



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

Joint Committee on Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gealtacht Affairs

Thursday 6 April 2017

Opening Statement Report

Provided by Gina McIntyre, CEO of the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB)



1.0 WHAT IS THE SEUPB

The SEUPB operates under the overall policy direction of the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC), with clear accountability lines back to the European Commission, the NSMC, the Oireachtas and the Northern Ireland Executive.

Cross-border bodies (of which the SEUPB is one of six established within the Good Friday Agreement) broadened levels of cross-border administrative co-operation, by working with relevant civil service departments and divisions in Northern Ireland and Ireland. This broad co-operation is central to the work of the SEUPB.

The SEUPB brings together officials from the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in Ireland. It also works closely with a wide variety of civil service departments in Northern Ireland and Ireland.

2.0 WHAT IS THE PEACE PROGRAMME

The EU cross-border Peace and Reconciliation (PEACE) Programme is a unique (across all 28 member states) structural fund aimed at reinforcing progress towards a peaceful and stable society within Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland.

The first PEACE I (1995-1999) Programme was created as a direct result of the European Union's desire to make a positive response to opportunities presented in the Northern Ireland peace process during 1994.

Since then it has provided €1.56 billion worth of funding to support peace and reconciliation projects on a cross-border basis.

The PEACE Programmes have evolved over each programming period, and several hundred thousand people have participated in cross-border activities including development of border region SMEs and social economy enterprises; community based organisations leading projects on reconciliation and cultural understanding; and cross-border projects focusing on skills, learning and training.



2.1 PEACE III (2007-2013) Programme

The PEACE III (2007-2013) Programme delivered a number of key achievements, as detailed below:

- 189,007 attendees at 8,393 events that address sectarianism and racism or deal with conflict resolution.
- 6,999 people in receipt of trauma counselling.
- 44,037 people attending 1,887 events assisting victims and survivors.
- 25,429 people attending 2,184 conflict resolution workshops.
- 2,754 participants from 63 interface areas engaged in initiatives which addressed barriers (physical and non-physical) to acknowledge and deal with the past.
- 136,166 users of 18 shared public environments which were created or improved through cross-community regeneration projects.
- 27,383 people benefiting from shared services. These innovative service delivery models (at both the local and central level) directly addressed the issues of segregation, sectarianism and racism and focused on sectors such as education, community health, employability, environmental protection and sport.
- 7 pilot projects of cross-border co-operation between public sector bodies aimed at increasing the capacity for a shared society.

Notable case studies (funded by the PEACE III Programme)

- **Peace Bridge, Derry/Londonderry.** A £14.6m PEACE III funded new iconic foot and cycle-bridge, joining the city physically and promoting interaction and cross-community engagement among communities. It has also brought back into public use the former Ebrington military barracks, thereby creating a new shared space.





- **Girdwood Hub, North Belfast.** This £11.7m PEACE III funded project created a state-of-the-art 'Community Hub' on the site of a former army barracks ensuring a new iconic shared space for Belfast and the wider region. The President of the Republic of Colombia, President Juan Manuel Santos Calderon, recently visited the Girdwood Community Hub during a three day visit to the UK.

During his visit President Santos took time to meet with local politicians, community representatives and school groups involved in the development and implementation of the project.

- **Castle Saunderson International Scout Centre.** This €3.7m PEACE III funded project has created a 30 acre multi-activity adventure centre, just outside Cavan. It includes fully equipped indoor facilities as well as a Jamboree site, capable of accommodating up to 1,000 people at any given time.

Located between Cavan, Fermanagh and Monaghan, the centre has been designed to encourage greater levels of interaction from young people from different religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.





- **Peace Link**, a €7.8m EU PEACE III funded project officially opened in September 2014 by the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins. The project has transformed a fourteen acre site at Liseggerton in Clones into a state-of-the-art multi-use sports and recreational facility that will be able to host major sporting competitions.

The core objective of the facility is to encourage greater levels of positive cross-community engagement through a shared interest in sport. It will also provide much needed cross-border access to high quality sporting facilities for people living across County Fermanagh and County Monaghan.



3.0 WHAT IS THE INTERREG PROGRAMME

The EU cross-border INTERREG Programme was first introduced in 1991 and was devised as the European Community's response to the implications of the single market. It recognised the relatively disadvantaged situation of Border Regions throughout the European Community and proposed a mechanism of support for such areas.

Since 1991 the INTERREG Programme has provided approximately €1.13 billion of support into the region. This funding has been used to finance thousands of projects that support strategic cross-border co-operation in order to create a more prosperous and sustainable region.

The eligible area for the INTERREG IIIA Programme was Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland, and in excess of a hundred thousand people have benefitted from jobs created or safeguarded throughout the Programme in areas such as business development, tourism, and rural business assistance, cross-border business clusters as well as those



created by participation in skills training, re-skilling programmes and sectorial initiatives such as cross-border healthcare.

Under the last programming period the eligible area of the Programme was expanded to include Western Scotland. This continues into the INTERREG VA Programme for 2014-2020.

3.1 What has the INTERREG Programme Achieved

The INTERREG IVA (2007-2013) Programme delivered a number of key achievements, as detailed below:

- 3,552 businesses assisted to help promote innovation and creative activities. This assistance included the development of new and innovative products and business processes, expertise sharing, skills sales, marketing, strategy development, staff training, mentoring and the development of educational/business skills.
- 663 of these businesses assisted above have entered new markets, both domestic and international.
- 954 new jobs created as a result of this support offered to businesses.
- 33 networking projects supported which focused on encouraging strategic co-ordination of small firms to raise competitiveness, market access and enhance reputation and credibility within and outside the region.
- 1,318 businesses collaborating on a cross-border basis as a result of participation in the above networking projects.
- 100 cross-border collaboration projects supported to promote co-operation and the exchange of expertise, information and best practice between public bodies and other relevant stakeholders to deliver services within border areas.
- 121,741 beneficiaries in terms of supported cross-border collaboration which included support in the areas of health, rural development, life sciences, enterprise and tourism.
- 14,373 attendees at 364 cross-border collaboration conferences and seminars which were focused on agreeing joint cross-border solutions for common problems and provided opportunities to create synergies, share best practice and information, facilitate greater joined-up delivery, improve access to services and facilities and ensure better value for money.



- 17 research projects completed that helped to improve the evidence base and quality of comparable information available when making policy and design decisions for cross-border collaboration.
- 8 renewable energy projects/energy efficiency projects assisted.
- 8 environmental management projects funded.
- 1 telecommunications project funded – telecommunication line/infrastructure installed.

Notable case studies (funded by the INTERREG IVA Programme)

- **North West Regional Science Park** - The construction of a £12m INTERREG IVA funded 50,000 sq ft science park facility in Londonderry and a 20,000 sq ft extension to the CoLab facility at Letterkenny Institute of Technology. This will assist with long-term development of the NW Business Technology Zone and foster clusters and networks that encourage cross-border cooperation between local firms.



- **The Centre for Renewable Energy and Sustainable Technologies (CREST)** - is Ireland's largest green technology research and development and training facility. Based at the South West College (SWC), Enniskillen, County Fermanagh. The EU INTERREG IVA funded £1.5m facility provides specialist education, training and R&D support to help small and medium-sized firms compete in the multi-billion pound renewable energy and sustainable technologies sector.
- **The Social Farming Across Borders project** - a c. €700K EU INTERREG IVA funded project designed to promote 'social farming' as a viable option for achieving improved quality of life for people who use health and social services, as well as for farm families. The service provides disadvantaged groups of people the opportunity for inclusion, to increase their self-esteem and to improve their health and well-being.

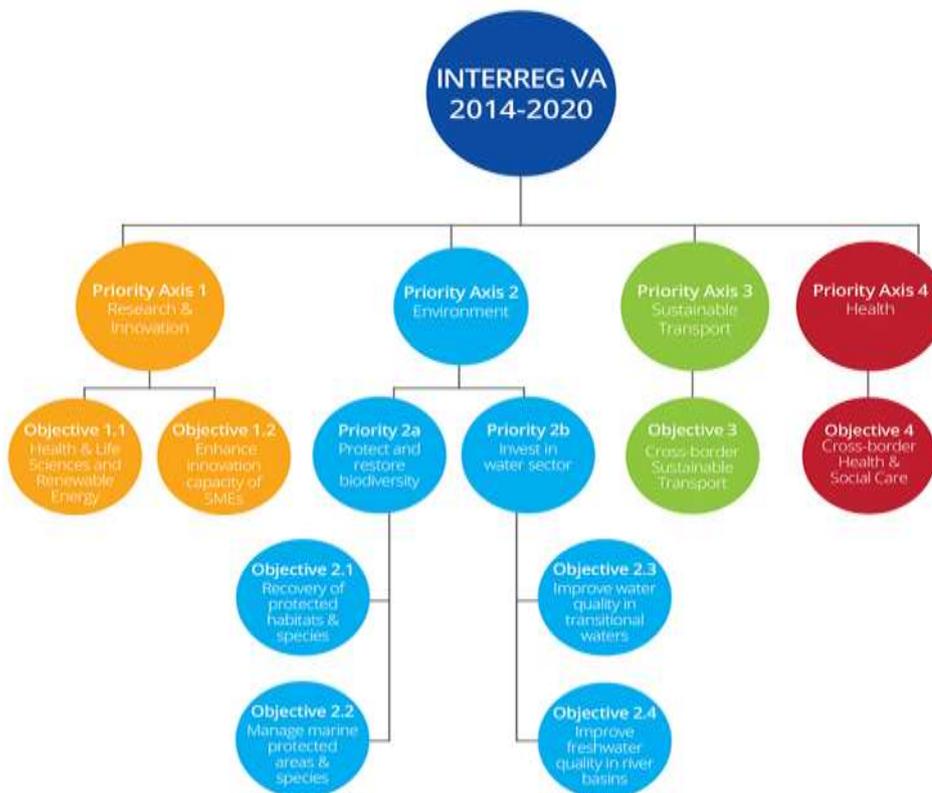


4.0 UPDATE ON EU PROGRAMME DELIVERY 2014-2020

4.1 INTERREG VA Programme (2014-2020)

The **€283m INTERREG** VA Programme is one of 60 similar funding programmes across the EU that have been designed to help overcome the issues that arise from the existence of a border. These issues range from access to transport, health and social care services, environmental issues and enterprise development. The new programming period for 2014-2020 provides opportunity for continued European Union assistance to help create a more prosperous and sustainable cross-border region. In total 85% of the Programme, representing €240m, is provided through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The remaining €43m, representing 15%, is match-funded by the Irish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive.

The content of the new INTERREG VA Programme has been agreed by the Northern Ireland Executive, the Irish Government, the Scottish Government and the European Commission. It has four core objectives where it will make real and lasting change: **Research & Innovation; the Environment; Sustainable Transport and Health & Social Care.**





Priority Axis 1: Research & Innovation (€71.7m)

1.1 Research and Innovation, Health and Life Sciences and Renewable Energy (€53m)

This objective will increase business industry-relevant Research & Innovation capacity across the region within two target sectors; 'Health & Life Sciences' and 'Renewable Energy'.

It will create up to 514 years' worth of PhD (or above) level research; 5 research institutions participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects; and 10 enterprises participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects etc.

It will result in *'an increase in the annual number of peer reviewed journal and conference publications within these two sectors, with cross-border authorship and with the potential to create economic impact'*.

1.2 Research and Innovation, Enhance Innovation capacity of SMEs (€18.7m)

This objective will increase the number and capacity of SMEs and micro-businesses in the region which are engaged in cross-border Research & Innovation activity aimed at the development of new products, processes and tradable services.

It will provide support for 1,408 enterprises, with 50 enterprises cooperating with research institutions; 469 enterprises receiving one-to-one innovation advice; 94 enterprises in receipt of an Innovation Capability Development Programme; and 70 enterprises engaging an Innovation intern, on a cross-border basis etc.

It will result in *'an increase in the percentage of SMEs and micro-businesses in the eligible area which are involved in Research & Innovation involving cross-border collaborations'*.

Priority Axis 2: Environment (€84.6m)

Protect and Restore Biodiversity (2a) and Invest in the Water Sector (2b)

This objective will promote cross-border cooperation to facilitate the recovery of selected protected habitats and priority species. It will also facilitate the development and implementation of common approaches to the management of the marine environment. The



improved management of the marine resource will contribute to the EU's Atlantic Strategy and Action Plan.

The support will create 25 conservation action plans; 6 complete marine management plans for designated protected areas; 10,000 people benefiting from improved wastewater treatment; and the creation of 1 cross-border drinking water Sustainable Catchment Area Management plan etc.

It will result in *'an increase in the percentage of selected protected habitats in or approaching favourable condition'*.

Priority Axis 3: Sustainable Transport (€47m)

Transportation across the region is dominated by car usage, which results in high carbon emissions. This trend is set to increase in line with rising population and economic growth. The Programme will provide support to greater connectivity between the three jurisdictions, creating a more coherent and integrated network.

This objective will also promote cross-border, intermodal and sustainable mobility in the region. It will create 80 km worth of new cross-border greenways and a multi-modal public transport hub etc.

It will result in *'an increased number of passenger journeys (up to 25%) utilising cross-border public transport services by 2023. It will also increase the number of cross-border journeys made by walking/cycling (up to 10%)'*.

Priority Axis 4: Health & Social Care (€62.4m)

The health and social care services across the region face challenges in meeting rising demand within a constrained budget environment. Cross-border cooperation will contribute towards the more efficient delivery of health services in border regions. Cooperation across the region is essential to obtain the necessary critical mass for healthcare trials.

Coordination and sharing of e-health solutions can fast-track implementation of this technology, facilitating the delivery of high quality services.



This objective will, through collaboration on a cross-border basis, improve the health and well-being of people living in the region by enabling them to access quality health and social care services in the most appropriate setting to their needs. It will result in an *‘increased number of ‘episodes of care’ delivered on a cross-border basis.’*

It will provide e-health interventions to support the independent living in caring communities for 4,500 patients; 12 new cross-border area interventions to support the positive health and well-being and prevention of ill health for 15,000 beneficiaries; and develop two new cross-border area community support services to support 4,000 disabled people who are socially isolated etc.

4.2 APPLICATION ASSESSMENT UPDATE

All of the INTERREG VA Programme calls are now closed. The INTERREG VA applications have been processed with many already in receipt of a letter of offer. Further details are outlined in table 1 overleaf.



Table1

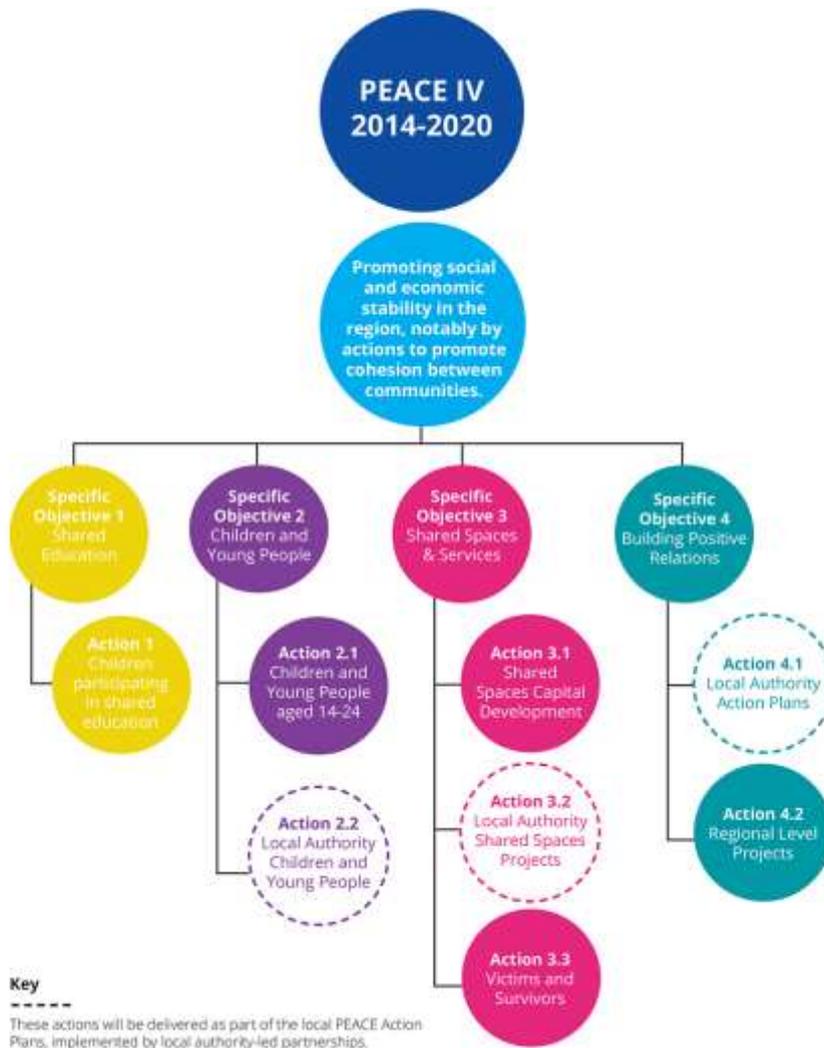
Specific Objective		Theme Value ERDF + Match (€)	No. Projects Approved	Total Value Projects Approved (€)	Total Value Under Assessment (€)
1. Research & Innovation	1.1 Health & Life Sciences and Renewable Energy	52,941,176	7	57,230,276	-
	1.2 Enhance innovation capacity of SMEs	18,737,453	1	16,671,744	-
Theme Total		71,678,629	8	73,902,020	-
2. Environment	2.1 Recovery of protected habitats & species	12,941,176	2	12,793,031	-
	2.2 Manage marine protected areas & species	12,941,176	3	11,642,534	-
	2.3 Improve water quality in transitional waters	35,294,118	1	3,282,787	32,011,332
	2.4 Improve freshwater quality in river basins	23,529,412	1	4,909,922	13,904,304
Theme Total		84,705,882	7	32,628,272	45,915,636
3. Sustainable Transport	3. Cross-border Sustainable Transport	47,058,824	4	46,810,967	-
Theme Total		47,058,824	4	46,810,967	-
4. Health	4. Cross-border Health & Social Care	62,352,941	8	47,691,722	8,000,000
Theme Total		62,352,941	8	47,691,722	8,000,000
Overall Total		265,796,276	27	201,032,980	53,915,636



5.0 PEACE IV PROGRAMME (2014-2020)

The **€270m PEACE IV** Programme 2014-2020 provides opportunity for continued EU assistance to help address the peace and reconciliation needs of the region. In total 85% of the Programme, representing €229m is provided through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The remaining €41, representing 15%, is match-funded by the Irish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive.

The content of the new PEACE IV Programme has been agreed by the Northern Ireland Executive, the Irish Government and the European Commission. It has four core themes where it will make real and lasting change: **Shared Education; Children & Young People; Shared Spaces & Services and Building Positive Relations.**





Specific objective 1: Shared Education (€35.3m)

The objective will provide direct, sustained, curriculum-based contact between pupils and teachers from all backgrounds, through collaboration between schools from different sectors in order to promote good relations and enhance children's skills and attitudes to contribute towards a cohesive society.

It will result in *'an increase in the percentage of schools that have been involved in shared education with another school within the past academic year'*.

It will facilitate the involvement of 350 schools in shared education initiatives; train 2,100 teachers in shared education methodologies; and involve 144,000 participants in shared education classrooms.

Specific Objective 2: Children & Young People

Action 2.1 Children & Young People aged 14-24 (€37.6m)

The 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 building a cohesive society.

It will target young people aged between 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 dissident activity. (Phase one of the project will target 3,400 young people who are most marginalised and disadvantaged).

Action 2.2 Local Authority Children & Young People (€17.1m)

The objective will bring about change in the form of clear, meaningful and sustainable 'distance travelled' for individual young people in terms of good relations, personal development and citizenship.

It will result in *'the percentage of 16 year olds, who socialise or play sport with people from a different religious community; who think relations between Protestants and Catholics are better than they were five years ago; and who think relations between Protestants and Catholics will be better in five years' time'*.



Phase one will target 21,000 participants aged 0-24 years completing approved programmes that develop their soft skills and a respect for diversity.

Specific objective 3: Shared Spaces and Services

Action 3.1 Capital Build (€52.9m)

The objective will create a more cohesive society through an increased provision of shared spaces and services. It will create up to eight new shared civic spaces that will be used by all sections of the community; this will involve changes in both attitudes and behaviour with a corresponding reduction in segregation.

Action 3.2 Local Authorities Shared Spaces Projects (€28.8)

This part of the Programme will support a number of local initiatives with the aim of making public spaces in cities, towns and villages more inclusive; this will often involve addressing sensitive topics around parades, flags, emblems, graffiti and other issues which can serve to intimidate and make some members of society, whether based on religion, race or other factors, feel unwelcome in some areas.

It will result in 'an increase in the percentage of people who would define the neighbourhood where they live as neutral; an increase in the percentage of people who prefer to live in a mixed religion environment; and a reduction in the percentage of people who would prefer to live in a neighbourhood with people of their own religion'.

Action 3.3 Victims & Survivors (€17.6m)

In recognition of the need and demand of those who have suffered from the trauma of the conflict, the Programme will develop the capacity for services to meet the needs of victims and survivors.

It will add value by investing in cross-border health and well-being services that develop proven expertise within the region and increase the capacity and the quality of care in the sector for victims and survivors and their families. The objective will be delivered by the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS).

The funding will support 6,300 individuals in receipt of advocacy support and 11,350 individuals in receipt of assessment, case work support and resilience support



Specific Objective 4: Building Positive Relations (€51.7m)

Action 4.1 Building Positive Relations at a Local Level (€35.3m)

This objective 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. All projects will involve people from diverse backgrounds; in particular, cross-border activity will be supported and facilitated. The support will be used to create 17 local action plans that will result in meaningful, purposeful and sustained contact between persons from different communities.

Action 4.2 Building Positive Relations at a Regional Level (€16.4)

This objective will support groups particularly impacted by the legacy of the conflict such as victims and survivors and those communities with low social capital as well as those identifiable groups and networks dealing with specific legacy issues such as young and older people, women, the faith community, those suffering from physical or mental disability arising from the legacy of violence, ex-prisoners, displaced persons and former members of the security forces. The support will be used to fund up to 20 regional level projects that will result in meaningful, purposeful and sustained contact between persons from different communities.

This objective will result in 'an increase in the percentage of people who think relations between Protestants and Catholics are better than they were five years ago; an increase in the percentage of people who think relations between Protestants and Catholics will be better in five years' time and an increase in the percentage of people who know quite a bit about the culture of some ethnic minority communities'.

5.1 Local Authority Funded PEACE IV Programme Objectives

The 17 Local Authorities across Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland have been invited to develop an Action Plan for their area, which addresses three out of the four PEACE IV Programmes core objectives. These are Children and Young People (Action 2.2), Shared Spaces & Services (Action 3.2) and Building Positive Relations (Action 4.1), as detailed in the sections above.

The financial allocations for each Local Authority is based on per capita (Census) and deprivation (NI Multiple Deprivation Measure and Trutz Haase Deprivation Index). Further details regarding the financial allocations is outlined in Table 2 overleaf.



Table 2

Local Authority Area	Peace Action Plan €
Antrim and Newtownabbey	3,863,288
Ards and North Down	3,933,916
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	6,116,245
Belfast	17,212,572
Causeway Coast and Glens	4,502,085
Derry City and Strabane	7,964,209
Fermanagh and Omagh	3,357,781
Lisburn and Castlereagh	2,993,260
Mid and East Antrim	3,697,120
Mid Ulster	3,953,614
Newry, Mourne and Down	5,610,615
Louth	3,507,153
Leitrim	1,882,318
Sligo	860,865
Cavan	3,128,825
Donegal	5,552,691
Monaghan	3,039,912



6.0 PEACE IV APPLICATION ASSESSMENT UPDATE

Due to the late adoption of the PEACE IV Programme, progress is not as advanced as INTERREG VA. However, much work has been undertaken to accelerate implementation where possible. An overview of the progress to date is provided in the below table.

Specific Objective		Theme Value ERDF + Match (€)	No. Projects Approved	Total Value Projects Approved (€)	Total Grant Requested by projects Under Assessment (€)
1. Shared Education		35,294,118	2	33,279,128	-
2. Children & Young People	2.1 Children & Young People aged 14-24	37,647,059	-	-	80,704,813
	2.2 Local Authority Children & Young People	29,411,765	16*	11,969,849	-
3. Shared Spaces & Services	3.1 Shared Spaces Capital Development	52,941,176	-	-	245,128,125
	3.2 Local Authority Shared Spaces Projects	28,823,529	16*	17,422,173	-
	3.3 Victims & Survivors	17,647,059	1	15,700,942	-
4. Building positive Relations	4.1 Local Authority Action Plans - Positive Relations	35,294,118	16*	20,938,241	14,630,687
	4.2 Regional Level Projects	16,375,485	-	-	26,865,782
Overall Total		253,434,308	19*	99,310,333	367,329,407

* Each Local Authority Action Plan addresses three out of the four PEACE IV Programme core objectives however these have been incorporated into one letter of offer.