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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PEACEPLUS funding boost to help unlock North-South and East-West potential

Developing Irish Sea Cooperation – PEACEPLUS funded project will promote improved North-South and East-West intergovernmental cooperation

Building partnerships and collaboration across a range of key sectors and organisations in Northern Ireland, Ireland and Great Britain has received a significant boost as a result of a €500K (£423K) PEACEPLUS investment by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).

The funding has been awarded to the **Developing Irish Sea Cooperation (DISC) project** under the PEACEPLUS investment theme ‘Building and Embedding Partnership and Collaboration’, which is aimed at capitalising on working relationships between Northern Ireland and Ireland, as well as growing East-West links.

DISC is two-year project whose overall objective is to enable intergovernmental cooperation between the relevant Northern Ireland departments and the Governments in Ireland, Wales and Scotland by developing a strategy and action plan for innovative North-South and East-West cross border economic and social cooperation.

The DISC project is itself an example of North-South and East-West cooperation involving as it does the Southern Regional Assembly in the Republic of Ireland, the Northern Ireland Executive Office, the Welsh Government and the Scottish Government as project partners and associate partners.

David Kelly, Director, Southern Regional Assembly:

"We are delighted to be the lead partner on the DISC project. As one of three Regional Assemblies in Ireland, we are passionate about balanced and sustainable regional development. We share this passion with the regional authorities in Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland, our closest neighbours to the North and across the Irish Sea. As neighbours, we have a long and rewarding history of interregional cooperation and learning, including through projects funded under Interreg programmes such as PEACE, Ireland-Wales, and Interreg North West Europe, and we share many common challenges and opportunities.

“The DISC project is an opportunity to capitalise on and develop these relationships, to work together to address administrative issues that could arise through differing legislation across jurisdictions, and to explore strategic opportunities to collaborate, therefore increasing connectivity, efficiency and effectiveness. This is at the heart of balanced and sustainable regional development”.

SEUPB Chief Executive, Gina McIntyre, said:

“This funding provides an amazing opportunity to address and overcome challenges to future economic prosperity and growth both North-South, and East-West.

“This project will bring wide-ranging interventions and improvements aimed at unlocking the huge potential that exists from greater collaboration at an administrative and statutory level on these islands. I am looking forward to this important work getting under way for the benefit of so many of our citizens and I am very excited by the opportunities that lie ahead.”

ENDS

Notes to the editors

- The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) is a North South Body with the statutory remit for managing EU funding programmes within Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland.
- PEACEPLUS is a cross-border funding Programme designed to support peace and prosperity across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland. The total value of PEACEPLUS is €1.14 billion.
- PEACEPLUS is co-funded by the European Union, the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Government of Ireland, and the Northern Ireland Executive.
- The DISC project partners are the Southern Regional Assembly in the Republic of Ireland (lead partner), the Northern Ireland Executive Office and the Welsh Government. The Scottish Government are associate partners in the project.
- The Southern Regional Assembly is responsible for regional spatial and economic planning in the Southern Region of Ireland, a region spanning ten local authority areas across Munster and South Leinster, with the ambition to be one of Europe’s most innovative, liveable, and sustainable regions.

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