed to addressing climate change, climate change adaptation and resilience building. The Programme area must play its role in the development of a greener and resilient Europe. Supporting a sustainable future where businesses and people can flourish is a priority for the Programme area. Strategic cross border investment to protect and enhance our natural environment can contribute to this priority. Biodiversity is the variety of life on earth and is crucial to human life. Healthy ecosystems produce vital services including clean air, fresh water, food and fuel sources as well as carbon storage and flood alleviation. Threats to biodiversity including loss of habitats,</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
adaptation risk prevention and management, and sustainable urban mobility			nutrient enrichment and invasive alien species reduce the resilience of nature, rendering it more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, and so must be addressed. Biodiversity is decreasing at an alarming rate. Approximately 80% of habitats across the Programme area are considered to be in unfavourable / bad conservation status. The Programme area as a single biogeographic area hosts a wide range of habitats and species of international significance. These include wetland habitats such as blanket and raised bogs and fen sites. However, due to the poor or fragmented condition of many of these habitats, they are no longer contributing ecosystem services to their full potential. There is an opportunity to promote cross border co-operation to facilitate the recovery of selected habitats and priority species across the Programme area, building on learning from INTERREG VA Programme which invested in the protection of 4,500ha of designated wetland habitats and species. Investment will be directed towards further delivery of conservation actions and other necessary conservation measures required to redress biodiversity loss and preserve important environmental, social and economic assets. Also, invasive alien species are most effectively tackled on a cross border basis. The establishment and management of cross border Nature Recovery Networks will have environmental benefits and result in increased levels of collaboration, which contribute to improved peace and reconciliation. Given the size of the financial envelope and the specificities of the Interreg programmes, PEACE PLUS will use grants.
3. A more connected Europe by enhancing mobility	RSO3.2. Developing and enhancing sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility, including improved access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility	Th5.2. Supporting a Better Connected Future	Developing a climate resilient, intelligent, secure sustainable and intermodal transport is essential for the economic and social and territorial cohesion of the Programme area which in turn will contribute to the further development and embedding of peace and reconciliation. Supporting a better connected future is a priority for the Programme area in order that businesses and people can flourish. Transport is essential for our economic and social development. It is a crucial economic driver as it connects businesses with markets and facilitates employee mobility. From a social perspective transport provides access to education, health and leisure services. Therefore, it is essential to invest in transport infrastructure and connectivity. From a peace and reconciliation perspective, investment in sustainable transport is important to build upon current levels of cross border

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
			<p>mobility. Transport is recognised as being one of the main contributors to CO2 emissions across the Programme area and this relates to the climate responsibilities of both jurisdictions (including progress towards net zero emissions). Investment in public transport is necessary. The PEACE PLUS Programme will invest in the cross border rail services between Belfast and Dublin on the Core Corridor for 2027, in the form of new rolling stock to facilitate the introduction of an hourly service and the reduction of emissions from rail and through encouraging a modal shift. New rail rolling stock to facilitate the introduction of an hourly service between Dublin and Belfast. Investment in transport will be a catalyst for regeneration and economic growth, in particular on the economic corridor between Belfast and Dublin, including the border counties in both Northern Ireland and Ireland. Given the size of the financial envelope, the specificities of Interreg programmes and the limited experience with financial instruments, PEACE PLUS will support operations using grants.</p>
<p>4. A more social and inclusive Europe implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights</p>	<p>RSO4.2. Improving equal access to inclusive and quality services in education, training and lifelong learning through developing accessible infrastructure, including by fostering resilience for distance and on-line education and training</p>	<p>Th2.2. Delivering Socio-Economic Regeneration and Transformation</p>	<p>Peace and prosperity are synonymous with one another, and peace is a necessary pre-condition for sustained socio-economic growth. In turn, the prosperity arising from a stable and rising economy can help foster and embed peace. Conflict and peace both shape and are shaped by the economy, hence why delivering socio-economic regeneration and transformation is a priority for the Programme area, while simultaneously contributing to the objective of a more social and inclusive Europe. There is a need and opportunity for the Programme area to build on its indigenous potential and diversify the economy where needed, boosting economic growth and creating more jobs. To achieve this requires investment in people's skills, as at present the Programme area experiences: - low levels of entrepreneurship and innovation which contribute to the high ratio of low to high paid jobs and comparatively higher levels of unemployment; - a high level of economic inactivity in Northern Ireland and rates have been increasing in the border counties of Ireland in recent years; - lower levels of qualifications, contributing to increasing long term unemployment levels. There is an emerging skills shortage in sectors such as Information, Communication and Technology (ICT), FinTech and financial services which would contribute to significant economic growth sectors. However, further expansion of these key sectors is</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
			<p>being limited by skills shortages. Through the PEACE PLUS programme there is an opportunity to address emerging skills gaps in high value sectors on a cross border area basis, to future proof the Programme area and encourage cross border labour mobility. This is vital in efforts to restore and rebuild the economy, particularly post COVID-19. Developing skills is fundamental to achieving increased productivity and employment in the Programme area and higher levels of cross border labour mobility. Given the size of the financial envelope, the specificities of Interreg programmes and the limited experience with financial instruments, PEACE PLUS will support operations using grants.</p>
<p>4. A more social and inclusive Europe implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights</p>	<p>RSO4.3. Promoting the socioeconomic inclusion of marginalised communities, low income households and disadvantaged groups, including people with special needs, through integrated actions, including housing and social services</p>	<p>Th2.2. Delivering Socio-Economic Regeneration and Transformation</p>	<p>Conflict and peace both shape and are shaped by the economy, this is why delivering socio-economic regeneration and transformation is a priority for the Programme area, while simultaneously contributing to the objective of a more social and inclusive Europe. Digital connectivity is essential to support the economic and social development of the rural areas (as marginalised communities) in the Programme area and its competitiveness. Promoting usage broadband services is vital to encourage inward investment, particularly in rural areas. Such investment will also ensure that existing enterprises can fully participate and expand in an increasing digital and global marketplace. The border counties of Ireland have the lowest share of households with access to internet in 2018 of any Irish area. Access to internet in Northern Ireland has improved in recent years but it still below the UK average. There are significant differences in availability and access to broadband in urban and rural areas. Both governments have significant plans in place to improve telecommunications infrastructure development, including the implementation of high speed broadband. Complementing with the above mentioned plans, through the PEACE PLUS programme, increasing access to and awareness of telecommunications presents an opportunity for the creative use of Information and Communication Technology, to establish more desirable places for people to live and work, creating Smart Towns and Villages which deliver improved social and economic outcomes across the Programme area. Promoting digitization in rural areas as more citizens, communities and organisations access and utilize ICT for both economic and social innovation will contribute to a more balanced and inclusive</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
			economy, creating a more resilient, vibrant and prosperous Programme area. ICT awareness can enable integrated actions focusing on regeneration of deprived urban and rural areas, including actions that address interlinked needs in the fields of education, health and housing, linked with community empowerment and awareness raising. Given the size of the financial envelope and the specificities of Interreg programmes, PEACE PLUS will use grants.
4. A more social and inclusive Europe implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights	RSO4.5. Ensuring equal access to health care and fostering resilience of health systems, including primary care, and promoting the transition from institutional to family- and community-based care	Th4. Healthy and Inclusive Communities	Collaborative Health and Social Care Health and social care is an area in which collaborative cross border approaches are proven to deliver considerable benefits to the citizen and the Programme area. There are now established arrangements for the provision of specific cross border healthcare services, much of it funded by the Interreg programme. New patterns of cross border patient mobility have been created, contributing to improved health outcomes and decreased inequalities. Hence, healthy and inclusive communities is a priority for the Programme area. There is an opportunity to build and expand on this work within other clinical areas which are suitable for cross border collaboration including obesity, geriatric medicine and children's mental health. Addiction services is a particular area where there is benefit from a collaborative and cross border management approach, particularly where there are links to intergenerational trauma related to the legacy of the conflict, and where interventions can lead to improved peace and reconciliation, given the incorporation of a whole family / community support dimension. Currently, the health and social care service sector faces monumental challenges to meet rising demand in a constrained budgetary environment. The more efficient delivery of health and social care services across the Programme area can be achieved by augmenting existing collaborative relationships and services on a cross border basis. This will improve the health and well-being of people living in the Programme area, by enabling them to access services in the most appropriate setting to their needs, including primary, family and community based care. The development of innovative community based health care interventions, which complement statutory provision (including social enterprise models), will be supported. The overall result is a more resilient health and social care sector in the Programme area, which contributes to improved population health and wellbeing and reduced health inequalities. Given the size of the

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
			financial envelope, the specificities of Interreg programmes and the limited experience with financial instruments, PEACE PLUS will support operations using grants.
4. A more social and inclusive Europe implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights	ISO4.1. PEACE PLUS Co-designed Local Community PEACE Action Plans	Th1. Building Peaceful and Thriving Communities	<p>Co-designed Local Community Peace Action Plans Whilst the Programme area is experiencing a period of relative post conflict stability, the significance of continued peace and reconciliation to the ongoing socio-economic development and prosperity of the Programme area cannot be underestimated. As such, building of peaceful and thriving communities is a priority for the Programme area, requiring continued and considered investment in proven pathways to reconciliation that allow individuals and communities to thrive in a post-conflict transformational society. Such investments should result in a legacy of change, achieved through physical and social improvements, which facilitate increased social inclusion and improved cross community and cross border relations.</p> <p>Everyone in the Programme area has the potential to contribute to a more peaceful and prosperous society. Peace and reconciliation initiatives at the local level are an important component of peace building. PEACE PLUS Local Community Action Plans will facilitate widespread participation across the Programme area at the local level, building on the preceding local authority managed PEACE Action Plans which have formed a key element of previous PEACE Programmes and complementing the community planning structures introduced across the Programme area. It is anticipated that sustainable, collaborative, inclusive and cross community partnerships will be created to deliver development priorities that build peace and reconciliation at the local level. PEACE PLUS Local Community Action Plans will enable diverse partnerships, led by the local councils, and involving people from different and diverse backgrounds collaborating to identify and deliver priority projects within their communities. These activities will make a significant contribution to community development, building positive relations, the creation of a more cohesive society and lasting peace and reconciliation at the local Programme area level. Given the size of the financial envelope, the specificities of Interreg programmes and the limited experience with financial instruments, PEACE PLUS will support operations using grants.</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
4. A more social and inclusive Europe implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights	ISO4.2. PEACE PLUS Empowering Communities	Th1. Building Peaceful and Thriving Communities	<p>Empowering Communities Whilst the Programme area is experiencing a period of relative post conflict stability, the significance of continued peace and reconciliation to the ongoing socio-economic development and prosperity of the Programme area cannot be underestimated. As such, building of peaceful and thriving communities is a priority for the Programme area, requiring continued and considered investment in proven pathways to reconciliation that allow individuals and communities to thrive in a post-conflict transformational society. Such investments should result in a legacy of change, achieved through physical and social improvements, which facilitate increased social inclusion and improved cross community and cross border relations. All citizens, communities and organisations across the Programme area have a role in creating a more peaceful and prosperous society and should be empowered to fulfil this potential. This will be achieved through a focus on: - participation by smaller organisations who can affect real change at a grass roots level, to make a direct contribution to peace and reconciliation within their community. Supported projects will enable community groups to work on shared challenges, on a cross community and or cross border basis. Central to all projects will be significant and sustained contact between culturally diverse communities; - the institutional capacity of voluntary and statutory organisations, including those responsible for delivering services in the Programme area (such as transport, health, education and housing services) to embed and promote peace and reconciliation practice; and - support for community-based justice interventions, which will help build peace by establishing relationships and understanding. Hence, an Empowering Communities initiative will enable organisations of all sizes, communities and citizens to engage in peace building activities and contribute to the creation of a more cohesive, peaceful and prosperous society. Given the size of the financial envelope, the specificities of Interreg programmes and the limited experience with financial instruments, PEACE PLUS will support operations using grants.</p>
4. A more social and inclusive Europe implementing the European Pillar of Social	ISO4.3. PEACE PLUS Building Positive Relations	Th1. Building Peaceful and Thriving Communities	<p>Building Positive Relations Whilst the Programme area is experiencing a period of relative post conflict stability, the significance of continued peace and reconciliation to the ongoing socio-economic development and prosperity of the Programme area cannot be underestimated. As such, building of peaceful and</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
Rights			<p>thriving communities is a priority for the Programme area, requiring continued and considered investment in proven pathways to reconciliation that allow individuals and communities to thrive in a post-conflict transformational society. Such investments should result in a legacy of change, achieved through physical and social improvements, which facilitate increased social inclusion and improved cross community and cross border relations. Great strides have been made in improving cross community relations across the Programme area. However, within Northern Ireland, significant levels of spatial and social segregation still exist between the two largest communities. In addition, the Programme area has become much more culturally diverse in recent years. The rapidly changing demography of the Programme area is compounding residual community relationships challenges, which are a legacy of the conflict. Building positive relations through providing support for projects which transcend local boundaries, where cultural diversity is celebrated and people can live, learn and socialise together, free from prejudice, hate and intolerance - has the potential to contribute to significant peace and reconciliation across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland. Building and sustaining relationships between groups and individuals from different community and cultural backgrounds is key. There will also be a focus on providing support to minority groups and organisations which have traditionally been marginalised in society. Given the size of the financial envelope, the specificities of Interreg programmes and the limited experience with financial instruments, PEACE PLUS will support operations using grants.</p>
4. A more social and inclusive Europe implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights	ISO4.4. PEACE PLUS Re-imaging Communities	Th1. Building Peaceful and Thriving Communities	<p>Re-imaging Communities Whilst the Programme area is experiencing a period of relative post conflict stability, the significance of continued peace and reconciliation to the ongoing socio-economic development and prosperity of the Programme area cannot be underestimated. As such, building of peaceful and thriving communities is a priority for the Programme area, requiring continued and considered investment in proven pathways to reconciliation that allow individuals and communities to thrive in a post-conflict transformational society. Such investments should result in a legacy of change, achieved by creating strong and cohesive communities, increased social inclusion and improved cross community and cross border relations. A legacy of the conflict are the prevalent</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
			<p>and persistent physical and psychological divisions that limit society. In some areas, the point of segregation is denoted by physical or invisible boundaries referred to as ‘interface barriers’. Many people live highly segregated lives, residing, learning, working and socialising within their traditional communities, particularly those communities which have been most impacted by the conflict. This situation can also compound the level of social isolation experienced by minority and marginalised communities, including newcomers. The PEACE Programme has previously invested in shared spaces and services, which have helped increase cross community and cross border integration. There is opportunity to build on this investment, to create new shared space facilities and re-image existing spaces to facilitate increased and shared usage, in urban and rural areas. The transformation of the appearance and perception of community spaces and assets has the potential to facilitate increased levels of sustained cross community and cross border contact. Bringing people from different communities together, by means of the community spaces, assets and services, will benefit and embed peace and reconciliation. Given the size of the financial envelope, the specificities of Interreg programmes and the limited experience with financial instruments, PEACE PLUS will support operations using grants.</p>
<p>4. A more social and inclusive Europe implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights</p>	<p>ISO4.5. PEACE PLUS Shared Learning Together Education Programme</p>	<p>Th3. Empowering and Investing in Our Young People</p>	<p>Shared Learning Together Continued peace and reconciliation are essential for the ongoing socio-economic development of the Programme area. To ensure long-term peace and prosperity, empowering and investing in our young people is a priority for the Programme. Whilst the current generation of young people has not experienced direct conflict to the extent their parents and grandparents did, they live with the legacy of the conflict. This situation impacts upon many areas of their lives. Many have grown up in predominately single identity areas and attended single identity schools. Combined, these factors have resulted in limited, if any, opportunity to develop relationships with those from different community, cultural and political backgrounds. This has often engendered feelings of fear and mistrust in our young people. Primary and second level education provision in Northern Ireland remains predominately segregated, with only 7.5% of pupils attending formal integrated schools (20/21 data) [ref. 1]. While this situation does not directly contribute to conflict, it impedes the creation of a more peaceful,</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
			<p>prosperous and cohesive, society. School settings in the border counties of Ireland have become increasingly multi-cultural in recent years, presenting diversity related challenges. There is a need to build upon the learning and experience of the successful PEACE IV Shared Education Programme in order to address these challenges. There will be a further focus on fostering an integrated ethos, to be considered as relating to integrated education as per the current definition (2021) in the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989, as well as sustained further development of existing shared education relationships, while ensuring the involvement of early years settings, schools and non-formal education/youth organisations yet to participate in the Programme. It will result in a broader participant base, to include the wider school community and schools in other parts of Ireland, where involvement will contribute to increased social inclusion and enhance the experience and learning of the participants. Given the size of the financial envelope and the specificities of Interreg programmes, PEACE PLUS will use grants. REFERENCES: [ref.1] https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/integrated-schools</p>
<p>4. A more social and inclusive Europe implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights</p>	<p>ISO4.6. PEACE PLUS Youth Programme</p>	<p>Th3. Empowering and Investing in Our Young People</p>	<p>PEACE PLUS Youth Programme Continued peace and reconciliation are essential for the ongoing socio-economic development of the Programme area. To ensure long-term peace and prosperity, empowering and investing in our young people is a priority for the Programme area. A considerable number of our young people have grown up in socio-economically disadvantaged areas, which have experienced under investment as a direct result of the conflict. In many cases, this situation has contributed to lower levels of educational attainment and an inability to participate in the diverse labour market, which would improve their individual life circumstances, while enhancing peace and reconciliation. Evidence suggests that many young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), particularly those from areas most impacted by the legacy of the conflict in Northern Ireland, require targeted support. These individuals can have deep emotional and social needs, can be at risk of violence or paramilitary activity and generally do not readily engage in support programmes. There is an opportunity to build on the learning from the PEACE IV Peace4Youth Programme which has delivered positive outcomes for many marginalised and disadvantaged young</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
			<p>people across the Programme area, developing the personal capabilities of participants in a manner which has improved their individual capacity and consequently their life circumstances. It also enhanced the cultural awareness of participants and as such improved cross community and cross border relations amongst young people from across the Programme area. Under the PEACE PLUS Programme, an emphasis will be placed on enhancing the employability of participants and developing their entrepreneurial and or social enterprise potential, through skills development. Investment in youth development will contribute to a more cohesive, peaceful and prosperous society. Given the size of the financial envelope, the specificities of Interreg programmes and the limited experience with financial instruments, PEACE PLUS will support operations using grants.</p>
<p>4. A more social and inclusive Europe implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights</p>	<p>ISO4.7. PEACE PLUS Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing</p>	<p>Th3. Empowering and Investing in Our Young People</p>	<p>Continued peace and reconciliation are essential for the ongoing socio-economic development of the Programme area. To ensure long-term peace and prosperity, empowering and investing in our young people is a priority. Approximately 20% of children and adolescents in NI experience mental health problems, a rate which is 25% higher than the national average [ref. 1]. There are higher levels of mental health problems experienced by young people living in those areas which have been most impacted by four decades of conflict. Health inequalities mean that many young people with acute mental health issues are not receiving the requisite levels of support. This problem is particularly prevalent in rural areas across the Programme area, where young people’s mental health problems are compounded by higher levels of isolation. In Ireland, the My Word Survey involving 19,000 young people undertaken by University College Dublin and Jigsaw found the number of teenagers reporting severe anxiety had doubled since 2012 [ref. 2]. The level of mental health difficulties, including self-harm and suicide among children and young people specifically, has become a particularly acute issue across the Programme area. PEACE PLUS will invest in youth mental health and wellbeing, building on the pilot youth mental health initiative of PEACE IV which incorporates non-formal mental health activities, and on current models of mental health support which provide accessible, age appropriate, early prevention and recovery activities. The aim is to develop an improved understanding of youth mental health and wellbeing issues and to develop best practice non-formal mental</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
			<p>health supports and services outside of clinical settings on a cross border collaborative basis including around intergenerational trauma. This investment will result in an increased number of resilient young people with the level of capacity required to be in control of their own lives and to make a positive contribution within their communities, and to peace and reconciliation across the Programme area. Given the size of the financial envelope and the specificities of Interreg programmes, PEACE PLUS will use grants. REF: [ref. 1] Child and Adolescent Mental Health in Northern Ireland, 2017, NICCY [ref. 2] https://www.myworldsurvey.ie/content/docs/My_World_Survey_2.pdf</p>
<p>4. A more social and inclusive Europe implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights</p>	<p>ISO4.8. PEACE PLUS Rural regeneration and Social Inclusion</p>	<p>Th4. Healthy and Inclusive Communities</p>	<p>Rural Regeneration and Social Inclusion Our rural communities have significant strengths but also face considerable challenges, which can result in inequalities within the Programme area. These inequalities include reduced access to key services (such as health, education and transport), higher levels of social isolation and reduced ability to engage in economic activity. This situation impacts the rural citizen at all stages of their life cycle, thus creating disparities between urban and rural areas. 36.6% of the population of Northern Ireland lives in rural areas. In the border counties of Ireland, the percentage of the population which is rural, ranges from 33.1% (County Louth) to 89.9% (County Leitrim) [ref. 1]. Given this context, creating healthy and inclusive rural communities is a priority for the Programme area. There is a need to provide strategic investment, which will address the challenges faced by rural communities and allow them to thrive and reach their full economic, social and environmental potential. A strengths-based approach will be adopted, enabling rural communities to build upon their considerable advantages, including higher rates of entrepreneurialism and social enterprise and educational attainment, as well as the surrounding natural heritage and environmental assets. Investment areas will be support rural community development and sustainable regeneration and social inclusion through improved access to key services; social enterprise development; development of green infrastructure to improve health and wellbeing, and rural and tourism enterprise. Supported projects will be designed to deliver significant and sustained contact between diverse rural communities and as such make a substantial contribution to more peaceful and prosperous rural areas. A more cohesive society will be created</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
			<p>through increased provision of shared spaces and services. Given the size of the financial envelope, the specificities of Interreg programmes and the limited experience with financial instruments, PEACE PLUS will support operations using grants. REFERENCES: [ref. 1] https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-urli/urbanandrurallifeinireland2019/agesexandgeographicaldistribution</p>
<p>4. A more social and inclusive Europe implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights</p>	<p>ISO4.9. PEACE PLUS Victims and Survivors</p>	<p>Th4. Healthy and Inclusive Communities</p>	<p>Victims and Survivors In recognition of the needs of those who have suffered from the trauma of the conflict, the PEACE PLUS Programme will develop the capacity for services to meet the ongoing needs of victims and survivors. The needs of victims and survivors are unique, complex, far ranging and diverse. Therefore, provision of the most appropriate supports requires careful and sensitive management. It is important to provide victims and survivors with sufficient levels of the most appropriate support for health and wellbeing, as well as to allow for deep healing and lasting peace and reconciliation. The definition of a victim and survivor as interpreted within the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, is an individual who can be categorised by any or all of the following: - Someone who is or has been physically or psychologically injured as a result of or in consequence of a conflict-related incident; - Someone who provides a substantial amount of care on a regular basis for an individual mentioned in paragraph (a); or - Someone who has been bereaved as a result of or in consequence of a conflict-related incident. Currently, the PEACE IV Programme supports an integrated, outcomes based, community led support programme for victims and survivors. This has improved the lives of many victims and survivors across the Programme area. It is proposed that the PEACE PLUS Programme will build on the evidence base for the most appropriate interventions and support, providing health and wellbeing supports and resilience-based capacity building programmes and providing additional supports to victims and survivors. Investment in this area should bring about improved access to services by victims and survivors and enhanced understanding of the effects of the past conflict upon the present, in a manner which contributes to the objective of peace and reconciliation and the creation of a more cohesive society. Given the size of the financial envelope, the specificities of Interreg programmes and the</p>

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
			limited experience with financial instruments, PEACE PLUS will support operations using grants.
6. Interreg: A better Cooperation Governance	ISO6.3. Build up mutual trust, in particular by encouraging people-to-people actions (strands A, D and, where appropriate, strand B)	Th6. Building and Embedding Partnership and Collaboration	Maintaining and Forging Relationships Between Citizens Trust between partners, organisations and citizens is an essential requirement for effective cross-border cooperation. Trust needs to be built and maintained. This particularly important in areas where this trust has been impacted as a result of the existence of the border and the issues pertaining to it. In the post conflict transformational society of the Programme area, building and embedding partnership and collaboration is a priority in order that trust can be built between citizens. Trust building is a longer term process that will require the forging and maintenance of relationships between citizens. In the Programme area it is also about fostering cooperation-minded future generations. Strengthening trust between citizens is a foundation for cross border cooperation. Funding of trust building measures amongst citizens and communities will take the form of a range of: - small project activities on a cross border basis, such as promoting citizens' cooperation around specific shared challenges, for example climate change; and - people to people projects, such as events and activities that develop mutual understanding and cement partnerships/collaboration. The measures will establish firmer relationships between communities and organisations, greater levels of trust and collaboration and will make a strong contribution to the social and civic cohesion of the cross-border region. Given the size of the financial envelope, the specificities of Interreg programmes and the limited experience with financial instruments, PEACE PLUS will support operations using grants.
6. Interreg: A better Cooperation Governance	ISO6.6. Other actions to support better cooperation governance (all strands)	Th6. Building and Embedding Partnership and Collaboration	Strategic Planning and Engagement Whilst the INTERREG and PEACE Programmes have made a significant contribution within the Programme area to cementing cross border collaboration, challenges still persist, some of which have arisen in recent years. Diverging national legislations, incompatible administrative processes and differences in institutional capacity can create obstacles which in turn can adversely affect cross-border economic and labour market integration, trade and services provision and the quality of life of citizens in the border regions. In 2016, the European Commission identified legal and administrative

Selected policy objective or selected Interreg specific objective	Selected specific objective	Priority	Justification for selection
			<p>obstacles for the Northern Ireland-Ireland border (UK-IE). Some of the sectors where obstacles exist are: industry and trade (exportation of goods, cross-border commercial services, e-commerce, cross-border economic advice services and commuter flows); labour market education (mobility of trainees, students and teachers, and access to tertiary education); social security system (access to social insurance system); and access to health care services and medical treatment. These obstacles are particularly relevant to the challenges that have arisen in form of Brexit and the Covid-19 emergency. Given this context it is a priority for the Programme area to build and embed partnership and collaboration and to take actions to support a better cooperation governance. A strategic planning and engagement approach will be required to address specific challenges and opportunities and to target obstacles to cooperation in relevant sectors. Strategic stakeholders, including regional and cross border authorities, will be engaged. Institutional and sectoral collaboration and partnership will be needed. There will be funding support to enable joint development and management of strategies; cooperation capacity building; and identification of solutions to reduce obstacles to cross-border cooperation. Investment will result in the improved capacity for cooperation at strategic level in relevant sectors. Given the size of the financial envelope, the specificities of Interreg programmes and the limited experience with financial instruments, PEACE PLUS will support operations using grants.</p>

2. Priorities

Reference: points (d) and (e) of Article 17(3)

2.1. Priority: Th1 - Building Peaceful and Thriving Communities

Reference: point (d) of Article 17(3)

2.1.1. Specific objective: ISO4.1. PEACE PLUS Co-designed Local Community PEACE Action Plans

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

PEACE PLUS Local Community Action Plans (Art. 14(2) Regulation (EU) 2021/1059)

2.1.1.1 Related types of action, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

PEACE PLUS Local Community Action Plans: Action Plans will be produced for each of the 17 local authority areas across the Programme area. These will be designed to complement the community planning structures introduced across the Programme area. The overarching plans will comprise component localised plans for defined local areas, which collectively extend to all parts of the individual local authority district. The Co-designed Local Community Action Plans will enable diverse partnerships, led by the local authorities, to establish priority actions for their local areas and collectively address these, in a manner which will make a significant and lasting contribution to peace and reconciliation at the local Programme area level.

The PEACE PLUS Programme will invest in the establishment of Local Community Peace Partnerships in each of the District Electoral Areas (DEAs) which comprise the 11 local authority areas in Northern Ireland; and each of the Local Electoral Areas (LEAs), which comprise each county council area in the border counties in Ireland. Or, local authorities may wish to adopt an alternative approach to clustering areas, whilst ensuring the PEACE PLUS Action Plans produced for their district incorporate all local areas therein. Membership of the Local Community PEACE PLUS Partnerships will reflect the diverse nature of our communities (including newcomers) and be managed to ensure the desired levels of representation and inclusivity.

Each Local Community Peace Partnership will be resourced to work with communities to develop a priority action plan for their individual area; which combined will form an overall PEACE PLUS Action Plan for each of the 17 local authority areas in the Programme area. Actions within the localised plans will span the range of social, environmental and economic interventions included within the PEACE PLUS Programme. However, principally, the plans will be centred around three core themes:

1. **Local community regeneration and transformation;**
2. **Thriving and peaceful communities;** and
3. **Building respect for all cultural identities.**

It will be important that the process to identify priority actions and the interventions subsequently supported, demonstrate significant peace and reconciliation progress. Projects supported by the Co-designed Local Community Action Plans should result in increased levels of social inclusion and cross community integration. By design, related actions should incorporate the level of sustained contact between those from different community, cultural and political backgrounds, required to achieve significant attitudinal and behavioural change. Support will be provided to help quality assure the plans from a peace and reconciliation perspective.

This **area of the Programme** will enable and empower local community partnerships to self-determine and deliver priority projects on a cross community basis; which will result in improved, shared and inclusive local services, facilities and spaces; and make a significant and lasting contribution to peace and reconciliation.

It will **result** in the development of PEACE PLUS Action Plans which benefit the Programme area as follows:

- The creation of sustainable, inclusive and cross community partnerships, which will make a significant contribution to community planning process and peace building in the Programme area;
- Community ownership of the PEACE PLUS Action Plans and ongoing engagement throughout their delivery;
- The management of significant and sustained cross community collaboration at the local level to deliver established development priorities; and
- The inclusion of all local areas across the Programme area, including those who may not previously have participated within PEACE Programme activities.

Actions to be supported

The PEACE PLUS Programme will invest in the creation of a Local Authority Action Plan for each local authority area in the Programme area. These plans will comprise component Co-designed Local Community Action Plans prepared for defined local areas, which collectively extend to all parts of each individual local authority district. To enable this process, the types of actions to be supported will include:

The preparation of 17 overarching PEACE PLUS Action Plans (one for each local authority area in the Programme area), each comprising an agreed number of Co-designed Local Community Action Plans which collectively incorporate all local areas within each individual district. The Co-designed Local Community Peace Action Plans will centre around three established themes (i) community regeneration and transformation; (ii) thriving and peaceful communities; and (iii) building respect for all cultural identities. The proposed plans will span the range of activities included within the PEACE PLUS Programme, for example: youth development programmes; health and wellbeing initiatives; community regeneration projects; redevelopment and reimagining of existing community facilities for shared usage; initiatives to build positive relations; social innovation; social enterprise and education and skills development programmes; all designed to address issues of racism and sectarianism, increase social inclusion and promote civil leadership.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they are not expected to have any significant negative environmental impact due to their nature.

2.1.1.1b. Definition of a single beneficiary or a limited list of beneficiaries and the granting procedure

Reference: point (c)(i) of Article 17(9)

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2.1.1.2. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2 - Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)
Th1	ISO4.1	PSO1.1	Co-designed PEACE PLUS action plans implemented	PEACE PLUS Action Plan	17	17

Table 3 - Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
Th1	ISO4.1	PSR1.1	People from different communities engaged jointly in the implementation of local action plans	People	0.00	2021	110,000.00	MA monitoring system	See Methodology Paper

2.1.1.3. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

- Local communities;
- Local authorities.

2.1.1.4. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

There is no planned use of territorial tools.

2.1.1.5. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

There is no planned use of financial instruments.

2.1.1.6. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4 - Dimension 1 – intervention field

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th1	ISO4.1	ERDF	152. Measures to promote equal opportunities and active participation in society	94,160,000.00

Table 5 - Dimension 2 – form of financing

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th1	ISO4.1	ERDF	01. Grant	94,160,000.00

Table 6 - Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th1	ISO4.1	ERDF	33. Other approaches - No territorial targeting	94,160,000.00

2.1.1. Specific objective: ISO4.2. PEACE PLUS Empowering Communities

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

Empowering Communities Programme (Art. 14(2) Regulation (EU) 2021/1059)

2.1.1.1 Related types of action, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

Empowering Communities Programme: All citizens, communities and organisations across the Programme area have a role in creating a more peaceful and prosperous society and should be empowered to fulfil this potential. The Empowering Communities Programme will enable organisations of all sizes to engage in peace building activities and contribute to the creation of a more cohesive society. There are three strands within this programme, which are distinct and yet are interlinked.

Strand 1: The Empowering Communities to Embed Peace Small Grants Programme will support the delivery of people to people projects by local community organisations, through the provision of a small grants programme. It will enable a bottom-up approach, designed to empower people and organisations at a grass roots level, to make a direct contribution to peace and reconciliation within their community. It will incorporate measures to encourage participation by smaller organisations with limited administrative resources and will be streamlined in nature, with simplified bureaucracy and access.

Supported projects will enable community groups to work on shared challenges, on a cross community and or cross border basis. The thematic approaches will vary but central to all projects will be significant and sustained contact between culturally diverse communities. This is in addition to the incorporation of outcomes clearly linked to embedding peace and reconciliation. Where appropriate, this will incorporate activities designed to address and transform sectarian attitudes and behaviours. Related actions will build respect and a mutual appreciation for cultural diversity and inclusivity. If necessary, investment will be made in single identity work, where this will lead to initial and sustained contact with individuals and groups from different community, cultural and political backgrounds. Participation will be encouraged by those from minority and marginalised groups.

Strand 2: The Institutional Capacity Development Programme will ensure issues related to Trust and Leadership are supported through collaborative actions between key voluntary, statutory and political institutions across multiple levels. The objective of these actions will be to build the capacity of such organisations to develop new models of service delivery, which contribute to peace and reconciliation. These may include key services, including those related to transport, health, education, media and housing, which have significant potential to contribute to increased peace and reconciliation.

Strand 3: The Community-Based Safety Interventions Programme will support projects with the potential to improve peace and reconciliation within local communities. It will facilitate collaborative approaches by the statutory, community and voluntary sectors, designed to address anti-social behaviours

which undermine peace and reconciliation. In this way, the Programme will contribute to the creation of strengthened and more cohesive local communities.

This **area of the Programme** will promote positive relations characterised by respect, where cultural diversity is celebrated and people can live, learn and socialise together, free from prejudice, hate and intolerance.

It will **result** in communities and organisations at all levels across the Programme area, empowered to fulfil their potential in the creation of a more peaceful and prosperous society.

Actions to be supported

The types of actions to be supported will include:

- **Peace and reconciliation projects:** Anti-sectarian initiatives (funded through a small grants programme) which incorporate significant and sustained contact between individuals and groups from different community, cultural and political backgrounds; the outcomes of which are clearly linked to improved community relations. The thematic focus of these programmes will span a broad range of areas and groups, including but not exhaustive: children and young people; sport; arts and culture; history; victims & survivors; ex-prisoners; members of the security services; health and wellbeing; community education; community safety; community regeneration; and social innovation / enterprise;
- **Institutional Capacity Projects:** Projects designed to support the development of the institutional capacity of key voluntary, statutory and political institutions; including projects with an emphasis on trust and leadership; which will lead to creation of new models of service delivery; and
- **Local community safety projects:** Interventions designed to contribute to increased levels of peace and reconciliation.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they are not expected to have any significant negative environmental impact due to their nature.

2.1.1.1b. Definition of a single beneficiary or a limited list of beneficiaries and the granting procedure

Reference: point (c)(i) of Article 17(9)

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2.1.1.2. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2 - Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)
Th1	ISO4.2	PSO1.2a	Organisations jointly engaged in local level projects	Organisations	160	960
Th1	ISO4.2	PSO1.2b	Organisations jointly engaged in institutional capacity projects	Organisations	0	16

Table 3 - Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
Th1	ISO4.2	PSR1.2a	People from different communities engaged in local level projects	People	0.00	2021	24,000.00	MA monitoring system	See Methodology Paper
Th1	ISO4.2	PSR1.2b	Organisations with increased institutional capacity due to their participation in cooperation activities	Organisations	0.00	2021	16.00	MA monitoring system	See Methodology Paper

2.1.1.3. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

- Local communities;
- Minority and marginalised communities;
- Community and voluntary sector organisations;
- Key voluntary, statutory and political institutions.

2.1.1.4. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

There is no planned use of territorial tools.

2.1.1.5. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

There is no planned use of financial instruments.

2.1.1.6. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4 - Dimension 1 – intervention field

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th1	ISO4.2	ERDF	152. Measures to promote equal opportunities and active participation in society	25,680,000.00

Table 5 - Dimension 2 – form of financing

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th1	ISO4.2	ERDF	01. Grant	25,680,000.00

Table 6 - Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th1	ISO4.2	ERDF	33. Other approaches - No territorial targeting	25,680,000.00

2.1.1. Specific objective: ISO4.3. PEACE PLUS Building Positive Relations

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

Building Positive Relations Programme (Art. 14(2) Regulation (EU) 2021/1059)

2.1.1.1 Related types of action, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

Building Positive Relations Programme: This will provide support for projects which transcend local boundaries and have the potential to achieve significant peace and reconciliation across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland. These projects should involve cross border dimensions where possible and appropriate to the intervention.

The Programme will place particular emphasis on providing support to those most marginalised within our communities. These include but this is not an exhaustive list: women; older people; minority communities (including migrants and refugees and those from the Traveller Community); those living with disability; those with issues arising from the legacy of the conflict including ex-prisoners and security service personnel; members of the Traveller Community; and those from the LGBT community.

Supported projects will enable individuals and communities to collaborate across a broad range of areas of mutual interest. These will include community development; parenting; arts and culture; sport; education; and social innovation / enterprise. Projects should be inclusive in nature and facilitate significant and sustained contact between those from different community, cultural and political backgrounds. Initiatives should evidence a commitment to tackling challenging and complex issues including sectarianism, which can limit peace and reconciliation progress.

This **area of the Programme** will promote positive relations characterised by respect, where cultural diversity is celebrated and people can live, learn and socialise together, free from prejudice, hate and intolerance.

It will **result** in an increase in the percentage of the Programme area population which has relationships with and as such a greater understanding of those from different cultural backgrounds; and feels part of a wider, more diverse community.

Actions to be supported

The types of actions to be supported will include:

- **Capacity building:** Projects which help build the capacity of Programme area and local organisations, through cross community and cross border collaboration; Projects which develop new community leaders and enhance the capacity of existing community leaders and volunteers to promote and facilitate peace and reconciliation;
- **Building Positive Relations:** Support for conflict resolution interventions (including anti-sectarian initiatives) which contribute towards building positive relations; Projects which build, improve and sustain relationships between and within communities by addressing issues of trust, prejudice and intolerance; Projects which showcase the benefits of cross community and cross border contact to achieve greater community cohesion; Community justice interventions that contribute to peace building and positive relations; Projects which engage those with opposing and dissenting views; which if not challenged will contribute to continued segregation and endanger the peace process;
- **Increasing Participation:** Projects which increase civic participation, including those by minority and newcomer communities (this may include the requirement for language support); Projects which increase minority groups and women's participation in public and political life - to reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society through the promotion of reconciliation amongst all communities;
- **Cultural expression:** Projects which facilitate positive cultural expression within diverse communities, and will lead to mutual trust and respect for each other; Projects related to sensitive and inclusive cultural expression and celebration, leading to cross community engagement and understanding.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they are not expected to have any significant negative environmental impact due to their nature.

2.1.1.1b. Definition of a single beneficiary or a limited list of beneficiaries and the granting procedure

Reference: point (c)(i) of Article 17(9)

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2.1.1.2. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2 - Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)
Th1	ISO4.3	PSO1.3	Organisations jointly engaged in regional level projects	Organisations	0	116

Table 3 - Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
Th1	ISO4.3	PSR1.3	People from different communities engaged jointly in regional level projects	People	0.00	2021	58,000.00	MA monitoring system	See Methodology Paper

2.1.1.3. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

- Local communities;
- Minority and marginalised communities;
- Community and voluntary sector organisations.

2.1.1.4. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

There is no planned use of territorial tools.

2.1.1.5. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

There is no planned use of financial instruments.

2.1.1.6. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4 - Dimension 1 – intervention field

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th1	ISO4.3	ERDF	152. Measures to promote equal opportunities and active participation in society	29,960,000.00

Table 5 - Dimension 2 – form of financing

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th1	ISO4.3	ERDF	01. Grant	29,960,000.00

Table 6 - Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th1	ISO4.3	ERDF	33. Other approaches - No territorial targeting	29,960,000.00

2.1.1. Specific objective: ISO4.4. PEACE PLUS Re-imaging Communities

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

Re-Imaging Programme (Art. 14(2) Regulation (EU) 2021/1059)

2.1.1.1 Related types of action, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

Re-Imaging Programme: This is a programme of transformative re-imaging projects, which will create new shared spaces for use by all communities; or increase the shared usage of existing facilities. It will result in an increased number of individuals and groups utilising shared spaces and accessing shared services.

The PEACE Programme has helped to increase cross community and cross border integration across the Programme area by investing in the creation of shared spaces and services. This has included iconic spaces which have created prominent physical symbols of a changing society, as well as shared spaces developed by interface communities on a cross community basis. This has led to significant and sustained attitudinal change in key areas across the Programme area. There is an opportunity to build upon this model to:

- Provide diverse communities with the support and resources to self-determine and co-design transformative shared, inclusive spaces and services on a cross community basis within their areas; and
- Facilitate the re-imaging of existing facilities (including those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic), with an emphasis on those areas which have been most impacted by the conflict, in a way which will deliver maximum social and economic benefits.

It will be important to develop innovative programmes of activity and service provision which maximise the cross community and or cross border usage of the shared spaces. The programme should have an equal emphasis upon the creation of new and re-imaged community spaces within urban and rural areas.

This **area of the Programme** will create a more cohesive society through an increased provision of shared space and services, which will benefit and embed peace and reconciliation.

It will **result** in an increase in the number of individuals and groups regularly accessing new or re-imaged shared spaces, which have been co-designed on a cross community basis; and spending recreational time or accessing services therein.

Actions to be supported

The types of actions to be supported will include:

- **Collaboration for re-imaging Projects:** Actions which will enable key representatives and leaders of different communities to collaborate and co-design re-imaging projects on a cross border and or cross community basis, which will result in significant social and economic regeneration and transformation;
- **Re-imaging Projects:** Actions which will result in the re-imaging of existing spaces; including the removal of sectarian symbols and emblems to encourage increased shared usage and deliver significant peace and reconciliation outcomes for the entire community; The development of re-imaged and new facilities which will accommodate social enterprise and social innovation projects, which will benefit the entire surrounding community through cross community usage; this should include facilities left vacant post the COVID-19 pandemic;
- **Shared spaces and shared facilities:** The development of new and inclusive shared spaces which will have a transformative effect on local areas and enable shared usage by groups and individuals from different community, cultural and political backgrounds; particularly within those communities which have been most impacted by the conflict and experience poverty, inequality and social exclusion as a direct result; The development of shared facilities and programmes which enable significant and sustained multi and inter-generational usage on a cross border and or cross community basis and include a focus on minority groups;
- **Supporting usage of shared spaces and shared facilities:** Programmes which address the levels of sectarianism and racism which prevent shared usage of spaces and access to shared services; Programmes which support the sustained cross community usage of new and re-imaged community spaces and facilitate access to shared services. These programmes may encompass a wide range of thematic areas including children and young people; health and wellbeing; social enterprise; tourism and heritage; education; arts and culture; and sport and recreation.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they have been assessed as compatible under the RRF DNSH technical guidance.

2.1.1.1b. Definition of a single beneficiary or a limited list of beneficiaries and the granting procedure

Reference: point (c)(i) of Article 17(9)

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2.1.1.2. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2 - Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)
Th1	ISO4.4	PSO1.4	Capital shared space jointly developed and implemented	Shared spaces	0	10

Table 3 - Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
Th1	ISO4.4	PSR1.4	Participants from different communities engaged jointly within new shared spaces	Participants	0.00	2021	50,000.00	MA monitoring system	See Methodology Paper

2.1.1.3. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

- Local communities;
- Minority and marginalised communities;
- Community and voluntary sector organisations.

2.1.1.4. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

There is no planned use of territorial tools.

2.1.1.5. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

There is no planned use of financial instruments.

2.1.1.6. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4 - Dimension 1 – intervention field

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th1	ISO4.4	ERDF	127. Other social infrastructure contributing to social inclusion in the community	64,200,000.00

Table 5 - Dimension 2 – form of financing

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th1	ISO4.4	ERDF	01. Grant	64,200,000.00

Table 6 - Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th1	ISO4.4	ERDF	33. Other approaches - No territorial targeting	64,200,000.00

2.1. Priority: Th2.1 - Delivering Economic Regeneration and Transformation

Reference: point (d) of Article 17(3)

2.1.1. Specific objective: RSO1.1. Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

The Innovation Challenge Fund

2.1.1.1 Related types of action, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

The Innovation Challenge Fund: This will support high level, commercially focused research, development and innovation within key Programme area growth sectors; resulting in increased productivity and higher export levels; and sustainable employment. It will deliver major change innovation projects, which result in lasting local and national economic and social benefits.

Investment in collaborative innovation is key to the economic development of the Programme area and beyond. Innovation leads to increased levels of productivity, which in turn deliver higher export volumes and sustainable employment. It is important to support innovation at all levels but with a particular emphasis on Programme area level, major change projects, which will deliver significant benefit to the Programme area.

The Innovation Challenge Programme will invest in cross border consortia groups comprising stakeholders who wish to collaborate on high level innovation projects, which will deliver local and national benefits. Investment will result in the development of strong and entrepreneurial, innovation led eco-systems, which encompass partnerships within specific sectors, in which there is the potential for competitive advantage. The Programme will provide key complementary support for R&I elements of locally led development plans and area-based strategies such as activities included within the Programme area investment plans including the City and Growth Deals, and the National Planning Framework, which can deliver cross border economic co-operation. The Programme will:

- Support collaborative projects / initiatives in key growth sectors, which will have a positive impact on entrepreneurial activity and or productivity; and the innovative capability of enterprise;
- Enhance the productivity and new product development opportunities of Programme area enterprises to sustain and increase employment levels across the Programme area;

- Increase the levels of automation and enable Programme area enterprises to respond to new technological opportunities across a range of key sectors; and
- Increase the level of accessible innovation focused facilities across the Programme area; including those which can be utilised by local start-ups and are tech and digital focused.

This **objective** will enhance cross border research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies in a manner which delivers economic regeneration and transformation.

It will **result** in higher levels of demonstrable commercially focused research, development and innovation in the Programme area, which will deliver new products and or processes and a correlated increase in Programme area productivity and export levels.

Actions to be supported

The types of actions to be supported will include:

- **Research, development and innovation projects:** High level cross border research, development and innovation projects, capable of demonstrating commerciality, which will contribute to Programme area growth sectors including Life & Health Sciences; Renewable / Bio Energy; Advanced Manufacturing; Agri-food; Cyber Security; and Artificial Intelligence;
- **Advanced technologies applications:** Initiatives which support the application of advanced technologies across other sectoral areas; including the development of advanced technology hubs, which assist enterprises of all scales to develop new products and or processes

These actions will be supported by a range of activities including:

- Programme area scaled facilities incorporating incubation and research space, digital facilities which will accommodate innovation led clustering in key sectors.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they have been assessed as compatible under the RRF DNSH technical guidance.

2.1.1.1b. Definition of a single beneficiary or a limited list of beneficiaries and the granting procedure

Reference: point (c)(i) of Article 17(9)

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2.1.1.2. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2 - Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)
Th2.1	RSO1.1	RCO07	Research organisations participating in joint research projects	Research organisations	0	36
Th2.1	RSO1.1	RCO01	Enterprises supported (of which: micro, small, medium, large)	enterprises	24	96
Th2.1	RSO1.1	RCO04	Enterprises with non-financial support	enterprises	24	96

Table 3 - Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
Th2.1	RSO1.1	RCR03	Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) introducing product or process innovation	enterprises	0.00	2021	82.00	Supported projects or enterprise surveys	See Methodology Paper

2.1.1.3. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

- SMEs;
- Academic/education institutions.

2.1.1.4. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

There is no planned use of territorial tools.

2.1.1.5. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

There is no planned use of financial instruments.

2.1.1.6. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4 - Dimension 1 – intervention field

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th2.1	RSO1.1	ERDF	012. Research and innovation activities in public research centres, higher education and centres of competence including networking (industrial research, experimental development, feasibility studies)	55,640,000.00

Table 5 - Dimension 2 – form of financing

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th2.1	RSO1.1	ERDF	01. Grant	55,640,000.00

Table 6 - Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th2.1	RSO1.1	ERDF	33. Other approaches - No territorial targeting	55,640,000.00

2.1.1. Specific objective: RSO1.3. Enhancing sustainable growth and competitiveness of SMEs and job creation in SMEs, including by productive investments

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

The SME Development and Transition Programme

2.1.1.1 Related types of action, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

The SME Development and Transition Programme: This will build upon existing investment to support SMEs to operate at scale through cross border collaboration; engage in commercially led innovation; effectively transition to engage in the low carbon, circular economy; support SMEs to deliver productivity improvements or transition to the latest digital tools; and strengthen the Programme area SME base for maximum engagement in a post COVID-19 economic landscape.

There is a need to provide continued strategic and structured support to the Programme area SME sector, particularly those entities with high growth and export potential. Businesses that innovate and collaborate are more productive and more likely to be engaged in exporting and employ highly skilled individuals. Investment will be directed towards the development of a cross border SME development programme to encompass an increased focus on the following elements:

- Support for SMEs (including where appropriate micro-businesses and start-ups) to operate at scale through the development and management of collaborative networks operating on a local, national and international basis, including industry clusters;
- Support for SMEs to engage in commercially led innovation, which will result in the development of new products and or more efficient processes;
- Support for SMEs to transition to a low carbon and circular economy through the development and introduction of sustainable manufacturing practices through education awareness and incentive programmes;
- Support to help SMEs deliver LEAN / productivity improvements or transition to / utilise the latest digitisation and Industry 4.0 tools to enable increased levels of productivity and competitiveness, while driving continuous economic improvement and performance, and access to global markets; and
- Support for SMEs to meet challenges and thrive in a post COVID-19 economy.

The Programme will include a focus upon those sectors most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including Tourism and Retail. It will ensure complementarity with other regional initiatives including existing statutory support programmes and cluster initiatives.

This **objective** will enhance growth and competitiveness of SMEs and increase job creation.

It will **result** in the development of a stronger, more innovative and collaborative Programme area SME base, which is delivering higher levels of productivity, exports and sustainable employment. Therefore in order to be attractive and relevant for SMEs, the programmes offered must demonstrate co design with SMES and address real practical needs and requirements.

Actions to be supported

The types of actions to be supported will include:

- **SME support:** Detailed SME capability assessment and mentoring programming to increase capacity in target areas including: sustainable development practices; new product and or process development; digitisation; and post COVID-19 recovery and adaption planning;
- **R & I for product and/or process development:** Cross border collaborative research and innovation projects centred around core areas including sustainable / advanced manufacturing, to develop new products and or processes designed to increase competitiveness;
- **Clusters:** Creation and management of innovative focused collaborative, cross border clusters;
- **Academic-industry collaboration:** Cross border academic and industry collaborative projects; and
- **Scaling networks:** Creation and management of support for scaling networks in key growth sectors.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they have been assessed as compatible under the RRF DNSH technical guidance.

2.1.1.1b. Definition of a single beneficiary or a limited list of beneficiaries and the granting procedure

Reference: point (c)(i) of Article 17(9)

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2.1.1.2. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2 - Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)
Th2.1	RSO1.3	RCO02	Enterprises supported by grants	enterprises	0	37
Th2.1	RSO1.3	RCO90	Projects for innovation networks across borders	projects	0	2
Th2.1	RSO1.3	RCO01	Enterprises supported (of which: micro, small, medium, large)	enterprises	0	1907
Th2.1	RSO1.3	RCO04	Enterprises with non-financial support	enterprises	0	1870

Table 3 - Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
Th2.1	RSO1.3	RCR03	Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) introducing product or process innovation	enterprises	0.00	2021	1,430.00	Supported projects or enterprise surveys	See Methodology Paper

2.1.1.3. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

- SMEs;
- Academic/education institutions.

2.1.1.4. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

There is no planned use of territorial tools.

2.1.1.5. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

There is no planned use of financial instruments

2.1.1.6. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4 - Dimension 1 – intervention field

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th2.1	RSO1.3	ERDF	010. Research and innovation activities in SMEs, including networking	21,400,000.00

Table 5 - Dimension 2 – form of financing

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th2.1	RSO1.3	ERDF	01. Grant	21,400,000.00

Table 6 - Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th2.1	RSO1.3	ERDF	33. Other approaches - No territorial targeting	21,400,000.00

2.1. Priority: Th2.2 - Delivering Socio-Economic Regeneration and Transformation

Reference: point (d) of Article 17(3)

2.1.1. Specific objective: RSO4.2. Improving equal access to inclusive and quality services in education, training and lifelong learning through developing accessible infrastructure, including by fostering resilience for distance and on-line education and training

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

The Programme area Skills Development Programme

2.1.1.1 Related types of action, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

The Programme area Skills Development Programme: This will support area-based approaches, designed to address evidenced skills gaps, which will result in increased productivity and employment and higher levels of cross border labour mobility. The Programme will enable cross community and cross border collaboration between education and training-based collaborations which reduce duplication and maximise the capacity of the Programme area to address existing and emerging skills gaps, and opportunities for re-skilling. It will also encompass the opportunity for overseas training and job placement opportunities.

Strategic investment is required to collaboratively and thus more effectively address existing and emerging skills gaps at the local and Programme area level. This will help to address economic inactivity through increased cross border labour mobility, with a particular focus upon rural areas

The PEACE PLUS Programme will build on best practice area-based models of skills development.

The proposed Programme will also incorporate community development skills, with an emphasis on those which will contribute to improved peace and reconciliation. These will include social economy / innovation enablers and supports. These programmes will target the more marginalised and under-represented groups in our society. Related programmes should seek to improve the working conditions and employment prospects of these target groups.

Building on the published research from both Departments and their agencies, the investment in Programme area Skills Development will:

- Support the provision of strategic cross border skills programmes in further education / higher education institutions (including joint programmes) in key disciplines such as ICT and digital, STEAM, the green economy, entrepreneurship and leadership and management amongst other areas;

- Promote the uptake of apprenticeships in key areas such as ICT;
- Support the establishment of cross border structures modelled on best practice;
- Support the delivery of cross border schemes in re-engagement with employment / upskilling to reduce the percentage of economically inactive and those in employment sectors at risk of automation changes; and

Recognising the need to balance area-based requirements and central Government objectives, it is envisaged appropriate governance arrangements will be developed to oversee the delivery of actions in this Investment Area.

It will **result** in the development of a flourishing Programme area workforce, with skills better aligned to existing and future growth sectors and in line with public policy.

Actions to be supported

The types of actions to be supported will include:

- **Clusters for sub-area skill gaps:** Programmes which enable area based cross community and cross border clusters to respond to the sub-area skill gaps and requirements (including re skilling and upskilling);
- **Area based skills strategies:** Development of cross community and cross border strategies, aimed at risk reduction to employment sectors, subject to job displacement through technological development, including the development of innovation and entrepreneurship in the Programme area.

The above actions will be complemented by a range of activities as outlined below:

- Programmes which maximise the delivery of cross border programmes by further and higher education providers to minimise duplication of resources;
- Development and delivery of joint educational awards administered by cross border partnerships where possible, to minimise the duplication of education provision and ensure alignment with evidence-based education, which will address recognised skills gaps and requirements;

- Supports which address the barriers to participation in skills development programmes, particularly by marginalised and disadvantaged groups. These barriers include: affordability; childcare and caring responsibilities; language skills; and disability access. Programmes should be designed to improve the working conditions and employment prospects of minority groups.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they have been assessed as compatible under the RRF DNSH technical guidance.

2.1.1.1b. Definition of a single beneficiary or a limited list of beneficiaries and the granting procedure

Reference: point (c)(i) of Article 17(9)

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2.1.1.2. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2 - Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)
Th2.2	RSO4.2	RCO85	Participations in joint training schemes	participations	2500	10000
Th2.2	RSO4.2	RCO83	Strategies and action plans jointly developed	strategy/action plan	0	5

Table 3 - Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
Th2.2	RSO4.2	RCR79	Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations	joint strategy/action plan	0.00	2021	5.00	MA monitoring system/survey	See Methodology Paper
Th2.2	RSO4.2	RCR81	Completion of joint training schemes	participants	0.00	2021	8,000.00	MA monitoring system	See Methodology Paper

2.1.1.3. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

- Individuals wishing to gain employment and upskill in key skill areas;
- Enterprises;
- Academic/education institutions.

2.1.1.4. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

There is no planned use of territorial tools.

2.1.1.5. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

There is no planned use of financial instruments.

2.1.1.6. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4 - Dimension 1 – intervention field

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th2.2	RSO4.2	ERDF	139. Measures to modernise and strengthen labour market institutions and services to assess and anticipate skills needs and to ensure timely and tailor-made assistance	42,800,000.00

Table 5 - Dimension 2 – form of financing

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th2.2	RSO4.2	ERDF	01. Grant	42,800,000.00

Table 6 - Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th2.2	RSO4.2	ERDF	33. Other approaches - No territorial targeting	42,800,000.00

2.1.1. Specific objective: RSO4.3. Promoting the socioeconomic inclusion of marginalised communities, low income households and disadvantaged groups, including people with special needs, through integrated actions, including housing and social services

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

Smart Towns and Villages Development Programme

2.1.1.1 Related types of action, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

Smart Towns and Villages Development Programme: This will promote greater access to and awareness of telecommunications. An area-based approach will be adopted to the creation of Smart Towns and Villages. This proven model utilises a social innovation led approach to maximise the potential of Information Communications Technology (ICT) to deliver improved social and economic outcomes in target areas; particularly those of a rural nature. The Programme will also incorporate measures for the transformation of vacant spaces and facilities within town centres for communal recreational and social usage.

Connectivity is an essential requirement to support the economic and social development of every area. Telecommunications is viewed as a necessity to support the development of communications, innovation, social inclusion and competitiveness.

Increasing access to and awareness of telecommunications presents an opportunity to adopt an overarching approach to the creation of Smart Towns and Villages. These are urban and rural areas and communities, which combine their strengths, with the creative use of Information and Communication Technology ICT, to create more desirable places for people to live and work. In particular, this model can explore how local services such as health, social services, education, energy, transport and retail can be enhanced and sustained through the deployment of ICT tools and community-led actions and projects. Digitisation is key to the creation of a Smart area. However, social innovation is also paramount. The PEACE PLUS Programme will support the development of Smart Towns and Villages on a cluster area basis, resulting in considerable cross community and cross border collaboration. This approach will broaden the impact and benefits of related social innovation based technological solutions. It will also lead to increased integration and the creation of more cohesive community.

The PEACE PLUS Smart Towns and Villages Development Programme will:

- Create a more competitive, inclusive and balanced economy in the Programme area;
- Enable more rural people to access current and future broadband infrastructure;
- Enable people living in rural communities to compete for higher value employment;

- Introduce more innovative solutions to service delivery through the creative use of ICT, particularly within rural areas where access to core services can be reduced;
- Create opportunities for rural innovation led businesses to establish a more creative society where people can fulfil their potential; and
- Create more citizen friendly town and village centres through the transformation of existing capital assets; and increase cross community and cross border collaboration within target areas, in a manner which contributes to enhanced peace and reconciliation the creation of a more cohesive society.

It will **result** in more citizens and communities accessing and utilising ICT to enhance social service delivery and economic development; and as such contribute to the creation of more a resilient, vibrant and prosperous Programme area.

Actions to be supported

The types of actions to be supported will include:

- **Mobile Digital Hubs:** The design and development of advanced mobile digital hubs, to ensure the widest possible opportunities for digital access for rural citizens and enterprises in particular;
- **Digital services by transforming existing assets:** The development of projects which will help transform existing assets within town and village centres for citizen recreational, social and enterprise usage;
- **Mentoring Programmes:** The design and delivery of digital mentoring programmes to be delivered through the proposed mobile digital hubs in rural communities and businesses
- **Digital clusters:** The development of digital clusters that can then develop opportunities to increase remote working and by so doing reduce the need for rural citizens to leave their communities and commute long distances to work;
- **Social enterprise / Innovation led Projects:** The development of social enterprise / innovation led projects designed to apply advanced ICT to create new models of social service and economic development.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they have been assessed as compatible under the RRF DNSH technical guidance.

2.1.1.1b. Definition of a single beneficiary or a limited list of beneficiaries and the granting procedure

Reference: point (c)(i) of Article 17(9)

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2.1.1.2. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2 - Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)
Th2.2	RSO4.3	RCO116	Jointly developed solutions	solutions	0	9

Table 3 - Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
Th2.2	RSO4.3	RCR104	Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations	solutions	0.00	2021	9.00	MA monitoring system / survey	See Methodology Paper

2.1.1.3. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

- Local communities;
- SMEs;
- Community and voluntary sector organisations.

2.1.1.4. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

There is no planned use of territorial tools.

2.1.1.5. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

There is no planned use of financial instruments.

2.1.1.6. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4 - Dimension 1 – intervention field

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th2.2	RSO4.3	ERDF	127. Other social infrastructure contributing to social inclusion in the community	25,680,000.00

Table 5 - Dimension 2 – form of financing

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th2.2	RSO4.3	ERDF	01. Grant	25,680,000.00

Table 6 - Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th2.2	RSO4.3	ERDF	33. Other approaches - No territorial targeting	25,680,000.00

2.1. Priority: Th3 - Empowering and Investing in Our Young People

Reference: point (d) of Article 17(3)

2.1.1. Specific objective: ISO4.5. PEACE PLUS Shared Learning Together Education Programme

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

Shared Learning Together Education Programme (Art. 14(2) Regulation (EU) 2021/1059)

2.1.1.1 Related types of action, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

Shared Learning Together Education Programme: The education together of those from diverse communities, including reasonable numbers of both Protestant and Catholic children or young persons; including those who are experiencing socio-economic deprivation and those who are not; including pupils and young people whose learning experience can be enhanced through additional supports which is secured by the working together and co-operation of two or more relevant education providers (formal and informal).

Informed by experience and evaluation, funding will be directed towards collaborative (including cross-border) education approaches within the formal and non-formal education sectors, which incorporate the following:

- Increased participation within the education system in Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland, across early years settings, primary schools, post-primary schools and special schools, including those in the integrated sector, which will enable more pupils to benefit from the positive experiences and outcomes that shared education brings and extend collaborative cross community/cross border engagement across youth work settings;
- Increased involvement of the wider school community including parents, grandparents, teachers, school managers; enabling the development of new and sustainable relationships, which contribute to a more cohesive society;
- Incorporation of cross community / cross border programmes which will develop empowered and confident learners through innovative shared teaching practices, based on the deployment of digital technologies in teaching and learning;
- Promotion of shared innovative cross-border/ cross community actions to address education underachievement and disadvantage, which will also seek to equip parents with the skills to make a fuller contribution to their children's educational and social development.
- Incorporation of support and facilitation from youth workers and youth sector organisations, where evidenced youth-based approaches can add value to the shared education process and support more adaptive pedagogical practices within the teaching workforce;
- The extension of geographical scope to include DEIS and other disadvantaged education settings in areas outside the border counties of Ireland, in

addition to schools in Northern Ireland which operate the Extended Schools Programme, where involvement will result in improved educational outcomes and increased social inclusion, which will contribute to improved community relations across the Programme area;

- The development of diverse school collaborations through the exploration of wider social and civic issues of relevance to young persons (14 to 16 year olds), which can be sustained using digital platforms and other appropriate media;
- Establishment of long-term, sustainable, mutually beneficial relationships between partner schools, including those between teachers and management staff; and
- Youth to youth Shared Learning Together programmes delivered by youth organisations, which are co-designed by young people and youth workers. Such non-formal programming should incorporate cultural awareness activities and opportunity for significant and sustained contact; including the development of cross border exchange programmes.

This **objective** will provide direct, sustained contact between children from all backgrounds through collaboration between and within schools, early years settings and youth organisations, to promote good relations and enhance children’s skills to contribute to a cohesive society.

It will **result** in an increase in the number of children (pre-school, primary and second level and those engaging with youth services); teachers, principals, practitioners and youth workers engaged in sustained partnerships with those from different community, socio-economic, cultural and political backgrounds, in a manner which will contribute to the attitudinal and behavioural change within schools and the wider community required to build a more peaceful, prosperous and cohesive Programme area.

Actions to be supported

The types of actions to be supported will include:

- **Shared Learning Together Programmes:** (1) Shared Learning Together programmes in early years settings, incorporating the principles of the ‘Sharing from the Start’ model and a focus on the wider family; (2) Shared Learning Together programmes in the formal education sector, will seek to increase the number of schools participating in shared education, in addition to exploring ways to sustain support for some existing participating shared education schools. Mindful of the demonstrable educational benefits, increased social inclusion and contribution to improved community relations across the Programme area; actions will also provide collaborative opportunities for DEIS and other disadvantaged education settings in areas outside the border counties of Ireland, in addition to schools in Northern Ireland which operate the Extended Schools Programme; (3) Programmes which will help end the cycle of educational disadvantage by supporting related initiatives which address the additional learning needs of pupils at risk of underachievement including upskilling parents to take a more active role in their children’s development and education; including

digital based learning activities; (4) Development and delivery of youth to youth Shared Learning Together programmes in the non-formal education sector, delivered by youth organisations, which facilitate youth-based organisation partnerships on a cross community and or cross border basis. These youth based, non-curricular approaches designed by young people and youth workers should incorporate cultural awareness activities and the opportunity for significant and sustained contact, including the development of cross border exchange programmes;

- **Youth work capacity building:** Programmes which develop youth work capacity on a cross border basis that will include enhancing relationships between youth workers across the Programme area

These actions will be complemented by other activities including:

- Digital based approaches which will contribute to the development and sustainability of shared education partnerships, including those of a cross border nature;
- Awareness raising programmes outlining the benefits of shared and integrated education; and
- Collaborative initiatives which enable stakeholders from all education sectors to further develop approaches to shared learning, for the benefit of young people across the Programme area.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they are not expected to have any significant negative environmental impact due to their nature.

2.1.1.1b. Definition of a single beneficiary or a limited list of beneficiaries and the granting procedure

Reference: point (c)(i) of Article 17(9)

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2.1.1.2. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2 - Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)
Th3	ISO4.5	PSO3.1	Participations (pupils and young people in youth settings) in Shared Learning Together programmes	Participation (pupils and young people in youth settings)	35657	142628
Th3	ISO4.5	RCO85	Participations in joint training schemes	participations	520	2080

Table 3 - Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
Th3	ISO4.5	PSR3.1	Completion (pupils and young people in youth settings) of Shared Learning Together Programmes	Participants (pupils and young people in youth settings)	0.00	2021	106,971.00	MA monitoring system	See Methodology Paper
Th3	ISO4.5	RCR81	Completion of joint training schemes	participants	0.00	2021	1,560.00	MA monitoring system	See Methodology Paper

2.1.1.3. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

- Early years, primary and post primary school children from all backgrounds; teachers principals and other school staff; parents, grandparents and carers;
- Youth, youth workers and youth organisations.

2.1.1.4. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

There is no planned use of territorial tools.

2.1.1.5. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

There is no planned use of financial instruments.

2.1.1.6. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4 - Dimension 1 – intervention field

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th3	ISO4.5	ERDF	152. Measures to promote equal opportunities and active participation in society	43,836,389.00

Table 5 - Dimension 2 – form of financing

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th3	ISO4.5	ERDF	01. Grant	43,836,389.00

Table 6 - Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th3	ISO4.5	ERDF	33. Other approaches - No territorial targeting	43,836,389.00

2.1.1. Specific objective: ISO4.6. PEACE PLUS Youth Programme

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

PEACE PLUS Youth Programme (Art. 14(2) Regulation (EU) 2021/1059)

2.1.1.1 Related types of action, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

PEACE PLUS Youth Programme: This is a targeted capacity building programme for young people aged 14-24 years, who are disadvantaged, excluded or marginalised, have deep social and emotional needs and are at risk of becoming involved in anti-social behaviour, violence or paramilitary activity. The Programme is outcomes focused across a number of key areas including *good relations, personal development, citizenship and employability*, and will bring about a positive change in the form of clear, meaningful and sustainable ‘distance travelled’ for participants. A primary aim will be to increase the capacity, confidence and achievement level of every young person participating.

Evidence suggests that many young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), particularly those from areas most impacted by the legacy of the Conflict in Northern Ireland, require targeted support. These individuals can have deep emotional and social needs, can be at risk of violence or paramilitary activity and generally do not readily engage in support programmes.

The PEACE IV Peace4Youth Programme has delivered positive outcomes for many marginalised and disadvantaged young people across the Programme area. An independent evaluation of the programme evidenced significant progress at programme level and provides a strong case for further investment in this policy area. The investment will build upon the current model, which incorporates a central focus on building key capabilities and support for positive progression by participants beyond the programme. This targets young people (aged 14 -24 years) and operates for a minimum of six months up to nine months (depending on the needs of the young person). This timeframe allows for sufficient intensity to ensure the experience is transformative across the following outcome areas:

- **Good relations:** contributing to lower levels of community division, sectarianism and racism, and making a positive contribution to reconciliation;
- **Citizenship:** developing the capacity of the young person to participate in and make a positive contribution towards family, community and society;
- **Personal development:** developing the fundamental social and emotional ‘soft’ skills of the participant;

- Related **Employability/skills** development: including certain qualifications and the ‘soft’ employability skills identified as essential by employers; and
- **Positive progression**: effectively supporting participants in their next steps following completion of the programme.

The PEACE PLUS Youth Programme will follow this model and will place even more specific emphasis on enhancing the employability of participants, alongside the other outcomes and the incorporation of activities to develop their entrepreneurial and or social enterprise potential. This is particularly important given the extent to which the youth population will be impacted by the legacy of the COVID-19 pandemic. In many cases, this will involve addressing the principal personal barrier to the young person achieving enhanced social and economic mobility, including their perception of their own abilities and potential and their need for skills development to help them navigate a challenging economic environment. As such, a primary aim of the Programme will be to increase the capacity, confidence and aspiration of every young person participating.

Experience indicates that the PEACE PLUS Youth Programme should also incorporate the following elements:

- Support to access to youth focused, professional / statutory mental health support services, including addiction counselling;
- Access to counselling and other support services for front line youth workers supporting participants who have experienced trauma and who lead complex and challenging lives;
- Interventions designed to address the barriers to participation including childcare; transport (particularly for those based in rural areas); language support; and disability access; and incorporation of gender specific approaches as appropriate; and
- Earlier intervention i.e. 14 – 16 years, in instances where this could prevent early disengagement from education and is complementary to mainstream provision.

A central Quality and Impact Body is a key element of the model to support delivery of projects and achievement of Programme outcomes. All projects will be required to engage actively and positively with this Body. The Quality and Impact Body will be responsible for ensuring that the impact of the Programme is maximised by developing and nurturing a strong change and outcomes focus by funded projects and supporting a high-quality, youth work approach.

This **objective** will enhance the capacity of children and young people to form positive and effective relationships with others of a different background, develop their confidence and future potential and make a positive contribution to building a cohesive society.

It will **result** in marginalised and disadvantaged young people from across the Programme area with enhanced capacity to form positive and effective

relationships with others from a different background, develop their confidence and future potential, improve their individual life circumstances and make a positive contribution to a more peaceful, prosperous and cohesive society.

Actions to be supported

The action to be supported is a:

- **Youth Programme:** Targeted programmes for young people, which use a range of mediums to deliver the PEACE PLUS Youth Programme intervention model.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they are not expected to have any significant negative environmental impact due to their nature.

2.1.1.1b. Definition of a single beneficiary or a limited list of beneficiaries and the granting procedure

Reference: point (c)(i) of Article 17(9)

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2.1.1.2. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2 - Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)
Th3	ISO4.6	RCO85	Participations in joint training schemes	participations	2438	9750

Table 3 - Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
Th3	ISO4.6	RCR81	Completion of joint training schemes	participants	0.00	2021	7,500.00	MA monitoring system	See Methodology Paper

2.1.1.3. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

- Young people who are marginalised and disadvantaged, typically not in education, employment or training;
- Youth organisations.

2.1.1.4. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

There is no planned use of territorial tools.

2.1.1.5. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

There is no planned use of financial instruments.

2.1.1.6. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4 - Dimension 1 – intervention field

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th3	ISO4.6	ERDF	136. Specific support for youth employment and socio-economic integration of young people	40,232,000.00

Table 5 - Dimension 2 – form of financing

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th3	ISO4.6	ERDF	01. Grant	40,232,000.00

Table 6 - Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th3	ISO4.6	ERDF	33. Other approaches - No territorial targeting	40,232,000.00

2.1.1. Specific objective: ISO4.7. PEACE PLUS Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing Programme (Art. 14(2) Regulation (EU) 2021/1059)

2.1.1.1 Related types of action, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing Programme: This will support additional, non-formal provision activity involving cross community and cross border multi-partner collaborative approaches, which will lead to improved understanding of youth mental health and wellbeing issues and the sharing of best practice across the Programme area to improve service delivery. The programme will make a considerable contribution to peace and reconciliation through the development of enhanced emotional resilience in our young people.

The legacy of the conflict has left an impact on many communities in Northern Ireland and Ireland, which is still evident across generations of adults and young people. Evidence indicates that children growing up in areas of conflict demonstrate higher levels of mental ill health and anti-social behaviours. The legacy of conflict through intergenerational transmission of trauma continues to impact on young people's mental health and wellbeing, affecting their ability to engage with education leading to underachievement and restricting their opportunities for employment; and as a consequence their ability to interact with young people from different community, cultural and political backgrounds. It also threatens their future and limits their potential future role within their communities and their contribution to peace and reconciliation.

The Programme will be designed to incorporate the learning of a current PEACE IV pilot youth mental health programme, which incorporates non-formal mental health activities. It will result in the following:

- The development of cross border, multi-agency collaborative approaches, which will lead to improved understanding and awareness of youth mental health and wellbeing issues and sharing of best practice across the Programme area;
- Increased awareness poor mental health and its impact upon young people and available supports;
- The development of accessible, age appropriate, innovative and integrated youth mental health service delivery models;
- The development of models which focus on the social, emotional and environmental wellbeing of young people and building their capacity;
- The development of interventions which increase the capacity of young people across the Programme area through participation in youth mental health focused advisory and advocacy groups; and
- The development of youth focused capacity building programmes which encompass a focus on: building internal reserves; improving social skills;

developing coping and resilience strategies; increasing self-worth and purpose; fostering the ability to form and sustain positive relationships; improving self-confidence; and creating a greater sense of the positive role young people can play within their communities.

This **objective** will enhance the capacity of children and young people to form positive and effective relationships with others of a different background and make a positive contribution to the creation of a cohesive society.

It will **result** in an increase in the percentage of the youth population in receipt of best practice mental health supports developed and delivered on a collaborative, cross border basis; which enhance emotional resilience and make a contribution to peace and reconciliation across the Programme area.

Actions to be supported

The types of actions to be supported will include:

- **Youth worker capacity building initiatives:** Training for key youth workers, which builds their capacity to better support children and young people's emotional resilience and good relations;
- **Mental health and well-being and youth leadership Programmes:** The expansion of successful additional, non-formal youth mental health and wellbeing models on a programme area and cross community and border basis; Peace and reconciliation focused youth leadership programmes; Programmes which instil young people with the confidence to improve well-being within their communities and act as agents of change, building peace for future generations.

These actions will be complemented by other activities including:

- Programmes which provide young people with opportunities to make a meaningful contribution to project design; including the creation of youth advisory groups;
- Programmes which incorporate innovative approaches to the proven mentor led model and facilitate peer mentoring support;
- Programmes which incorporate the innovative use of digital resources including social media platforms; applications and podcasts; and
- Programmes which incorporate innovative approaches to youth mental health focused education and development.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they are not expected to have any significant negative environmental impact due to their nature.

2.1.1.1b. Definition of a single beneficiary or a limited list of beneficiaries and the granting procedure

Reference: point (c)(i) of Article 17(9)

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2.1.1.2. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2 - Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)
Th3	ISO4.7	RCO85	Participations in joint training schemes	participations	18750	75000

Table 3 - Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
Th3	ISO4.7	RCR81	Completion of joint training schemes	participants	0.00	2021	56,000.00	MA monitoring system	See Methodology Paper

2.1.1.3. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

- Young people and youth;
- Youth workers;
- Schools/education institutions.

2.1.1.4. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

There is no planned use of territorial tools.

2.1.1.5. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

There is no planned use of financial instruments.

2.1.1.6. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4 - Dimension 1 – intervention field

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th3	ISO4.7	ERDF	152. Measures to promote equal opportunities and active participation in society	21,400,000.00

Table 5 - Dimension 2 – form of financing

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th3	ISO4.7	ERDF	01. Grant	21,400,000.00

Table 6 - Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th3	ISO4.7	ERDF	33. Other approaches - No territorial targeting	21,400,000.00

2.1. Priority: Th4 - Healthy and Inclusive Communities

Reference: point (d) of Article 17(3)

2.1.1. Specific objective: RSO4.5. Ensuring equal access to health care and fostering resilience of health systems, including primary care, and promoting the transition from institutional to family- and community-based care

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

Collaborative Health & Social Care Programme

2.1.1.1 Related types of action, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

Collaborative Health & Social Care Programme: This will build upon existing and new cross border collaborative approaches to health and social care delivery models (within specified treatment areas), to deliver an increased number of episodes of care across the Programme area. It will support the development of innovative community based health care interventions, which complement statutory provision (including social enterprise models). It will result in a more resilient health and social care sector in the Programme area, which contributes to improved population health and wellbeing and reduced health inequalities.

Health and social care is an area in which collaborative cross border approaches are proven to deliver considerable benefits to the citizen and the Programme area. Cross border cooperation will contribute towards the more efficient delivery of health and social care services across the Programme area. This will be achieved through building upon existing collaborative relationships and services on a cross border basis. This will improve the health and well-being of people living in the programme area, by enabling them to access quality health and social care services in the most appropriate setting to their needs.

Previous investment in the development and delivery of collaborative cross community and cross border health and social service provision supported by the INTERREG Programme, has contributed to the following learning:

The Importance of an Integrated Approach: There are great opportunities for health and social care systems to realise the full potential of working with other agencies and unlock the potential of cross border collaboration. This involves signing up to work differently with partners, in a shared process of planning, management and delivery of large scale, strategic cross border projects, which create a solid infrastructure and build a lasting legacy for future collaboration;

The Adoption of New Technologies to Improve Access to Services: The potential for information communications technology to transform healthcare services has been distinctly highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, despite progress in some areas, keeping abreast with new technologies

and adoption of innovation within healthcare, remain a challenge. Meanwhile demand for services are rising, outstripping the capacity to deliver. Increased levels of digitalisation are required to address this situation, which can be more effectively developed and implemented on a cross border basis;

The Need to Tackle Health Inequalities: Based upon the population profile of the Programme area, reports in recent years have indicated that communities along the border, both north and south, are lagging behind economically, in stark contrast to strong economic growth and employment in other parts of the Ireland and Northern Ireland. The continued existence of high levels of poverty and deprivation in border counties is linked with poor health outcomes. The extent of health inequalities has been further highlighted by the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. There is a need to provide increased episodes of care, within more peripheral and remote parts of the Programme area, to maximise the health and wellbeing of all citizens, regardless of what part of the Programme area, they are resident;

The Opportunity to Develop and Deliver Cross Border Health and Social Care Research Initiatives: INTERREG VA has illustrated the benefits of managing cross border intervention trials to advance important areas of health and social care. The PEACE PLUS Programme provides an opportunity to build upon this investment in cross border research capacity, networks and infrastructure by supporting new innovative health and social care intervention trials across the Programme area. This should include those areas of importance highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic;

The Requirement for Specific Mental Health Interventions: There is a need to support specific mental health interventions, especially within those areas where there are benefits to collaborative, cross border management approaches. Suitable areas identified include addiction services and suicide prevention initiatives. Such areas lend themselves to gender specific, whole family, community-based approaches, which will contribute to many of our most vulnerable citizens leading healthier and more hopeful lives.

It is essential that the lessons learned from the innovative and collaborative response to the COVID-19 pandemic are fully considered. The full impact of COVID-19 upon future health and social care provision is not yet known. PEACE PLUS Programme investment may be directed towards addressing such challenges on a cross border basis.

Informed by current experience, an assessment of those healthcare areas which are most suitable to a collaborative, cross border ‘whole system approach’ to service delivery has been undertaken. On this basis, PEACE PLUS funding may be directed towards a number of key areas including:

- Obesity management;
- Renal services;
- Addiction and suicide prevention;
- Medicine management;

- Respiratory services;
- Coronary care / heart failure;
- Geriatric medicine (complex needs of older people);
- Mental health (resilience);
- Children’s mental health; and
- Social inclusion for those with disabilities and carers.

This **objective** will ensure equal access to health care and fostering resilience of health systems.

It will **result** in an increase in the number of ‘episodes of care’ delivered on a cross border basis. This will support positive health and well-being and the prevention of ill health, through an integrated approach designed to reduce health inequalities within the Programme area.

Actions to be supported

The types of actions to be supported will include:

- **Collaborative health and social care initiatives:** (1) Initiatives designed to deliver cross community and cross border collaborative approaches to health and social care service delivery, in those clinical areas identified as being most suitable to a cross border service delivery models; (2) Development and implementation of support and cooperation services on a cross border basis, for community and voluntary organisations involved in the provision of health and social care services within their own communities; (3) Development of cross border healthcare intervention trials;
- **Community based initiatives addressing the legacy of the Troubles/Conflict:**Development and delivery of initiatives designed to address the Trauma of the Troubles on the Health and Mental Wellbeing of citizens and communities, by adopting a strengths-based, cross community and cross border mental and emotional resilience and recovery model; to include the development of addiction treatment facilities and programmes.

Other activities complementing these actions include:

- Development of a social equality approach to promote social inclusion, citizenship and better life outcomes for disabled people and those with complex needs;
- Development and delivery of primary care and older people services, supporting caring communities and independent living;
- Initiatives to enable early authoritative intervention within vulnerable families;
- Development and delivery of new models of working, both in scheduled and unscheduled care streams, by better utilising scarce physical, financial and human resources; and
- Cross border training and development interventions for healthcare professionals, social care professionals and personnel in community and voluntary organisations involved in the provision of cross border health and social care support services.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they are not expected to have any significant negative environmental impact due to their nature.

2.1.1.1b. Definition of a single beneficiary or a limited list of beneficiaries and the granting procedure

Reference: point (c)(i) of Article 17(9)

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2.1.1.2. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2 - Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)
Th4	RSO4.5	RCO116	Jointly developed solutions	solutions	0	11

Table 3 - Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
Th4	RSO4.5	PSR4.1	Beneficiaries of jointly developed and delivered health and social care solutions	People (beneficiaries)	0.00	2021	82,000.00	MA monitoring system	See Methodology Paper

2.1.1.3. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

- Citizens/clients/patients;
- Health and social care professionals;
- Community and voluntary sector organisations.

2.1.1.4. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

There is no planned use of territorial tools.

2.1.1.5. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

There is no planned use of financial instruments

2.1.1.6. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4 - Dimension 1 – intervention field

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th4	RSO4.5	ERDF	128. Health infrastructure	83,032,000.00

Table 5 - Dimension 2 – form of financing

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th4	RSO4.5	ERDF	01. Grant	83,032,000.00

Table 6 - Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th4	RSO4.5	ERDF	33. Other approaches - No territorial targeting	83,032,000.00

2.1.1. Specific objective: ISO4.8. PEACE PLUS Rural regeneration and Social Inclusion

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

The Rural Regeneration and Social Inclusion Programme (Art. 14(2) Regulation (EU) 2021/1059)

2.1.1.1 Related types of action, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

The Rural Regeneration and Social Inclusion Programme: This will support social, economic and environmental projects which contribute to the creation of healthy communities in rural areas.

By adopting a strengths-based approach, the programme will contribute to the creation of a more balanced Programme area, in which our rural communities thrive and reach their full potential through health and wellbeing focussed solutions.

A number of specific investment areas to support rural development and sustainable regeneration and social inclusion have been identified as follows:

- **Community Development Resources:** Deployment of human resources to co-ordinate collaborative (cross community and cross border) approaches; progress key strategic projects; and deliver core community services across designated rural area boundaries;
- **Family Support Hubs:** Development of centralised facilities to support the provision of key family support services, ranging from early years to older people, in a setting which will facilitate increased levels of cross community contact;
- **Social Enterprise:** Development and delivery of rural specific social enterprise support programmes, incorporating support for: volunteer recruitment and development; product and or service development; awareness, promotion and sectoral marketing; funding mechanisms; and capital assets required for service delivery and expansion;
- **Green Infrastructure:** Development of green infrastructure to promote active lifestyles and support rural enterprise and tourism within rural areas (including those on a cross border basis) and the interconnection of rural and urban areas; and
- **Social Farming:** Deployment of resources to support diversification in the agricultural sector and the development of social farms (including collaborative approaches) for social and economic benefit.

Supported projects across all these investment areas will be designed to deliver significant and sustained contact between diverse rural communities and as such make a substantial contribution to more **peaceful and prosperous** rural areas.

This **objective** will create a more cohesive society through an increased provision of shared space and services in rural areas.

It will **result** in strategic investment designed to allow rural communities to thrive and reach their full economic, social and environmental potential.

Actions to be supported

The types of actions to be supported will include:

- **Collaborative community development initiatives and services including those related to health and wellbeing:** (1) Deployment of human resources to co-ordinate collaborative (cross community and cross border) approaches; progress key strategic projects; and deliver core community services, including those related to health and wellbeing, across designated rural area boundaries; (2) Development of centralised facilities to support the provision of key family support services, ranging from early years to older people, in a setting which will facilitate increased levels of cross community contact; (3) Development of green infrastructure to promote active lifestyles and support enterprise and tourism within rural areas (including those on a cross border basis) and the interconnection of rural and urban areas;
- **Agricultural diversification support programmes:** Deployment of resources to support diversification in the agricultural sector and the development of social farms (including collaborative approaches) for social and economic benefit;
- **Social enterprise support programmes:** Development and delivery of rural specific social enterprise support programmes including those focused on increasing health and wellbeing. This will incorporate support for: volunteer recruitment and development; product and or service development; awareness, promotion and sectoral marketing; funding mechanisms; and capital assets required for service delivery and expansion.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they have been assessed as compatible under the RRF DNSH technical guidance.

2.1.1.1b. Definition of a single beneficiary or a limited list of beneficiaries and the granting procedure

Reference: point (c)(i) of Article 17(9)

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2.1.1.2. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2 - Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)
Th4	ISO4.8	RCO116	Jointly developed solutions	solutions	0	20
Th4	ISO4.8	RCO01	Enterprises supported (of which: micro, small, medium, large)	enterprises	0	65
Th4	ISO4.8	RCO04	Enterprises with non-financial support	enterprises	0	65

Table 3 - Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
Th4	ISO4.8	PSR4.2	Participants accessing new rural facilities, enterprises and community services	Participants	0.00	2021	25,000.00	MA monitoring system	See Methodology Paper

2.1.1.3. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

- Local communities;
- Community and voluntary sector organisations;
- Rural social enterprises;
- SMEs.

2.1.1.4. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

There is no planned use of territorial tools.

2.1.1.5. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

There is no planned use of financial instruments.

2.1.1.6. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4 - Dimension 1 – intervention field

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th4	ISO4.8	ERDF	127. Other social infrastructure contributing to social inclusion in the community	42,800,000.00

Table 5 - Dimension 2 – form of financing

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th4	ISO4.8	ERDF	01. Grant	42,800,000.00

Table 6 - Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th4	ISO4.8	ERDF	33. Other approaches - No territorial targeting	42,800,000.00

2.1.1. Specific objective: ISO4.9. PEACE PLUS Victims and Survivors

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

The Victims and Survivors Programme (Art. 14(2) Regulation (EU) 2021/1059)

2.1.1.1 Related types of action, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

The Victims and Survivors Programme: In recognition of the needs of those who have suffered from the trauma of the troubles/conflict, the Programme will develop the capacity for services to meet the needs of **victims and survivors**.

The PEACE IV Programme currently supports an integrated, outcomes based, community led support programme for victims and survivors. This has improved the lives of many victims and survivors across the Programme area. The PEACE PLUS Programme provides an opportunity to learn from and build upon this work, to provide additional supports to victims and survivors. The proposed areas to be supported are as follows:

- **Further Development of the Health and Wellbeing Case Worker Network Model:** Experience has shown that building resilience is central to improving the lives of victims and survivors. The expanded programme will incorporate transgenerational support (including family therapy) informed by related pilots and research. The Programme will reflect the needs of an aging demographic and incorporate issues of gender. Related training opportunities will incorporate literacy and numeracy; trauma focused physical activity; volunteering; and social isolation activities. Consideration will be given to addressing any barriers to engagement with services and support (e.g. concerns related to welfare payments, medication etc.);
- **Advocacy Support Programme (Truth, Justice and Acknowledgement):** The existing Advocacy Support Programme enables victims and survivors to access advocacy support to effectively engage with existing legacy institutions relating to truth, justice and acknowledgement e.g. PSNI, Legacy Inquests, PRONI and other institutions in Ireland, the UK and beyond. Experience has illustrated the benefits of providing parallel health and wellbeing supports. From a mental health perspective, there is evidence that acknowledgement and healing through oral history can be very effective. This requires the sensitive exploration of narratives and facilitates constructive dialogue within and between individuals, groups and communities. It will be important to continue research and evaluation activities related to health and wellbeing approaches to develop an evidence base for future intervention;
- **Research including new co-designed and action based approaches; and**

- **Further development of the resilience programmes.**

The benefits of the proposed interventions will be as follows:

- Improved health and wellbeing of victims and survivors; including increased function; fewer symptoms; and a sense of acknowledgement and recognition;
- Provision of a whole family approach, which addresses transgenerational trauma issues;
- Increased access to support services by victims and survivors; and
- Increased levels of resilience within victims and survivors.

This **objective** will contribute to the creation of a more cohesive society.

It will **result** in improved access to services by victims and survivors and enhanced understanding of the effects of the past troubles/conflict upon the present, in a manner which contributes to peace and reconciliation.

Actions to be supported

The types of actions to be supported will include:

- **Support and services for victims and survivors - Health & Wellbeing, Resilience and Social Prescribing:** (1) Access to trauma-informed integrated support and services including a resilience programme to address the long term and changing needs of victims and survivors; (2) Further development of the Health & Wellbeing Casework Network to improve support and services for victims and survivors at an individual, family and community level and to improve equity of services at a geographical level;
- **Advocacy Programme:** Continuation and further development of the Advocacy Network to increase recognition and acknowledgement of the experiences of victims and survivors;

- **Training Programmes:** (1) Development of bespoke training programmes to address current and emerging needs; (2) Continued development of a trauma-based education and training programme for staff, practitioners and volunteers to include online training models to extend geographical reach; (3) Extension of the current trauma education qualifications supported to include Masters level trauma specific programme (building on the progression of qualification levels supported by previous PEACE Programmes);
- **Research for support and services for victims and survivors:**(1) The development and implementation of strategies to address barriers to engagement in support and services by victims and survivors; (2) A co-designed research programme integrating academic research with practice and experiential based learning, training, monitoring, evaluation and policy development to improve support and services and provide an evidence base for further understanding and investment in this area.

To ensure coordination of services for victims and survivors the Victims and Survivors Service will be the lead partner in a consortium which will take ensure coverage within Ireland.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they are not expected to have any significant negative environmental impact due to their nature.

2.1.1.1b. Definition of a single beneficiary or a limited list of beneficiaries and the granting procedure

Reference: point (c)(i) of Article 17(9)

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2.1.1.2. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2 - Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)
Th4	ISO4.9	RCO83	Strategies and action plans jointly developed	strategy/action plan	0	1
Th4	ISO4.9	PSO4.3a	Participations in interventions in support of victims and survivors	participations	3000	15000
Th4	ISO4.9	PSO 4.3b	Participations in joint education and training	Participations	200	1000

Table 3 - Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
Th4	ISO4.9	PSR4.3b	Completion in joint education and training	Participants	0.00	2021	750.00	MA monitoring system	See Methodology Paper
Th4	ISO4.9	PSR4.3a	Beneficiaries completing the interventions in support of victims and survivors	People (beneficiaries)	0.00	2021	20,000.00	MA monitoring system	See Methodology Paper
Th4	ISO4.9	RCR79	Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations	joint strategy/action plan	0.00	2021	1.00	MA monitoring system	See Methodology Paper

2.1.1.3. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

- Victims and survivors;
- Organisations with a responsibility for victims and survivors;
- Community and voluntary sector organisations.

2.1.1.4. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

There is no planned use of territorial tools.

2.1.1.5. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

There is no planned use of financial instruments.

2.1.1.6. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4 - Dimension 1 – intervention field

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th4	ISO4.9	ERDF	152. Measures to promote equal opportunities and active participation in society	21,400,000.00

Table 5 - Dimension 2 – form of financing

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th4	ISO4.9	ERDF	01. Grant	21,400,000.00

Table 6 - Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th4	ISO4.9	ERDF	33. Other approaches - No territorial targeting	21,400,000.00

2.1. Priority: Th5.1 - Supporting a Sustainable Future

Reference: point (d) of Article 17(3)

2.1.1. Specific objective: RSO2.2. Promoting renewable energy in accordance with Renewable Energy Directive (EU) 2018/2001[1], including the sustainability criteria set out therein

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

Geothermal Energy Demonstration Programme

2.1.1.1 Related types of action, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

Geothermal Energy Demonstration Programme: This will build the knowledge, skills and capacity required to develop a policy framework and encourage Programme area investment in the geothermal technology sector. Increased usage of this renewable energy source will result in many environmental, social and economic benefits for the Programme area.

Heat production is a significant contributor to GHG emissions. Decarbonisation of heat is central to the EU, UK and Irish strategies to meet the 2050 net zero GHG targets. Research indicates this will require renovation and retrofit of energy efficiency measures and renewable heating in buildings, and increased use of energy from renewable sources [ref. 1].

The deployment of district heating networks and the use of heat pumps for individual dwellings or in communal heating systems, are key to heat decarbonisation. In Ireland (including the border counties) and Northern Ireland, the housing stock is characterised by a larger percentage of ‘off-gas grid’ buildings than would be present in other parts of the UK. This type of housing stock is easier and more cost effective to retrofit than others.

Across the Programme area, there is clear potential for the widespread use of geothermal heat sources. However, the expansion of the fledgling geothermal sector requires demonstration of its viability. This will necessitate cross border collaborative measures to develop demonstration projects, which will build an awareness of the micro and macro benefits of adopting geothermal practices across residential, industrial and public buildings. Such interventions should build Programme area capacity through a range of incentive and support mechanisms and effective regulation.

Cross border collaboration to achieve the replacement of fossil fuels by indigenous renewable energy in the heat sector will result in a reduced reliance on fossil fuels and enhanced energy security. It will deliver economic, social and environmental benefits across the Programme area including:

- Development of a Programme area policy framework to support widespread uptake of geothermal energy in the residential, industrial and public sectors;
- Increased uptake of geothermal technologies in the target sectors within the Programme area;
- Reduction in fuel poverty levels across the Programme area;
- Increased attainment of local, national and EU decarbonisation GHG emission reduction targets; and
- A strengthened local geothermal industry.

This **objective** will promote energy efficiency measures and reducing green-house gas emissions.

It will **result** in an increased awareness and uptake of geothermal technologies for heat production across the Programme area. This will result in improved energy efficiency, increased fuel security and a reduction in GHG emissions in accordance with Programme area, national and EU targets.

Actions to be supported

The main action will be a **Geothermal Energy Demonstration Programme** which will include:

- Demonstration projects which build awareness regarding the benefits of and support for increased uptake of geothermal technologies in the residential, industrial and public sectors;
- Initiatives which demonstrate the application of heat networks using shallow geothermal energy and Ground Source Heat Pump (GSHP) systems, including those within the SME sector;
- Initiatives which demonstrate the application of Deep Geothermal Energy (>400m), particularly for decarbonising District Heating Systems;
- Initiatives designed to increase market penetration of GSHPs;
- Initiatives which involve the design, build and operation of geothermal surface infrastructure within social housing sector in the Programme area;
- Initiatives which support the growing geothermal technologies sector in the Programme area;
- Initiatives which contribute to the development of a cross border policy framework designed to promote and support cross-sectoral uptake of geothermal technologies across the Programme area;

- Geothermal related energy efficiency studies focussed on areas most affected by fuel poverty; and
- Programmes for citizens to raise awareness and understanding of the benefits of Geothermal heating solutions.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they have been assessed as compatible under the RRF DNSH technical guidance.

References

[ref. 1] EC (2018) A Clean planet for all.

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0773>

2.1.1.1b. Definition of a single beneficiary or a limited list of beneficiaries and the granting procedure

Reference: point (c)(i) of Article 17(9)

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2.1.1.2. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2 - Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)
Th5.1	RSO2.2	RCO116	Jointly developed solutions	solutions	0	2
Th5.1	RSO2.2	RCO84	Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects	pilot actions	0	2

Table 3 - Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
Th5.1	RSO2.2	RCR104	Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations	solutions	0.00	2021	2.00	MA monitoring system /survey	See Methodology Paper

2.1.1.3. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

- Academic/education institutions;
- Residents (social housing);
- Public sector organisations.

2.1.1.4. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

There is no planned use of territorial tools.

2.1.1.5. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

There is no planned use of financial instruments.

2.1.1.6. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4 - Dimension 1 – intervention field

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th5.1	RSO2.2	ERDF	052. Other renewable energy (including geothermal energy)	17,120,000.00

Table 5 - Dimension 2 – form of financing

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th5.1	RSO2.2	ERDF	01. Grant	17,120,000.00

Table 6 - Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th5.1	RSO2.2	ERDF	33. Other approaches - No territorial targeting	17,120,000.00

2.1.1. Specific objective: RSO2.4. Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience taking into account eco-system based approaches

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

Marine and Coastal Management Programme

2.1.1.1 Related types of action, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

Marine and Coastal Management Programme: This will enable a cross border approach to the protection of the marine and coastal environment from potentially damaging human activities, and support the development of climate change adaptation plans which will increase the resilience of ecosystems, coastal communities, infrastructure and the marine economy.

The marine and coastal environment in the Programme area is under pressure from both human activities and climate change which already pose a threat to Ireland and Northern Ireland's cultural and natural resources, coastal infrastructure, and public assets and must be addressed.

Across the Programme area, climate change is accelerating coastal erosion. Coastlines are affected by storms and other extreme weather, which contribute to coastal erosion.

Climate change and human activities are impacting on habitats and species, and there is particular concern around the impact on marine birds which includes both wintering water birds that spend the autumn and winter around our shores, and seabirds that come to breed in the spring and summer. There is increasing concern about the impacts that human activities, ocean acidification and rising temperatures are having on foodwebs and pelagic ecosystems. Climate change is a threat to Marine and coastal heritage and there is an increasing need for the development of mitigation and adaptation plans for heritage assets.

Marine litter is an issue across the Programme area and poses a significant threat to the biodiversity of our marine environment if not addressed. Plans are required that encompass removal, education and awareness strands.

The marine and coastal environment plays an important role in climate change adaptation and mitigation. Coastal habitats such as sand dunes, salt marsh, seagrass, kelp and shellfish beds provide nature-based solutions that include coastal protection and carbon storage. There is increasing recognition of the need to protect and restore these habitats. Marine renewable energy provides opportunities to transition towards the net zero emissions target and decision support tools are needed to ensure development proposals consider potential impacts to marine environment.

The marine environment is transboundary in nature and is well suited for cross border collaboration. The extent and severity of the situations to be addressed differs across the Programme area. On this basis, area-based studies will be required to develop bespoke, place-based solutions. This collaboration will result in an improved performance in achieving related targets set at national and European levels.

Such interventions will result in the following benefits:

- **Coastal change:** Improved evidence-based knowledge and understanding of the rate of coastal change and coastal vulnerability to inform policy and practices, which will result in more resilient coastal areas.
- **Climate and pelagic systems:** Improved evidence-based knowledge and understanding of coastal, oceanographic and sediment transport dynamics in the changing climate context; improved knowledge of current impacts and impact of potential climate change scenarios on seabirds and other key species and habitats; improved understanding of the risks to and impacts upon the pelagic ecosystem and human activities reliant upon it including fisheries and conservation.
- **Natural capital, habitats and human:** Improved understanding of coastal and marine habitats and their role as nature based solutions to climate change adaptation and mitigation; Improved evidence based knowledge to support decision-making in marine spatial planning, fisheries management, marine protected area identification and management, and support of the recovery and/or restoration of impacted habitat types; Improved awareness of the impact of marine litter and the benefits of reducing inputs through a circular economy; Improved understanding of underwater cultural heritage resources to support marine planning, heritage asset management and improved public awareness and appreciation.
- **Local action to protect marine biodiversity and coastal and marine heritage:** Improved sense of local and transboundary responsibility regarding marine biodiversity and heritage; and better outcomes for communities and the marine environment.

This **objective** will promote climate change adaptation and sustainable marine and coastal management.

It will **result** in improved knowledge and management of the transboundary marine environment and a Programme area which is more resilient and responsive to climate change and threats from human activities.

Actions to be supported

The Programme will encompass four thematic areas. The types of actions to be supported will include:

- **Cross border Marine protection and coastal change action plans:** repeat surveys and mapping; sea level wave and hydrodynamic modelling; coastal vulnerability assessments; coastal monitoring; habitat recovery and restoration; development of nature based solutions; development of adaptation and resilience plans for key sites; site cultural asset development plans; teaching and awareness raising resources; decision support tools; and training programmes;
- **Cross border Climate and pelagic systems studies:** instrumentation based oceanographic and hydrodynamic modelling; enhancement of monitoring network and sampling activities; developing proven, high quality and cost-effective methods for pelagic habitat evaluation; integrated assessment of marine food webs; evidence based pelagic species protection methodologies; and evidence based transboundary action plans;
- **Cross border Natural capital, habitats and human behaviour management plans:** bird surveys, benthic habitat surveys and seabed mapping in areas for potential renewable energy; quantification of marine ecosystem services; trans boundary action plans for selected benthic species; geohazard repeat mapping surveys; and underwater cultural heritage surveys to support the further development and refinement of national and regional historic environment records; strategies or protocols reflecting principles of the circular economy that will reduce marine litter;
- **Local action** to protect marine biodiversity and coastal and marine heritage action plans

These actions will be complemented by a range of activities including:

- Local level stewardship arrangements; Marine Protection Area climate change action plans; community and citizen participation initiatives; and education and awareness training programmes.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they are not expected to have any significant negative environmental impact due to their nature.

2.1.1.1b. Definition of a single beneficiary or a limited list of beneficiaries and the granting procedure

Reference: point (c)(i) of Article 17(9)

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2.1.1.2. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2 - Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)
Th5.1	RSO2.4	RCO83	Strategies and action plans jointly developed	strategy/action plan	0	17
Th5.1	RSO2.4	RCO84	Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects	pilot actions	0	10

Table 3 - Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
Th5.1	RSO2.4	RCR104	Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations	solutions	0.00	2021	8.00	MA monitoring system /survey	See Methodology Paper
Th5.1	RSO2.4	RCR79	Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations	joint strategy/action plan	0.00	2021	13.00	MA monitoring system /survey	See Methodology Paper

2.1.1.3. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

- General population;
- Community and voluntary sector organisations;
- Non-governmental organisations (NGOs);
- Public sector organisations.

2.1.1.4. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

There is no planned use of territorial tools.

2.1.1.5. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

There is no planned use of financial instrument

2.1.1.6. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4 - Dimension 1 – intervention field

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th5.1	RSO2.4	ERDF	079. Nature and biodiversity protection, natural heritage and resources, green and blue infrastructure	21,217,263.00

Table 5 - Dimension 2 – form of financing

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th5.1	RSO2.4	ERDF	01. Grant	21,217,263.00

Table 6 - Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th5.1	RSO2.4	ERDF	33. Other approaches - No territorial targeting	21,217,263.00

2.1.1. Specific objective: RSO2.5. Promoting access to water and sustainable water management

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

Water Quality Improvement Programme:

- Cross border catchments (freshwater bodies in cross border river basins) located within the Programme area; and
- Water bodies.

2.1.1.1 Related types of action, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

Water Quality Improvement Programme: This will enable a cross border collaborative approach to the management and improvement of water quality to address the requirements of the Water Framework Directive in selected:

- Cross border catchments (freshwater bodies in cross border river basins) located within the Programme area; and
- Water bodies.

Cross Border Catchments

There is now a better understanding of the role of nature-based solutions and sustainable catchment management and how these should be incorporated as part of the restorative measures. The transboundary nature of water bodies across the Programme area presents an opportunity for strategic collaboration. The proposed investment will facilitate the development and implementation of cross border best practice and technical expertise to improve water quality across the Programme area. It will result in the following benefits:

- Quantifiable improvements in water quality and quantity;
- A decrease in soluble reaction phosphorus (SRP)/ nitrate/ nutrient concentration in selected water bodies across the Programme area;
- An improved understanding and knowledge of nutrient management and biodiversity through cross border collaboration and the development of new solutions;
- Financial savings within the Programme area agricultural sector;

- Decreased public expenditure arising from water treatment costs for public water supply utility; improvement of public health for rural private water supplies; and catchment based flood-reduction measures;
- Improvement to designated sites through implementation of necessary conservation measures which may include nutrient management ;
- A reduction in flooding risks within areas identified as vulnerable;
- The development of nature based solutions (including a contribution to the conservation of boglands);
- The development of buffer strips to protect river basins (and incumbent ecosystems) from the threat of agricultural pollutants; and
- Better public engagement with nature facilitated through the development of nature recovery networks.

Water bodies

The proposed investment in water quality in selected sites will provide the following benefits:

- Additional wastewater treatment in a cross border area encompassing seven counties; Fermanagh and Tyrone in Northern Ireland; and Donegal, Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan and Sligo in the border counties of Ireland;
- An improvement in water quality using new sustainable treatment technologies and innovative solutions, which can be used to inform future cross border collaborative projects and will contribute to decarbonisation;
- A decrease in the threats to the natural habitats of Loughs Erne, Melvin and Donegal Bay;
- The development of cross border urban development management strategies, which ensure a best practice, consistent approach for the areas adjacent to the transition waters; and
- Increased levels of cross border asset, resource, knowledge and experience exchange, which will contribute an improved ecosystem management approach within the Programme area.

This **objective** will promote sustainable water management.

It will **result** in:

- The development and management of cross border water quality and catchment management programmes, designed to enable freshwater bodies in cross border river basins to achieve good or high quality; and
- An increased percentage of shared waters in the Programme area with good or high-quality status.

Actions to be supported

The types of actions to be supported will include:

Cross Border Catchments:

- **Water quality and catchment management strategies:** An operational strategy for dealing with nutrients (soil, organic manures and chemical fertilisers, digestate, sewage sludge) and trans boundary movements in cross-border catchments to include elements such as flow of nutrients, tracking systems, innovative solutions for optimum use of nutrients for sustainable utilisation of all nutrients;
- **Pilots for nature based solutions:** A pilot/pilots for nature-based solutions or innovative nature based solutions to restore catchments including implementation of the necessary conservation measures (e.g. peat restoration), water management measures to reduce runoff (sediment loss) nutrient loss and co-benefits relating to pesticide losses to waterways and to reduce impacts from flooding, e.g. green infrastructure.

These actions will be complemented by:

- Initiatives which result in a measurable change in behaviours/ mind set of landowners;
- A project legacy initiative which will develop or enhance community-focused environmental learning resources to improve understanding of cross-border catchment from environmental, cultural, social or economic views; and /or improve amenity value through nature recovery networks.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they have been assessed as compatible under the RRF DNSH technical guidance.

Water Bodies:

- **Water quality improvement strategies:** The development of a comprehensive cross border catchment plan focussed on the cross border catchments of Loughs Melvin, Erne and Donegal Bay; Projects which encourage improved pesticide practices and develop sustainable farm practices across catchments to minimise impact upon water quality; including the development of a holistic pesticide plan to reduce / eliminate pesticide use within cross-border catchments; The development of a suite of integrated models that will act as tools for the management of shared inland freshwater bodies (Lough Erne, Lough Melvin and Donegal Bay) as a complete ecosystem; to incorporate sustainable treatment technologies and innovative solutions; The production of a comprehensive ecosystem model for the above catchments, coupled with an advanced network of instrumentation;
- **Technologies and solutions for water quality and waste water:** Research and development in wastewater treatment technologies, including the use of sustainable technologies with direct relevance to shared waters; The development and delivery of innovative solutions for sewage related pressures in rural areas in priority catchment(s), to be adopted by the local utility.

These actions will be complemented by:

- Capital projects delivering decarbonisation during both the construction and operation;
- The production of enhanced fishery assessments for both Lough Erne and Lough Melvin; An assessment of ecosystem services *within the target water bodies*;
- Upstream catchment based initiatives to encourage uptake of catchment measures that achieve multiple benefits for water quality, quantity and biodiversity;
- The provision of alternative sustainable treatment systems such as reed beds, willows and wet-lands;
- The provision of nature-based solutions and value added green and blue green infrastructure wherever possible; and
- *The delivery of* education and outreach events for locals including citizen science and school visits.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they are not expected to have any significant negative environmental impact due to their nature.

2.1.1.1b. Definition of a single beneficiary or a limited list of beneficiaries and the granting procedure

Reference: point (c)(i) of Article 17(9)

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2.1.1.2. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2 - Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)
Th5.1	RSO2.5	RCO116	Jointly developed solutions	solutions	0	3
Th5.1	RSO2.5	RCO32	New or upgraded capacity for waste water treatment	population equivalent	0	5000
Th5.1	RSO2.5	RCO83	Strategies and action plans jointly developed	strategy/action plan	0	3

Table 3 - Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
Th5.1	RSO2.5	RCR79	Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations	joint strategy/action plan	0.00	2021	3.00	MA monitoring system /survey	See Methodology Paper
Th5.1	RSO2.5	RCR104	Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations	solutions	0.00	2021	3.00	MA monitoring system /survey	See Methodology Paper
Th5.1	RSO2.5	RCR42	Population connected to at least secondary public waste water treatment	persons	0.00	2021	1,000.00	MA monitoring system /survey	See Methodology Paper

2.1.1.3. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

- General population;
- Community and voluntary sector organisations;
- Agricultural stakeholders;
- Non-governmental organisations (NGOs);
- Public sector organisations.

2.1.1.4. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

There is no planned use of territorial tools.

2.1.1.5. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

There is no planned use of financial instruments.

2.1.1.6. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4 - Dimension 1 – intervention field

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th5.1	RSO2.5	ERDF	065. Waste water collection and treatment	27,392,000.00
Th5.1	RSO2.5	ERDF	064. Water management and water resource conservation (including river basin management, specific climate change adaptation measures, reuse, leakage reduction)	17,976,000.00

Table 5 - Dimension 2 – form of financing

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th5.1	RSO2.5	ERDF	01. Grant	45,368,000.00

Table 6 - Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th5.1	RSO2.5	ERDF	33. Other approaches - No territorial targeting	45,368,000.00

2.1.1. Specific objective: RSO2.7. Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

Biodiversity, Nature Recovery and Resilience Programme

2.1.1.1 Related types of action, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

Biodiversity, Nature Recovery and Resilience Programme: This will promote cross border co-operation to facilitate the recovery of selected habitats and species across the Programme area. It presents an opportunity to build upon current INTERREG VA Programme by continuing to promote cross border co-operation and facilitating the recovery of additional protected habitats and priority species. Investment will be directed towards further delivery of conservation actions proven to redress biodiversity loss and preserve these important environmental, social and economic assets.

Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland as a single biogeographic area hosts a wide range of habitats and species of international significance. Such biodiversity assets have high potential to deliver ecosystem services such as carbon storage and water regulation. However, due to the poor or fragmented condition of many of these habitats, they are no longer contributing ecosystem services to their full potential.

The PEACE PLUS Programme presents an opportunity to invest in the environment through the identification of additional conservation interventions. The Programme will direct investment towards conservation action plans and other conservation measures which are required to redress biodiversity loss and sustain these important environmental, social and economic assets.

A cross border approach to biodiversity management will result in the following benefits to the Programme area;

- Improved and restored habitats and species within protected sites and more resilient ecosystems in the wider landscape;
- Significant contribution to meeting legally-binding requirements and Programme for Government targets to put in place the necessary conservation measures and achieve favourable conservation status for selected habitats and species;
- Enhanced resilience to the effects of climate change and ability to deliver vital nature-based solutions for climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- The restoration of peatland/wetland sites to become net carbon sinks to contribute to achieving net zero emission targets;
- Improvements in water quality and water regulation, and management of wildfire risk; improved flooding protection measures; increased carbon storage; and enhancement of habitat and species in areas managed as natural climate buffers;

- The creation of better ecological connections through the establishment of Nature Recovery Networks; resulting in improved nature engagement and access by the public; and
- Increased defence against the threats posed by invasive alien species.

This **objective** will enhance nature protection and biodiversity and reduce pollution.

It will **result** in an increase in the surface area of selected habitats and habitats for species in improving condition.

Actions to be supported

The Programme will encompass four individual thematic areas. The types of actions to be supported will include:

- **Cross border Protected site restoration:** Delivery of further necessary conservation measures in areas supporting the selected habitats and species to improve conservation condition and increase ecological and climate resilience. This comprises: development of wildfire resilience plans; and the development of nature-based solutions to improve the capacity of habitats to store carbon (including sustainable grazing solutions, positive adjustments to hydrological flow and reductive strategies for encroaching scrub species); and monitoring to demonstrate conservation outcomes;
- **Cross border Development and management of nature recovery networks and nature-based projects:** The identification of key areas for nature recovery and the development and implementation of ecological recovery networks, encompassing green infrastructure; monitoring of species to determine necessary conservation action; and the identification and implementation of nature-based solutions for climate mitigation and adaption, including restoration of habitats to increase carbon storage and/or attenuate flooding risks;
- **Cross border Initiatives to address invasive alien species (IAS):** Development of an all-island strategy on invasive alien species; establishment of an all-island biosecurity group; commissioning of baseline awareness surveys; and development of systems to capture and centralise all-island invasive species data.

Additional activities in support of the above actions include:

- measures which increase appropriate recreation within, and appreciation of, important areas for nature recovery areas;
- innovative solutions and rural enterprise activities linked to nature recovery areas, which promote nature conservation; and
- localised biodiversity action, citizen science projects, and education activities that increase awareness and appreciation.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they have been assessed as compatible under the RRF DNSH technical guidance.

* Selected habitats and species to be specified.

2.1.1.1b. Definition of a single beneficiary or a limited list of beneficiaries and the granting procedure

Reference: point (c)(i) of Article 17(9)

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2.1.1.2. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2 - Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)
Th5.1	RSO2.7	RCO37	Surface of Natura 2000 sites covered by protection and restoration measures	hectares	0	11184
Th5.1	RSO2.7	RCO36	Green infrastructure supported for other purposes than adaptation to climate change	hectares	0	5300
Th5.1	RSO2.7	RCO83	Strategies and action plans jointly developed	strategy/action plan	0	1

Table 3 - Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
Th5.1	RSO2.7	PSR5.1	Number of management units demonstrating a positive change in condition	Management Units	0.00	2021	50.00	MA monitoring system	See Methodology Paper
Th5.1	RSO2.7	RCR79	Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations	joint strategy/action plan	0.00	2021	1.00	MA monitoring system /survey	See Monitoring System

2.1.1.3. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

- General population;
- Community and voluntary sector organisations;
- Non-governmental organisations (NGOs);
- Public sector organisations.

2.1.1.4. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

There is no planned use of territorial tools.

2.1.1.5. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

There is no planned use of financial instruments.

2.1.1.6. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4 - Dimension 1 – intervention field

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th5.1	RSO2.7	ERDF	079. Nature and biodiversity protection, natural heritage and resources, green and blue infrastructure	34,240,000.00

Table 5 - Dimension 2 – form of financing

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th5.1	RSO2.7	ERDF	01. Grant	34,240,000.00

Table 6 - Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th5.1	RSO2.7	ERDF	33. Other approaches - No territorial targeting	34,240,000.00

2.1. Priority: Th5.2 - Supporting a Better Connected Future

Reference: point (d) of Article 17(3)

2.1.1. Specific objective: RSO3.2. Developing and enhancing sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility, including improved access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

Enhanced Sustainable Travel Connectivity Programme

2.1.1.1 Related types of action, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

Enhanced Sustainable Travel Connectivity Programme: This programme will increase connectivity across the Programme area in the form of sustainable transport. It will involve significant investment in sustainable rail stock to enable the introduction of an hourly cross-border rail service.

Increasing the level of cross border mobility is essential for the economic and social and territorial cohesion across the Programme area. This includes the further development and embedding of peace and reconciliation. Transportation facilitates connectivity and contact between people from Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland. The PEACE PLUS Programme will increase connectivity in the form of sustainable public transport. It will invest in the cross border rail services between Belfast and Dublin on the Core Corridor for 2027, in the form of new rolling stock to facilitate the introduction of an hourly service and the reduction of emissions from rail and through encouraging a modal shift.

Investment in transport will be a catalyst for regeneration and economic growth, in particular on the economic corridor between Belfast and Dublin, including the border counties in both Northern Ireland and Ireland. The improvement of the rail service linking the two capital cities and the smaller adjacent urban centres of Portadown, Newry, Dundalk and Drogheda can exploit this dynamic to its full potential, providing spin-off agglomeration and wider economic benefits. Other benefits include the following:

- An investment in modern, safe and sustainable rail infrastructure;
- Reduced emissions per passenger/km arising from reduced journey times, more environmentally friendly rolling stock and improved public transport connections;
- New rolling stock for the 'Enterprise' which will not only have significantly reduced emission but will be future-proofed to enable migration to net zero carbon emissions by 2040;
- New rolling stock with improved accessibility and features for passengers of reduced mobility

- Improved connectivity to key Programme area, national and EU economic centres (thereby boosting the local economy);
- Improved rail connectivity between Belfast and Dublin for the *circa* 3.5m people living within a 40 mile radius of the corridor including:
- An increased speed and capacity which will support the enhanced cross border rail service planned by both *Iarnród Éireann* and *Northern Ireland Railways* including: (a) a reduced journey time target on the Belfast to Dublin rail network (from the current 2 hours 10 mins; and (b) a new hourly service on the Belfast to Dublin rail network. The current service is 2 hourly with 8 departures daily in each direction;
- Significantly increased passenger capacity on key services. Rail passenger forecasts developed illustrate the average daily forecast of passenger numbers benefitting from the investment to be in the range of 16,000 – 18,000 by 2030; and 19,000 – 21,000 by 2040. This will make a significant contribution to improved cross community and cross border relations and thus the creation of a more cohesive society across the Programme area.

It will **result** in an increase in the sustainable rail stock across the Programme area and an increase in cross border mobility achieved through an increased and faster rail service.

Actions to be supported

The action to be supported will include:

- **New sustainable rail rolling stock** to facilitate the introduction of an hourly service between Dublin and Belfast. The investment will work towards the achievement of an increase in service levels and passenger numbers.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they have been assessed as compatible under the RRF DNSH technical guidance.

2.1.1.1b. Definition of a single beneficiary or a limited list of beneficiaries and the granting procedure

Reference: point (c)(i) of Article 17(9)

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2.1.1.2. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2 - Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)
Th5.2	RSO3.2	PSO5.6	Capacity of rail rolling stock for intercity public transport	passengers	0	3096

Table 3 - Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
Th5.2	RSO3.2	PSR5.6b	Time savings due to upgraded intercity rail public transport	Man-days/year	0.00	2021	25,000.00	Supported projects	See Methodology Paper
Th5.2	RSO3.2	PSR5.6a	Annual users of upgraded intercity rail public transport	Passenger-km/year	153,000,000.00	2021	230,000,000.00	Supported projects	See Methodology Paper

2.1.1.3. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

- Rail passengers;
- Enterprises.

2.1.1.4. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

There is no planned use of territorial tools.

2.1.1.5. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

There is no planned use of financial instruments.

2.1.1.6. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4 - Dimension 1 – intervention field

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th5.2	RSO3.2	ERDF	106. Mobile rail assets	141,240,000.00

Table 5 - Dimension 2 – form of financing

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th5.2	RSO3.2	ERDF	01. Grant	141,240,000.00

Table 6 - Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th5.2	RSO3.2	ERDF	27. Other approaches - Functional urban areas	141,240,000.00

2.1. Priority: Th6 - Building and Embedding Partnership and Collaboration

Reference: point (d) of Article 17(3)

2.1.1. Specific objective: ISO6.3. Build up mutual trust, in particular by encouraging people-to-people actions (strands A, D and, where appropriate, strand B)

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

Trust Building Measures between Citizens

2.1.1.1 Related types of action, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

Trust Building Measures between Citizens: The Programme will put in place mechanisms to finance smaller projects or people to people projects that make a strong contribution to the social and civic cohesion of cross-border region. There will be a focus on joint actions to promote citizens' cooperation and trust-building, linking up small organisations cross border that work directly with citizens including community groups (for example sports clubs, cultural organisations), schools, regional SMEs and organisations in the social economy sector.

This **objective** will strengthen trust-building activities among citizens as a founding pillar for cross-border cooperation.

It will **result** in increasing the level and diversity of cooperation between citizens.

Actions to be supported

The types of actions to be supported will include:

- **Citizens Cooperation:** Small projects to promote citizens' cooperation around specific shared challenges e.g. climate change;
- **Joint events and activities:** North South joint events and activities that develop mutual understanding and cement partnership; and

- **Trust building activities:** For example, linking up sports clubs, cultural organisations and community groups.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they are not expected to have any significant negative environmental impact due to their nature.

2.1.1.1b. Definition of a single beneficiary or a limited list of beneficiaries and the granting procedure

Reference: point (c)(i) of Article 17(9)

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2.1.1.2. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2 - Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)
Th6	ISO6.3	RCO81	Participations in joint actions across borders	participations	0	10000
Th6	ISO6.3	RCO87	Organisations cooperating across borders	organisations	0	400

Table 3 - Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
Th6	ISO6.3	RCR104	Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations	solutions	0.00	2021	7,500.00	MA monitoring system	See Methodology Paper
Th6	ISO6.3	RCR84	Organisations cooperating across borders after project completion	organisations	0.00	2021	200.00	MA monitoring system/survey	See Methodology Paper

2.1.1.3. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

- Citizens;
- Community groups of all types;
- Community and voluntary sector organisations;
- Schools and youth organisations;
- SMEs;
- Social enterprises.

2.1.1.4. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

There is no planned use of territorial tools.

2.1.1.5. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

There is no planned use of financial instruments.

2.1.1.6. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4 - Dimension 1 – intervention field

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th6	ISO6.3	ERDF	171. Enhancing cooperation with partners both within and outside the Member State	17,120,000.00

Table 5 - Dimension 2 – form of financing

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th6	ISO6.3	ERDF	01. Grant	17,120,000.00

Table 6 - Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th6	ISO6.3	ERDF	33. Other approaches - No territorial targeting	17,120,000.00

2.1.1. Specific objective: ISO6.6. Other actions to support better cooperation governance (all strands)

Reference: point (e) of Article 17(3)

The Strategic Planning and Engagement Programme

2.1.1.1 Related types of action, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives and to macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, where appropriate

Reference: point (e)(i) of Article 17(3), point (c)(ii) of Article 17(9)

The Strategic Planning and Engagement Programme: This will support engagement of strategic stakeholders targeting legal and administrative obstacles to cooperation in relevant sectors. The funding will focus on enabling joint development and management of strategies; cooperation capacity building; and identification of solutions to reduce obstacles to cross-border cooperation.

The Programme will operate in synergy with other policies (e.g. cross-border mobility), legal instruments (e.g. bilateral agreements, treaties, EGTCs) and other funding not limited to INTERREG (e.g. European Cross-Border Mechanism).

Investment will be directed towards enhancing cross-border cooperation to address obstacles that impact cross-border socio-economic fluidity and more generally the reconciliation process throughout the Island. There will be an increased focus on the following elements:

- Support to identify of key obstacles and unused potential (examples include cross-border labour market hindrances, health care, transport connections, tourism, energy, and issues related to the legacy of the conflict. There will also be challenges deriving from Brexit and the COVID-19 emergency);
- Support to bring the relevant actors together (e.g. authorities at national, regional and local levels, voluntary and community sectors, enterprises, stakeholder networks);
- Support for the process of finding solutions to reduce these obstacles or exploit the potential;
- Support for cross border entities (e.g. Euroregions [ref. 1]) to enhance sharing experience, expertise and knowledge to further develop in the future. Partnership models will be promoted in order to reach common solutions for shared challenges in specific territories; and
- Support to identify areas where important cross-border data is missing and support projects to fill the gap in the context of its vital nature in future cooperation.

These support measures will contribute to the development and management of cross-border strategies which are necessary for sustainable and structural cooperation. Linkages between existing and new strategies will also be encouraged. The Programme will also seek to align with the European Green Deal and other European initiatives such as the Atlantic Strategy.

This **objective** will reduce the legal and administrative barriers to cross-border cooperation through joint development and management of strategies; cooperation capacity building; and identification of solutions.

It will **result** in the improved capacity for cooperation at strategic level in relevant sectors.

Actions to be supported

The types of actions to be supported will include:

- **Collaboration and dialogue incorporating:** Dialogue between different actors to establish the challenges and possible solutions to facilitate increased cross border collaboration in key sectors including Business, Health Care, Tourism, Environment (including air quality) and Energy;
- **Feasibility studies and data collection:** Cross border feasibility studies and data collection activities designed to develop solutions to address current obstacles to cross border collaboration in key areas. For example, research related to the cross border labour market and future skills mapping; and air quality modelling and analysis to establish emerging issues and increased levels of evidence;
- **Strategies:** Joint development of cross-border strategies, including for example, a joint tourism marketing and branding initiative and cross border council strategies;
- **Pilot project and demonstration initiatives:** (1) Pilot projects initiatives informed by the dialogue and feasibility work undertaken, designed to implement jointly developed solutions to strategic cross border collaboration; (2) Exchange of experience and demonstration initiatives to share solutions and increase their impact in key areas; and
- **Capacity building and skills research hub:** (1) Training, peer reviews and staff exchanges to enhance institutional capacity; (2) Support the establishment of an all-island skills research hub, in cooperation with relevant agencies and stakeholders, to commission and foster cross border research and innovation, driven by the social and economic needs of the Programme area.

The types of actions have been assessed as compatible with the DNSH principle, since they are not expected to have any significant negative environmental impact due to their nature.

References

[ref. 1] For example Ireland Northwest have established a cooperation between local authorities of Derry/Londonderry & Strabane District Council and Donegal County Council or the East Border Region.

2.1.1.1b. Definition of a single beneficiary or a limited list of beneficiaries and the granting procedure

Reference: point (c)(i) of Article 17(9)

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2.1.1.2. Indicators

Reference: point (e)(ii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iii) of Article 17(9)

Table 2 - Output indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Milestone (2024)	Target (2029)
Th6	ISO6.6	RCO83	Strategies and action plans jointly developed	strategy/action plan	0	12
Th6	ISO6.6	RCO84	Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects	pilot actions	0	12
Th6	ISO6.6	RCO87	Organisations cooperating across borders	organisations	0	48

Table 3 - Result indicators

Priority	Specific objective	ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline	Reference year	Target (2029)	Source of data	Comments
Th6	ISO6.6	RCR84	Organisations cooperating across borders after project completion	organisations	0.00	2021	24.00	MA monitoring system / survey	See Methodology Paper
Th6	ISO6.6	RCR79	Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations	joint strategy/action plan	0.00	2021	12.00	MA monitoring system /survey	See Methodology Paper

2.1.1.3. Main target groups

Reference: point (e)(iii) of Article 17(3), point (c)(iv) of Article 17(9)

- Citizens;
- Public sector organisations;
- Cross border bodies;
- Stakeholder network and umbrella organisations.

2.1.1.4. Indication of the specific territories targeted, including the planned use of ITI, CLLD or other territorial tools

Reference: Article point (e)(iv) of 17(3)

There is no planned use of territorial tool

2.1.1.5. Planned use of financial instruments

Reference: point (e)(v) of Article 17(3)

There is no planned use of financial instruments.

2.1.1.6. Indicative breakdown of the EU programme resources by type of intervention

Reference: point (e)(vi) of Article 17(3), point (c)(v) of Article 17(9)

Table 4 - Dimension 1 – intervention field

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th6	ISO6.6	ERDF	173. Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders to implement territorial cooperation projects and initiatives in a cross-border, transnational, maritime and inter-regional context	27,392,000.00

Table 5 - Dimension 2 – form of financing

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th6	ISO6.6	ERDF	01. Grant	27,392,000.00

Table 6 - Dimension 3 – territorial delivery mechanism and territorial focus

Priority	Specific objective	Fund	Code	Amount (EUR)
Th6	ISO6.6	ERDF	33. Other approaches - No territorial targeting	27,392,000.00

3. Financing plan

Reference: point (f) of Article 17(3)

3.1. Financial appropriations by year

Table 7

Reference: point (g)(i) of Article 17(3), points (a) to (d) of Article 17(4)

Fund	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
ERDF	0.00	40,055,395.00	275,390,687.00	161,543,285.00	164,158,141.00	136,024,824.00	138,745,320.00	915,917,652.00
Total	0.00	40,055,395.00	275,390,687.00	161,543,285.00	164,158,141.00	136,024,824.00	138,745,320.00	915,917,652.00

3.2.Total financial appropriations by fund and national co-financing

Reference: point (f)(ii) of Article 17(3), points (a) to (d) of Article 17(4)

Table 8

Policy objective	Priority	Fund	Basis for calculation EU support (total eligible cost or public contribution)	EU contribution (a)=(a1)+(a2)	Indicative breakdown of the EU contribution		National contribution (b)=(c)+(d)	Indicative breakdown of the national counterpart		Total (e)=(a)+(b)	Co-financing rate (f)=(a)/(e)	Contributions from the third countries
					without TA pursuant to Article 27(1) (a1)	for TA pursuant to Article 27(1) (a2)		National public (c)	National private (d)			
4	Th1	ERDF	Total	214,000,000.00	200,000,000.00	14,000,000.00	53,500,000.00	53,500,000.00	0.00	267,500,000.00	80.000000000000%	0.00
1	Th2.1	ERDF	Total	77,040,000.00	72,000,000.00	5,040,000.00	19,260,000.00	19,260,000.00	0.00	96,300,000.00	80.000000000000%	0.00
4	Th2.2	ERDF	Total	68,480,000.00	64,000,000.00	4,480,000.00	17,120,000.00	17,120,000.00	0.00	85,600,000.00	80.000000000000%	0.00
4	Th3	ERDF	Total	105,468,388.00	98,568,587.00	6,899,801.00	26,367,097.00	26,367,097.00	0.00	131,835,485.00	80.000000000000%	0.00
4	Th4	ERDF	Total	147,232,000.00	137,600,000.00	9,632,000.00	36,808,000.00	36,808,000.00	0.00	184,040,000.00	80.000000000000%	0.00
2	Th5.1	ERDF	Total	117,945,264.00	110,229,219.00	7,716,045.00	29,486,316.00	29,486,316.00	0.00	147,431,580.00	80.000000000000%	0.00
3	Th5.2	ERDF	Total	141,240,000.00	132,000,000.00	9,240,000.00	35,310,000.00	35,310,000.00	0.00	176,550,000.00	80.000000000000%	0.00
6	Th6	ERDF	Total	44,512,000.00	41,600,000.00	2,912,000.00	11,128,000.00	11,128,000.00	0.00	55,640,000.00	80.000000000000%	0.00
	Total	ERDF		915,917,652.00	855,997,806.00	59,919,846.00	228,979,413.00	228,979,413.00	0.00	1,144,897,065.00	80.000000000000%	0.00
	Grand total			915,917,652.00	855,997,806.00	59,919,846.00	228,979,413.00	228,979,413.00	0.00	1,144,897,065.00	80.000000000000%	0.00

4. Action taken to involve the relevant programme partners in the preparation of the Interreg programme and the role of those programme partners in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation

Reference: point (g) of Article 17(3)

The principle of partnership working is long established and deeply engrained in the development and implementation of previous PEACE and Interreg Programmes. The SEUPB has coordinated the preparation of the PEACE PLUS Programme. From the outset of the Programme development, the SEUPB adopted an approach which facilitates the partnership principle and a Programme Development Steering Group (PDSG) was established to provide assistance and advice to the SEUPB throughout the development of the PEACE PLUS Programme.

Members of PDSG were appointed through nomination from partner bodies represented under the current programme Monitoring Committees' (PEACE IV and Interreg VA) sectoral groupings. These sectoral groupings had previously been agreed with the Minister of Finance and Personnel (NI) and Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (Ireland), following nomination from relevant partner bodies.

In accordance with Article 8(1) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060, these partners are the most representative of the relevant stakeholders. Table Y below outlines the membership of PDSG. The categories of membership include regional and local public authorities (government), bodies with cross-cutting interests reflective of civil society and finally social and economic partners, as required by Article 8(4) of the Code of Conduct on Partnership.

Attached to the IP you can find a table with the Composition of the PEACE PLUS Programme Development Steering Group (PDSG), which contains the following types of partners: Member State Representatives; Regional/Sub-Regional/ Local Government Interests; Cross Cutting Interests; Social and Economic Partners and Accountable Departments.

The main functions of the PDSG included **review and advice** on the following:

- The stakeholder engagement and public consultation process for the development of the Programme, as well as the findings from these processes;
- The socio-economic profile of the Programme area;
- The content of the draft PEACE PLUS Programme throughout its stages of development;
- The proposals for the effective and efficient programme delivery of PEACE PLUS.

The PDSG met throughout the programme development process of the PEACE PLUS Programme. Appropriate procedural arrangements were put in place to ensure members of PDSG had adequate time to consider proposals. A final agenda and working papers for all meetings were circulated five working days in advance of meetings, as far as possible. Papers were circulated via e mail (and hard copies were provided if requested) and hence were easily accessible. If members (or their alternative representative were unable to attend a meeting, the member was able to submit written comments on any of the items of business to be considered at the PDSG meeting). At each meeting an extensive Programme Update was presented, which addressed key aspects of Programme development, and comment from members was sought. The main areas of involvement of the PDSG are summarised below:

- The documents supporting the Stakeholder Engagement Survey were shared with PDSG members and revised accordingly, based on their views. The Stakeholder Engagement Report was shared

with PDSG for comment, before wider circulation;

- The Draft Socio-Economic Profile, critical to the identification of the needs and opportunities of the Programme area, was revised and finalised after PDSG consideration. The PDSG also had input into the Terms of Reference for this piece of work – reviewing and providing suggestions;
- An overview of the Themes/Priorities for the Programme and the Draft Schema of the Programme, including Investment Areas, was presented in various iterations as Programme development progressed. The comments of PDSG members were noted and acted upon as appropriate;
- The Draft Consultation Information Document was also shared with members for review and comment. The views of PDSG were duly considered and documents were amended as relevant;

The role of those partners in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Programme

To ensure the partnership principle continues throughout the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Programme, the cross-border Monitoring Committee will include balanced representation from across the Programme area including representatives of the Member States; regional, local and other public authorities: economic and social partners; and bodies representing civil society, such as environmental partners, non-governmental organisations and bodies responsible for promoting social inclusion, gender equality and non-discrimination.

The Monitoring Committee shall delegate responsibility for the selection of projects to a Steering Committee which will be constituted on a cross border basis, will echo the balanced representation of the Monitoring Committee and which will be reflective of the principles of partnership.

Process for involving all types of stakeholders (and efforts to reach out to them)

Whilst the partners of the PDSG are regarded as the most representative of relevant stakeholders for the PEACE PLUS programme and the PDSG has supported the programme development process providing guidance and expertise, the programme has also been informed by intensive stakeholder engagement. This has included bilateral engagement with government departments in Northern Ireland and Ireland over an 18 month period. In addition, there have been meetings with stakeholders from a wide range of sectors and interest groups including statutory agencies, local government, business representatives and community and voluntary organisations. Finally, a wider stakeholder engagement exercise to capture the views of citizens was facilitated through a two stage process, as described below.

Stage one: A stakeholder engagement survey was undertaken in early 2020. The purpose of the stakeholder engagement survey was to obtain direct input from stakeholders on potential funding themes for the PEACE PLUS Programme as well as feedback on delivery and implementation options as proposed by the draft regulations. In order to maximise awareness of the survey and support a high level of good quality responses, a broad range of communications interventions were deployed. A comprehensive and extensive stakeholder engagement process took place between December 2019 and February 2020. A total of 16 public events were held across the Programme area (in each of the border counties of Ireland and in each county in Northern Ireland), and these were attended by over 1000 people. Umbrella organisations also arranged smaller events. In addition six specific events were held with children and young people to gauge their opinions on the Programme. This initial engagement process culminated in the submission of over 300 surveys. A full report which summarises the findings of the surveys was produced and made available on the SEUPB website.

Stage two: An extensive **statutory public consultation** exercise was undertaken, the purpose of which

was to provide citizens and other key stakeholders with an opportunity to share their views on the content and administrative arrangements for the PEACE PLUS programme. A Consultation Information Document, reflective of the aspects of the draft Cooperation Programme, was produced and published. To assist stakeholders formulate their consultation response, it provided pertinent information on the following:

- An overview of how the Programme was prepared;
- A summary of the proposed Programme Strategy including the Themes and Investment Areas of the PEACE PLUS Programme;
- A summary of the administrative arrangements proposed to simplify the Programme.

The Consultation document also included key questions on the proposed Themes and Investment Areas as well as administrative arrangements for the Programme. Views were also sought on the findings of the Equality Screening Exercise and the Strategic Environmental Assessment, supporting documents associated with the Consultation Information Document. A range of Navigation Papers which were sector specific were also published on the SEUPB website in order to describe the range of areas under the proposed programme which groups could benefit from and apply to.

The public consultation exercise took place from 10 March 2021 to 12 May 2021. A total of 415 responses were received and a report summarising these responses was produced and published on the SEUPB website.

Accessible formats of the engagement and consultation documents were offered on request, including Braille, easy read, large print, audio-CD and different languages. An Executive Summary of the Consultation document, taking the form of an Infographic, was also produced in line with best practice guidelines.

In order to reach as many potential consultees across the Programme area, comprehensive communications plans were developed for both the engagement survey and the statutory public consultation. These plans identified target audiences including citizens across the Programme area, government departments, elected representatives, local authorities, social partners, private sector and business representative groups, academic and research organisations, and umbrella bodies representing various interest groups. A GDPR compliant bespoke Contact Database was developed to help promote stakeholder engagement and consultation. In addition, “hard to reach” local community- based organisations were identified through a separate consultancy report.

The following communication channels were used to ensure stakeholders were aware of all stages of engagement (and adapted to take account of the unique circumstances in relation to Covid-19):

- Direct e mail campaign via the PEACE PLUS Contact Database;
- Paid social media advertising campaign;
- Social media posts throughout the consultation process;
- Print adverts in local press;
- Communications partnering with relevant interest groups who acted as “communications multipliers” to help promote engagement and consultation;
- Bespoke SEUPB consultation video;

- SEUPB website with dedicated consultation page.

Capacity Building (Article 17 of the Code and Article 8(2) CPR)

Partners who will be involved in PEACE PLUS are experienced partners with the institutional capacity to effectively participate in preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes. However, if a need to support institutional capacity was identified, the SEUPB will respond accordingly.

5. Approach to communication and visibility for the Interreg programme (objectives, target audiences, communication channels, including social media outreach, where appropriate, planned budget and relevant indicators for monitoring and evaluation)

Reference: point (h) of Article 17(3)

Communication Objectives

The primary objectives of the communications strategy will be to:

- Promote funding calls to potential applicants across and, where appropriate, outside the programme area in order to attract high-quality, suitable applications. Details of all calls will be published on the SEUPB's website, updated at least three times a year;
- Help ensure that the PEACE PLUS Programme's target audiences perceive the programme as having a positive impact;
- Ensure that successful beneficiaries have access to the right information and guidance needed to properly acknowledge EU funding;
- Ensure effective internal communication within the SEUPB.

A detailed communications strategy for the PEACE PLUS Programmes has also been prepared. As the programme reaches full commitment under each theme, the communications work will focus more heavily on promoting the achievements of all funded projects.

Target Audiences

The communications strategy will target the following audiences: potential applicants and beneficiaries; the community/voluntary sector; local authorities, NGO's/charities; Universities and FE Colleges; Academic & Research Institutions; local/national level government officials and departments; local/national level media (including print, broadcast and online journalists); the general public; internal SEUPB staff; the European Commission; potential beneficiary partners outside of the programme area; and the programme monitoring and steering committees. The SEUPB will also liaise with existing relevant national and EU-level communication networks. This function will be carried out by the programme's communication officer.

Communication Channels

The SEUPB will proactively seek out opportunities to highlight the positive benefits that the PEACE PLUS Programme is making. All media relations activity will be reflective of the results and achievements of the programme. The SEUPB's website will act as the main repository of information pertaining to PEACE PLUS, it will include a list of funded projects, updated every four months. The website will also include information on the programme's objectives, activities, planned calls for proposals and achievements etc. Other communication channels used will include: social media; print, broadcast and online advertising campaigns; events (such as conferences, exhibitions, seminars and training workshops etc.), as well as additional visibility support provided by the SEUPB for project communication events or activities, as appropriate, which will involve the Commission, for any operation

of strategic importance and operations whose total cost exceeds €5m; email marketing; printed and digital/online literature (infographics, programme summary documents etc.); promotional programme videos; and branded promotional items etc. The SEUPB will incorporate a number of disability inclusion measures into relevant communications activities and also adopt sustainable eco-friendly practices, particularly concerning publications and event organisation.

Social Media Outreach

A range of different social media platforms and campaigns will be used to help secure high levels of social media outreach. These platforms will include Twitter, Facebook, You Tube and LinkedIn etc.; forming the basis of a social media strategy for the PEACE PLUS Programme. Different analytical tools will be used to record, track and evaluate the success of all social media activity and campaign work on each platform, on a monthly basis. This analysis will be focused around engagement levels (measured in Retweets, likes, link clicks, comments etc.), reach, impressions, new followers and/or subscribers etc. All of the analytical data collected will be used to help enhance social media performance.

Planned budget

The communications budget will cover the costs of the following activities: events (including speaker fees, venue hire, catering, event management and audio-visual support); advertising (print, broadcast and online); PR/Communications support; design (for printed and digital literature etc.); branded promotional items and other marketing collateral; video production; website development and maintenance; translation services; photography; media monitoring services; newspaper licencing; and surveying support etc. The total available programme communications budget would be equal or higher than 0.3% of the total value of the PEACE PLUS Programme. This budget would be reviewed on an annual basis.

Relevant Indicators for monitoring and evaluation

A wide-range of different methods and monitoring systems will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the communications strategy. These will be subject to annual review and potential amendment. Baselines will be agreed, wherever possible, to help measure levels of improvement and success. Examples include: high levels of social media engagement; unique page views on the SEUPB website and positive satisfaction ratings for attendees at programme related events etc. Evaluation of the different communication channels used will be undertaken by various sources including: on-line analytics, an independent media monitoring company and externally commissioned stakeholder surveys.

6. Indication of support to small-scale projects, including small projects within small project funds

Reference: point (i) of Article 17(3), Article 24

Larger organizations such as universities, research institutes and business organizations have been active in applying for PEACE and INTERREG programme funding in the past. In general, small organizations have been funded through the local authority action plans or have benefited from activity funded through larger organisations. There is no lack of ideas nor needs in small organizations, the problem appears instead to be related to administrative capacity, a lack of liquidity and a lack of knowledge and skills required for governing an EU-project. A main project in the current programmes is normally a project with a budget in excess of 1 million Euro. The Programmes have in the past supported smaller organisations to carry out important activity particularly around capacity building and trust building activity.

In the 2021-27 period, the PEACE programme will support projects of limited financial volume by using differentiation in the types of projects supported. The Programme will support small scale projects under Priority Th1 ISO4.2 (Empowering Communities; Art. 14(2) Regulation (EU) 2021/1059) and Priority Th6 ISO 6.3. Under Priority Th1 ISO4.2 and Priority Th6 ISO 6.3, this will be done via an Implementing Body appointed by the Managing Authority. This Implementing Body is an existing organisation in Ireland called Pobal who work on behalf of government, as an existing structure, to support communities and local agencies, and they will deliver this work in partnership a partner organisation in NI, who will be selected through a public procurement exercise run by Managing Authority, which will ensure coverage of partnership across both jurisdictions.

7. Implementing provisions

7.1. Programme authorities

Reference: point (a) of Article 17(6)

Table 9

Programme authorities	Name of the institution	Contact name	Position	E-mail
Managing authority	Special EU Programmes Body	Mr Paul Beattie	Director of the Managing Authority	paul.beattie@seupb.eu
Audit authority	Department of Public Expenditure and Reforms	Mr Dermot Byne	Head of Audit Authority	dermot.byme@per.gov.ie
National authority (for programmes with participating third or partner countries)	Department of Finance, Northern Ireland	Mr Dominic McCullough	Head of EU Unit	domonic.mccullough@finance.ni.gov.uk
Group of auditors representatives	Department of Finance, Northern Ireland	Mr Fergal McAneney	ETC programmes Audit Authority	fergal.mcaneney@finance.ni.gov.uk
Body to which the payments are to be made by the Commission	Special EU Programmes Bodies	Mr Paul Sheridan	Director of Corporate Services	paul.sheridan@seupb.eu

7.2. Procedure for setting up the joint secretariat

Reference: point (b) of Article 17(6)

In accordance with ETC Article 45 (3) (Regulation (EU) 2021/1059), the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) will be the Managing Authority of the Programme.

The SEUPB is one of the six Cross-border Bodies set up under the “Agreement between the Government of Ireland and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland establishing implementing bodies” signed on 8 March 1999 (the British-Irish Agreement of 8 March 1999). The Agreement was given domestic effect, North and South, by means of the North/South Co-operation (Implementation Bodies) (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 and the British-Irish Agreement Act 1999 respectively. The SEUPB currently acts as the Managing Authority, Joint Secretariat and Certifying Authority of the PEACE IV and INTERREG VA (Northern Ireland, Ireland, and Scotland) Programmes.

In accordance with ETC Article 46(2) (Regulation (EU) 2021/1059) the Managing Authority has agreed with the Member States that the Joint Secretariat for the programme will be part of the SEUPB.

The Joint Secretariat shall have the following functions:

- assist the managing authority and the monitoring committee in carrying out their respective functions;
- provide information to potential beneficiaries about funding opportunities under the Programme;
- assist beneficiaries in the implementation of operations.

Staff working for the Joint Secretariat will be operating from two locations in Northern Ireland and one in the Border Counties of Ireland (three premises in total in the Programme Area).

A memorandum of understanding will be issued to the Joint Secretariat from the managing authority delegating the roles and responsibilities of the Joint Secretariat.

The SEUPB will allocate sufficient staffing and financial resources to the Joint Secretariat to enable it to carry out its functions. These resources will be agreed with the Member States as part of the approval of the corporate and business plans for the SEUPB.

7.3. Apportionment of liabilities among participating Member States and where applicable, the third or partner countries and OCTs, in the event of financial corrections imposed by the managing authority or the Commission

Reference: point (c) of Article 17(6)

If the Managing Authority suspects or is informed about an irregular use of granted funds it shall employ follow-up actions, such as suspending the reimbursement of the financing related to the lead partner or project partner and expenditure under examination, withdrawal or reduction of the Programme co-financing, recovery of granted funds.

The Managing Authority shall ensure that any amount paid as a result of an irregularity is recovered from the lead partner. Project partners shall repay the lead partner any amounts unduly paid.

Article 52 (3) of Regulation (EU) No 2021/1059 indicates the MS will reimburse the MA. In the case of PEACE Plus the programme is pre-financed by Accountable Departments. If an irregularity is pursued and not recovered from a recipient the MA will not claim this from the EU. However if it has been claimed from the EU, this will be netted against the next reimbursement from the EU. The AD that pre-financed the irregularity will therefore not receive the equivalent reimbursement from the EU through SEUPB and SEUPB will need to apply for a debt write off from the AD. The risk remains with the AD and not the MA and EU.

With regard to TA expenditure based on joint decisions by the participating countries, the participating countries bear joint liability proportionally to their respective share in the overall TA budget.

Apportionment of liabilities among participating Member States will be covered in the financing agreement.

8. Use of unit costs, lump sums, flat rates and financing not linked to costs

Reference: Articles 94 and 95 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 (CPR)

Table 10: Use of unit costs, lump sums, flat rates and financing not linked to costs

Intended use of Articles 94 and 95 CPR	Yes	No
From the adoption, the programme will make use of reimbursement of the Union contribution based on unit costs, lump sums and flat rates under the priority according to Article 94 CPR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
From the adoption, the programme will make use of reimbursement of the Union contribution based on financing not linked to costs according to Article 95 CPR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Appendix 1

A. Summary of the main elements

Priority	Fund	Specific objective	Estimated proportion of the total financial allocation within the priority to which the simplified cost option will be applied in %	Type(s) of operation covered		Indicator triggering reimbursement		Unit of measurement for the indicator triggering reimbursement	Type of simplified cost option (standard scale of unit costs, lump sums or flat rates)	Amount (in EUR) or percentage (in case of flat rates) of the simplified cost option
				Code(1)	Description	Code(2)	Description			

(1) This refers to the code for the intervention field dimension in Table 1 of Annex 1 CPR

(2) This refers to the code of a common indicator, if applicable

Appendix 1

B. Details by type of operation

C. Calculation of the standard scale of unit costs, lump sums or flat rates

1. Source of data used to calculate the standard scale of unit costs, lump sums or flat rates (who produced, collected and recorded the data, where the data is stored, cut-off dates, validation, etc):

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2. Please specify why the proposed method and calculation based on Article 94(2) is relevant to the type of operation:

3. Please specify how the calculations were made, in particular including any assumptions made in terms of quality or quantities. Where relevant, statistical evidence and benchmarks should be used and, if requested, provided in a format that is usable by the Commission:

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4. Please explain how you have ensured that only eligible expenditure was included in the calculation of the standard scale of unit cost, lump sum or flat rate:

5. Assessment of the audit authority or authorities of the calculation methodology and amounts and the arrangements to ensure the verification, quality, collection and storage of data:

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Appendix 2

A. Summary of the main elements

Priority	Fund	Specific objective	The amount covered by the financing not linked to costs	Type(s) of operation covered		Conditions to be fulfilled/results to be achieved triggering reimbursement by the Commission	Indicator		Unit of measurement for the conditions to be fulfilled/results to be achieved triggering reimbursement by the Commission	Envisaged type of reimbursement method used to reimburse the beneficiary or beneficiaries
				Code(1)	Description		Code(2)	Description		

(1) This refers to the code for the intervention field dimension in Table 1 of Annex 1 to the CPR and Annex IV to the EMFAF Regulation.

(2) This refers to the code of a common indicator, if applicable.

B. Details by type of operation

PEACE PLUS will support the following operations of strategic importance:

10 operations of strategic importance under ISO4.4 – focusing on Shares Spaces

Specific Objective: ISO4.4. PEACE PLUS Re-imaging Communities

Approximate timeline (Note that this is indicative)

1. Call launch: May 2022
2. Project Start: Q4 2022
3. Project duration: 3 years

Further detail on the operation will be established at application and contracting stage.

Approximately 11 operations of strategic importance under RSO4.5 – focusing on Health

Specific Objective: RSO4.5. Ensuring equal access to health care and fostering resilience of health systems, including primary care, and promoting the transition from institutional to family- and community-based care

Approximate timeline (Note that this is indicative)

1. Call launch: June 2022
2. Project Start: Q4 2022
3. Project duration: 3-4 years

Further detail on the operation will be established at application and contracting stage.

1 operation of strategic importance under RSO3.2 – focusing on rail

Specific Objective: RSO3.2. Developing and enhancing sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility, including improved access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility

Approximate timeline (Note that this is indicative)

1. Call launch: September 2022
2. Project Start: Q1 2023
3. Project duration: 6 years

Further detail on the operation will be established at application and contracting stage.

DOCUMENTS

Document title	Document type	Document date	Local reference	Commission reference	Files	Sent date	Sent by
Programme snapshot 2021TC16RFPC001 2.0	Snapshot of data before send	26 Jun 2023		Ares(2023)4419599	Programme_snapshot_2021TC16RFPC001_2.0_en.pdf	26 Jun 2023	Beattie, Paul