



Comhairle Contae Dhún na nGall
Donegal County Council

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EU UNIT UPDATE



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WELCOME / FAILTE

This bulletin is produced by the EU Funding and Strategic Policy Unit of Donegal County Council. The EU Unit works with all services of Donegal County Council to proactively target external funding opportunities, influence policy and identify EU networks of benefit to the Council. The Strategic Policy Unit promotes and support inter-agency networking and partnership across the wider north west region through a range of collaborative structures and projects. This bulletin will provide you with all the latest news in relation to Donegal County Councils involvement in this important area of work.

Liam Ward, Director of Services, Donegal County Council

Donegal County Council receives welcome funding for enhancing sustainable development at Errigal Mountain – ASCENT Project



Donegal County Council is set to benefit from INTERREG Funding of €1.6m to implement the ASCENT project. Together with project partners Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, Metsähallitus Parks & Wildlife, Finland, Hordaland County Council, Norway, Soil Conservation Service of Iceland and Mourne Heritage Trust, the ASCENT project will address the environmental challenges facing the conservation and enhancement of Areas of Natural beauty in the partner regions. The project will look at how to use and manage the mountains and upland areas responsibly, will examine new ways to deal with the sites, learn from other regions using a teacher learner principle, examine habitat damage and habitat restoration, and

introduce appropriate site specific mitigation measures. The pilot site is Errigal in Donegal and will include three areas of activity:

1. Undertake international learning and knowledge exchange and transfer across the partner regions
2. Designing solutions and interventions for sustainable environmental management
3. Trialling of practical initiatives for sustainable environmental management

Gerry Finn, Director of Northern & Western Regional Assembly welcomed the announcement of this funding and wishes Donegal County Council well with this initiative. Donegal County Council Chief Executive Seamus Neely

also welcomed this project stating *“I am delighted with the announcement of this funding which represents a substantial investment in exploring new concepts for balancing tourism, cultural and economic interests with environmental needs. The project will disseminate and generate knowledge on the impacts on the environment, local biodiversity resources and promote civic pride among communities of their environmental resources, and unique local cultural heritage. By working collaboratively with partners in Ireland and Northern Ireland, Scotland, Norway, Iceland and Finland, we are in a position to secure this level of investment for the county.”*

This project is supported by the Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme 2014-2020 with support from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

For further information, please contact: Charles Sweeney Donegal County Council Tel.: 074 9153900 csweeney@donegalcoco.ie



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2014-2020

HERICOAST Project Receives Funding



Donegal County Council, through the Central Planning Unit, is one of 8 European partners working on the recently approved 'Hericoast' project, examining the management of cultural heritage in our coastal landscape under the Interreg Europe VB transnational programme.

Vest Agder County Council in Norway, as lead partner, hope to launch the programme with an opening conference, workshop and initial steering group meeting to be held in Kristiansand Norway, providing further opportunity for formative exchange and sharing of experience with our approved European counterparts in Spain, Romania, Italy, Clue Research Unit in the University of Amsterdam and Civilscape landscape forum Europe.

The Hericoast project received preliminary approval in February 2016 with an anticipated programme start

of 1st April 2016 to run over 2 and a half years. Concentrating on a number of coastal settlements, the Central Planning Unit, working closely with the EU Unit, hope to engage with a range of advisory bodies, stakeholders and community groups to inform regional policies for the appropriate and effective management of cultural heritage in maritime and fluvial regions to inform the revitalization of coastal communities.

For further information contact:
Clare McCallan / Alana Greene at the Central Planning Unit Donegal County Council Tel.: 074 9153900

The ERNACT network of regions secures €1.8 million for another digital innovation project



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2014-2020

The European Union has approved a new ERNACT led innovation project SECURE, worth €1.8 million, aimed at transferring innovative energy solutions for housing and public infrastructure developed in Scandinavia and Atlantic Canada to Ireland and Northern Ireland. This follows the award of almost €4 million last month for two other projects – one dealing with innovation in the food chain and the other with new public investment models for high speed broadband services in rural areas.

The project will be carried out with financial support from the European Union's Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme 2014-2020.

This programme provides funding and support to organisations in the Northern part of Europe - including Ireland and Northern Ireland - wishing to transfer successful public service innovations between countries and regions.

The main objective of the innovation project SECURE – Smarter Energy Communities in Northern and Arctic Regions is to study, transfer and pilot new solutions for improving energy efficiency and renewable sources in public housing, lighting and public buildings.

The project will last three years and has a budget of €1.8 million. The ERNACT regions of Derry and Strabane (NI), Donegal (including Donegal County Council) (Ireland) and Västernorrland (Sweden) will participate in this initiative. In addition, SECURE provides the opportunity to work with and learn from the following regions: North Karelia (Finland), Faroe Islands, Nova Scotia (Atlantic Canada) and Leitrim (Ireland).

The project has ambitious targets to meet. Each region must establish a Smart Energy Community in a village, rural area or neighbourhood of a city. This will be supported by transferring 15 energy solutions to retrofit 24 houses across the project regions, increasing efficiency by 5% in 3 public buildings, and installing alternative or renewable energy sources in public infrastructure (e.g. street lighting).

Councillor Michael Cooper, Chairperson of ERNACT, stated that *"this latest series of successful bids demonstrate that Derry/Strabane and Donegal councils, working on a cross border basis through their ERNACT vehicle, are able to compete at the highest level to form partnerships with other European regions and cities. These pan-European partnerships provide additional finance and know-how to allow councils to support the food sector, introduce energy efficiency solutions for housing, lighting and public buildings, and explore new models to justify public investment in high speed broadband solutions for rural areas"*.

For further information contact:
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NICHE and ERUDITE Projects

The **NICHE** project - **Building innovative food value chains in regions** - ranked in the top 3 of 261 proposals submitted to the Interreg Europe programme. The project will address challenges arising from changes in the food sector and will explore the potential of using information technology to increase innovation in seven European regions where food is important for jobs and economic growth. NICHE has a budget of €1.7 million and several ERNACT regions will be involved, including Derry and Strabane (UK) and West Romania (Romania). The project proposal was fully developed and will be led by the

ERNACT partnership. Donegal County Council is a project partner with the Local Enterprise Office playing a key role locally.

For further information contact ERNACT or visit www.ernact.eu



The second ERNACT led project approved, **ERUDITE - Enhancing Rural and Urban Digital Innovation Territories**, aims to explore the potential of new public investment models that consider the total private, economic and social needs of a community, to justify investment in new high speed broadband services in rural areas. This second project has a budget of €2.2 million. The ERNACT regions of Derry and Strabane (UK), Donegal (Ireland) and Västernorrland (Sweden) will participate in this project, which is led by the Burgandy region (France).

For further information contact: ianire.renobales@ernact.eu

WaterPro Project

Donegal County Council are partners in 3 out of the 5 successful projects that received funding as part of the recent Interreg VB 3rd call and will benefit from funding of €252k to implement the WaterPro project. The other project partners are Savonia University of Applied Sciences Ltd, Finland, [Lead Partner], Geological Survey of Finland, Agricultural University of Iceland, Lulea University of Technology, Sweden, Agricultural Agency, Faroe Islands, Lough Neagh Partnership, Magherafelt, Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute, Belfast and Heriot Watt University, Edinburgh.

The project, which is being supported by the Interreg Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme, will develop eco-efficient tools and models for Stormwater Runoff Management practices and environmental protection for the NPA sparsely populated region. This will be done

through the development of a Tool-Box of good management practices and a communication platform. In addition several innovative, low cost practices will be implemented in pilot sites and their treatment and cost-efficiency evaluated. The ultimate goal of WaterPro is to enhance the preparedness of responsible authorities and local resource users to protect the water quality of the NPA region's coastal and freshwaters, protect human health and ecosystems and stimulate sustainable economic growth and development. Donegal County Council would like to acknowledge the assistance of the Northern and Western Regional Assembly in the application process.

For further information please contact: Joanne Holmes, Donegal County Council, jholmes@donegalcoco.ie
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HIKING EUROPE

Approved in January 2016, Hiking Europe was submitted to the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises' (EASME) COSME second call for "Supporting Competitive and Sustainable Growth in the Tourism Sector" under theme 2, "Diversifying the EU tourism offer and products - Promoting transnational thematic tourism products". Led by the Catalan Tourist Board, consortium partners included organisations located in Ireland, Spain, Italy, Croatia, Germany and Austria.

The project will look to tackle the issue of tourism diversification in European regions that have traditionally focused and benefitted from mass tourism but are willing to commit to a more sustainable, responsible and high-quality alternative based in less explored European areas, specifically in inland/rural locations.

The project will offer a unique experience to international visitors by promoting a transnational network of rural touristic routes structured in several hiking itineraries as a unique way to unveil the local heritage in a sustainable manner, while contributing to physical activity and thus to a better health and quality of life of citizens. The duration of the project is 18 months and the trails in Donegal are Bealach na Gaeltachta and the Island walks. Donegal County Council will be working with the Catalan Tourist Board on the terms of the draft grant agreement.

For further information contact:
EU Unit Donegal County Council
Tel.: 074 9153900

Catchment CARE Project



Donegal County Council are acting as lead partner for the Catchment CARE project which has passed Stage 1 of the Interreg VA application process with work underway to complete a Business Plan for Stage 2.

The bid for funding is being made under the Environment measure, specific objective 2.4 : To improve freshwater quality in cross-border river basins. As Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland share three International river basins a coordinated, cross-border approach to the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive is needed.

The Catchment CARE project has identified actions that go above and beyond those that agencies already have a statutory obligation to undertake and will address the core challenge of restoring water-bodies in border area catchments by increasing catchment resilience (biophysical, social and economic) and developing stakeholder capacity (community, government and NGOs) taking into consideration both surface and groundwater.

For further information contact:
 Joanne Holmes,
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Donegal County Council is a key partner in the Cool Route project with responsibility for project communications including the development of the project website www.sailcoolroute.eu.

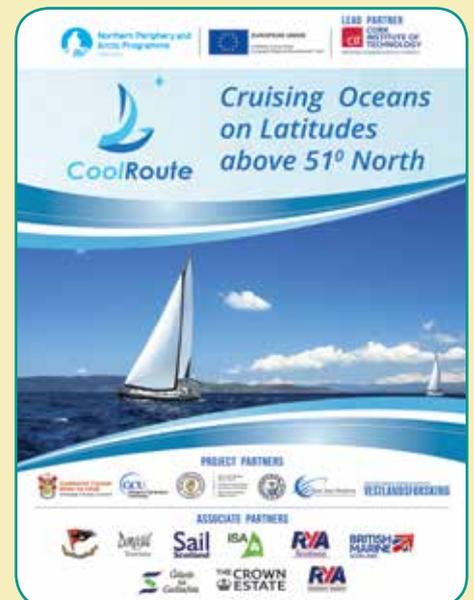
There has been an extraordinary level of engagement and buy-in by key sectoral actors and project awareness is growing in all regions. A keynote of the project success to date is that it has been specifically referenced in both the National Plan for Jobs in Ireland and the Scottish Marine Tourism Strategy Action Plan.

The Cool Route project received INTEREG VB funding under the Northern Periphery & Arctic programme 2014-2020 by lead partner Cork Institute of Technology.

Donegal hosted a meeting of the Cool Route Steering Committee in Donegal Town in October 2015. A Memorandum of Cooperation was successfully completed with another NPA SAINT Project - both projects regularly liaise and a representative from SAINT presented at the Cool Route meeting in Donegal last year. Work on the project Marketing Plan is progressing to schedule with a number of early drafts of the first chapters completed and under consideration. Several important surveys have been completed to gather sailing and marine tourism data as part of the logistics and business planning work associated with the project.

Donegal County Council continues to deliver a successful social media campaign with the growing influence and reach of the Cool Route Facebook and Twitter pages. PR campaigns, e-mail newsletters, press releases and blog articles also continue to be produced and are raising awareness of the Cool Route project across a wide audience. A range of new promotional materials have also been produced for use at upcoming promotional events.

The project merges all aspects of the practical logistics and business potential to establish a



bi-directional yacht cruising route along the offshore areas of the Northern Periphery Area, stretching from the South of Ireland, to the UK (Northern Ireland and Western Scotland) on onwards to Norway. The next meeting of the Cool Route partners is due to take place in Scotland in April 2016.

Joy Harron, Marine Marketing Development Officer, Donegal Tourism Ltd, Tel.: 353 (74) 9724431 donegalmarinetourism@gmail.com





IMPROVE is a €1.5 million project funded by the Northern Periphery & Arctic Programme. It is led by ERNACT, with the participation of Donegal County Council and Derry & Strabane County Council. €560,000 of the total budget is specifically ring fenced to benefit the North West region.

The project seeks to increase innovation in six regions in the area of technology-driven public service solutions. It adapts a novel living labs-driven approach to maximise knowledge transfer between regions and stakeholders.

The project partners recently finalised the co-production methodology, a reference framework aimed to guide any organisation planning to develop public services with the involvement of their local communities. This methodology incorporates a transnational dimension and makes use of successful good practices in other European regions. The methodology will be employed by real communities from the six participating regions in the areas of Planning and eHealth. This methodology will also be made available for use by any other interested region.

For further information contact:
ianire.renobales@ernact.eu



ENTERPRISE EUROPE NETWORK

The Local Enterprise Office (LEO) in Donegal County Council is delighted to have secured participation in the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) and to be a Lead Partner on behalf of the 31 LEO's in Ireland. Michael Tunney, Head of Enterprise and Eileen Kelly, EEN Co-ordinator are working closely with staff in all the Local Enterprise Offices to secure delivery of this programme.

This COSME Programme 2014-2020 is being led by Enterprise Ireland along with the Dublin and Cork Chambers of Commerce. The EEN helps business when expanding into another country. The EEN database

contains thousands of company profiles through which potential opportunities or partners can be identified. Help and advice is also available on;

- Technology transfer
- Access to finance
- Advice on EU law and standards
- Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs)
- Research funding

Opportunities also arise for business to give feedback on issues affecting them relating to EU law and Overcoming EU Barriers.

For further information please contact:
Eileen Kelly, Europe Network
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Donegal County Council along with lead Partner Derry City & Strabane District Council have passed stage 1 of the application process in the Sustainable transport cross border Greenways call of the Interreg VA 2014-2020 funding programme.

This project aligns with the Operational programme to develop physical cross border greenway and walking routes at three strategic locations; Derry- Letterkenny via Bridgend, Derry- Lifford via Strabane and Derry- Muff. The project is the result of close collaboration with project partners including Sustrans and the Department for Regional Development NI.

The project aims to develop up to 40km of infrastructure utilising new lands, existing footpaths and old railways lines for the majority of the routes to affect a modal shift in cross

Interreg VA Sustainable Transport Call - North West Greenways Network

border vehicular behaviour. Additional benefits such a project will bring to the region are sustainable transport & carbon reduction. Greenway infrastructure can contribute to other policy themes such as environment, civic pride, social community engagement, recreation, health & tourism.

The consortium recently met with the SEUPB to discuss the feedback given by the project steering committee on stage 1 of the application. The SEUPB will also provide guidance to the project partners on the next phase of the application, stage 2. As part of this phase, the group are required to submit a detailed project business plan by Friday April 22nd.

For more information please contact the EU Unit Tel.: 0749153900



The MalinWaters project consortium (formerly Sail West) recently held a Steering Committee meeting in Belfast on 2nd February to discuss the Marketing Plan and ongoing development activity associated with this project. It was decided that since the EU funding for Sail West has now ceased that the new partnership should be known as MalinWaters going forward and partners agreed on a firm commitment and support package to continue the project into the future.

At this meeting partner's also agreed on the marketing activity that would be carried out in 2016 to continue to promote the MalinWaters brand including emphasis on a strong digital element including Google Ad Words, Facebook advertising and e-mail campaigns, continued website development, key publications and strategic events. There was agreement that new itineraries should be added to the website to highlight new facilities

and also a sailing trail that links our Celtic Heritage should be developed. The partners also discussed future EU funding opportunities to continue to build on the success of MalinWaters. The completion of the work at Bunagee and the installation of the new pontoons has been a great success of this project. A launch of the new pontoons will be held in spring 2016 and it was suggested that the next Steering Committee meeting could be held in Donegal to coincide with this launch and a potential networking event and marine tourism workshop would also take place. The date for this event has yet to be confirmed.

For further information please contact: Joy Harron, Marine Marketing Development Officer, Donegal Tourism Ltd, Tel: + 353 (74) 9724431 donegalmarinetourism@gmail.com



The EASME EU funded WILDSEA Europe project continues to progress with representatives from Donegal County Council recently attending a project Steering Committee meeting in Italy. This meeting was hosted by project partners from the MPA (Marine Protected Area) of Santa Margherita de Ligure on 8th and 9th February. During the meeting discussions took place around the development of the new project website and promotional videos that are due for launch in May 2016.

The production of the Marketing and Business Plan for the project was also on the agenda with partners discussing the longevity of the project and future commercial opportunities.

Train the trainer sessions for partners were also facilitated by expert website developers 'Imaginonet' to allow them to effectively update content on the website. The partners also made

excellent progress in planning for upcoming information sessions in their respective regions.

Donegal County Council as a key partner, are focusing initially on Malin Head as a pilot area for the WILDSEA Europe project and have contacted a number of potential tourism experience providers who have expressed much interest in the project.

Tourism providers have been invited to register online for participation in the project and to feature on the new website and marketing activity.

For further information please contact: Joy Harron, Marine Marketing Development Officer, Donegal Tourism Ltd, Tel: + 353 (74) 9724431 donegalmarinetourism@gmail.com



WILDSEA Europe Information Session



Representatives from the tourism sector in the Malin Head area attended an Information Session on 8th March in Carndonagh PSC hosted by Donegal County Council.

WILDSEA Europe is a Sustainable Tourism Route connecting European coastal destinations that host a rich marine biodiversity and Donegal County Council is a key project partner. Wildlife watching, snorkelling, kayaking, surf, birding, walking...and much more, Donegal has it all when it comes to our natural and rugged coastline rich in marine life.

Our magnificent marine offering makes Donegal an ideal destination on the WILDSEA Europe trail. The goal of this session was to inform attendees about the opportunities to develop sustainable marine tourism or wildlife

watching tours along the Wild Atlantic Way as part of project WILDSEA Europe.

The Information Session was facilitated by Joy Harron; Marine Tourism Marketing & Development Officer with Donegal Tourism Ltd. Joy presented the project to the group, many of which had already registered online to participate in the project having seen the potential to diversify into this type of sustainable tourism.

This project incorporates marketing and promotion of sustainable marine tourism and the main target audiences of the video would be tourists and visitors who are looking forward to engaging in wildlife experiences in coastal tourism destinations. Participants will be listed on the new WILDSEA Europe website



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Travelecology

due for launch in May 2016 and will be promoted as part of marketing activities including video and online campaigns. There was great interest in the project from those in attendance; participants highlighted the point that as tourism increases in Donegal, they are keen protect the marine species and environment in order to ensure the continuation of positive development in marine tourism.

For further information please contact: Joy Harron, Marine Marketing Development Officer, Donegal Tourism Ltd, Tel: + 353 (74) 9724431 donegalmarinetourism@gmail.com

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WILDSEA EUROPE Brings you the best marine wildlife experiences in Europe

REGISTER NOW FOR GREAT TRAVEL HINTS | TOURISM OPERATORS JOIN WILDSEA EUROPE

ROUTE MAP & DESTINATIONS | WILDLIFE EXPERIENCES | MARINE WILDLIFE | SCIENCE & CONSERVATION | COMMUNITY | BLOG

Find your next marine wildlife adventure!

Write here [SEARCH]

DONEGAL HOME OF THE BASKING SHARK



The EU unit and the Social Inclusion of Donegal County Council have recently held talks on a possible bid to the ERASMUS+ programme.

Exploratory meetings have taken place with the Donegal Sports Partnership and the Letterkenny Institute of Technology to discuss a potential bid under the collaborative partnerships in sport action of the ERASMUS+ programme. Collaborative Partnerships

offer the opportunity to develop, transfer and/or implement innovative practices in different areas relating to sport and physical activity.

Any potential project would aim to encourage social inclusion and equal opportunities in sport, especially by supporting the implementation of EU strategies such as Gender Equality and the EU Disability Strategy. A scoping document is currently being developed

by the Donegal Sports Partnership after which the process of identifying and selecting suitable partners will begin. The duration of Collaborative Partnership projects submitted can be from 12 to 36 months and the closing date for applications is the 12th of May.

For further information please contact:
EU unit Donegal County Council
Tel.: 074 9153900



Ocean Renewable Power Company – Community Consultation – Donegal February 2016.

ORPC made a return visit to Donegal in February 2016 to present their feasibility findings to SEAI, Donegal County Council and the local communities.

The company have conducted desk top in-depth research into the feasibility of tidal energy exploitation in Donegal waters and their results indicate that the tidal energy velocities in the county

remain at a level that would indicate a pilot scale community oriented project might be an appropriate initial opportunity, provided further analysis is conducted (i.e. actual deployment of velocity measurement equipment to properly document velocities and the completion of other assessment activities).

This effort could lead to site opportunities that would support a next generation of devices more suitable for converting the marginal flows to electricity. In this context there may be future research development funding and program opportunity for LYIT.

This visit is the latest in a number of trips to Donegal to pursue the development of a demonstration tidal energy site. This work will continue to develop in line with LYIT and Donegal County Council's shared interest and ambition in possible tidal energy community development .

For more information please contact the EU unit: 0749153900

Interreg VA Cross border partnership meeting - Queens University Belfast

The Centre for Advanced Sustainable Energy (CASE) located at Queen's University Belfast, hosted a project planning meeting on March 10th in Belfast to discuss the opportunities presented under the Research and Innovation Priority of the new Interreg VA cross border programme.

This priority seeks to develop research and innovation capacity in the renewables sector in the Interreg VA eligible region.

CASE will lead a project bid to this call, with partners Letterkenny Institute of Technology, Donegal County Council, and Scottish Partners (Dumfries and Galloway Council; Highlands and Islands Enterprise and University).

SEUPB are the managing authority for this funding and will be holding an information event to publish details of the call which will be opening shortly.

The project will focus on building Phd level capacity, research and resources in the renewable sector.

For further information please contact: the EU unit Donegal County Council Tel.: 074 9153900.



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Donegal County Council is a project partner in the LADDER Project.

The Project aims to inform EU citizens about development issues, mobilise greater public support for actions against poverty, give citizens tools to engage critically with global development issues, to foster new ideas and ultimately to change attitudes.

Donegal County Council has rolled out a number of local level training events throughout the county, Gweedore, Donegal Town, Carndonagh and Letterkenny.

The LADDER website is now live and can be found at www.ladder-project.eu

For more information please contact:
Joanne on jkilmart@donegalcoco.ie





Enterprise Ireland EOI - Accelerator Development Scheme Fund Announcement

During August 2015 Enterprise Ireland released a call for expression of ideas for regional initiatives. The aim of this call is to assist in identifying potential areas of enterprise and sectoral opportunities in regions; and to stimulate a future pipeline of potential strategic, sectorally focused and regionally based projects.

Donegal County Council, Letterkenny Institute of technology and Bord lascaigh Mhara have formed a stakeholder group that meet regularly and collaborate on the achievement of a shared vision for the sectors and North-west region. On behalf of this stakeholder group Donegal County Council lodged an Expression of ideas to Enterprise Ireland on 11th September, based on the detailed and focused work progressed to date on the development of a Marine Renewables Innovation centre.

This collaboration seeks to address the need for a Marine innovation centre based on the three focus sectors of Tourism, Food product development

and marine renewable energy and to serve the needs of the NW region Enterprise Ireland used the EOI to scope the regional competitive fund announced by the Minister for Jobs in 2015 and in January 2016 announced the five thematic areas that will form the focus of future competitive funding administered under this initiative; these are:

- Establishing regional accelerators
- Opportunities to drive greater company/sector collaboration/ clustering in the regions
- Driving procurement opportunities for start-ups and established small businesses
- Strengthening Third-level as a driver of regional enterprise
- Strengthening the Start-up ecosystem locally

In the period 2016 and beyond, Enterprise Ireland will roll out a number of competitive calls under this funding initiative in a systematic manner. The first of these calls, a €3 million

Accelerator Development Scheme, to support entrepreneurs in regions outside of Dublin, was launched by Enterprise Ireland. The overall vision of this Scheme is to increase the number of accelerators operating in the Irish market to support entrepreneurship, company creation and job creation in new Manufacturing and Internationally Traded Services companies in Ireland.

For more information please contact EU unit Donegal County Council
Tel.: 0749153900

Ireland's participation in FP7 and Horizon 2020 - Survey

The EU unit has participated in a survey commissioned by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation (DJEI) and undertaken by the Technopolis Group to evaluate Ireland's participation in the European Framework Programme 7 and Horizon 2020. The evaluations place a priority on linking the lessons of the FP7 with the Horizon 2020 and how future participation in framework programmes can be best aligned with national STI objectives, including maximising and increasing levels of participation, investment and scale. In this context, the evaluations primarily had a strategic focus in terms of evidence of lessons learned, outcomes and impact.

A central aspect of the study was a survey-based consultation for those involved in FP7 or H2020. Participation in this process will help to inform improvements of support to the applicants and enhance the benefits Ireland derives from the growing participation in EU RTD partnerships.

For further information please contact: EU unit Donegal County Council
Tel.: 074 9153900



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In February 2016, the EU unit prepared a detailed report for inclusion in Donegal County Councils Annual report for 2015. The report documents the Unit's three core areas of work which are: External funding, networks and partnership; and policy. The report details the progress and success of funding applications made, networks utilised and policy contribution made during this period.

The EU Unit during 2015 has continued to successfully expand its activities and to explore opportunities presented by the regions eligibility to compete in National and European

funding programmes. The Unit has continued to actively explore the opening bids of the 2014-2020 INTERREG and other transnational suites of programmes to develop projects that align with the long term objectives and priorities of the organisation.

The ability to maximise and attract external funding to the county and wider region will be key in supporting and in realising the Council's 4 no. directorate's medium and long term objectives and ambitions as set out in the Councils Corporate Plan and Local Economic and Community Plan.

For more information please contact the EU unit on 0749153900

INTERREG VB Atlantic Area Transnational programme Opens

The details for the first call under the INTERREG VB Atlantic Area programme have been launched. The call will open for applications in late April and close on May 27th.

A total budget of €131m from the European Regional Development Fund will be available over the lifetime of the Programme to support Transnational Projects across the five member states of Ireland, the UK, Spain, Portugal and France. Projects will be supported at a grant rate of 75%.



Four Priorities will be open: -

1. Innovation & Competitiveness
2. Fostering Resource Efficiency
3. Addressing Risk across the Atlantic Area
4. Enhancing Biodiversity & the natural and cultural assets.

Donegal County Council has been working with project leads to consider applications to this call.

For further information contact the EU Unit at
Tel: 074 9153900



NORTH WEST UPDATES

INTERREG VA and PEACE IV Training in the Sustainable Development Horizontal Principle

The SEUPB Managing Authority held a training seminar on the Horizontal Principle of Sustainable Development, aimed at potential applicants of the INTERREG VA and PEACE IV 2014-2020 Programmes on the 10th March 2016 in the Ramada Resort, Dundalk. The EU Unit attended this training seminar which was delivered by Sustainable Development experts, Ms Sue Christie and Prof Jim Kitchen, and focused on how best to implement Sustainable Development and Sustainability best practice into applicants' project development, application and implementation.

The INTERREG VA and PEACE IV 2014 – 2020 Programmes have been subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment to ensure that it supports activity that will promote sustainable development. Projects must demonstrate how they will minimise any adverse impact they may have on the environment. All projects in all themes must comply with the Sustainable Development Strategy, adopted by the European Council in June 2006, as well as the respective national Sustainable Development Strategy within each jurisdiction.

Project applicants are required to illustrate how they will promote sustainable development in terms of the integration of environmental, economic and social issues and show how the principle of sustainable development has been incorporated into the design of the project and is embedded into the monitoring of the project. This will be assessed in the Phase 2 application. Donegal County Council is currently involved in two Phase 2 applications under Interreg VA in the North West region.

For further information please contact: EU Unit Donegal County Council Tel.: 074 9153900.



Urban Innovative Actions Programme

The EU unit attended a meeting hosted by ICBAN on 25th January 2016 on the new EU Urban Innovative Actions Programme.

The Urban Innovative Actions Programme is a new €371 million European Commission fund administered by DG Regio. The first call for proposals has been launched with a closing date of 31st March 2016. The second call will open in November 2016.

Four thematic areas have been identified for the first call as follows:

- Jobs & skills in the local economy
- Urban poverty – deprived neighbourhoods
- Inclusion of migrants and refugees
- Energy transition

The event hosted by ICBAN invited partner councils to consider and explore possible project themes under the broad theme of urban development.

Partner councils identified many common challenges facing the border region, and noted the need for collaboration to promote further urban regeneration and development. Following the information event in January, ICBAN have confirmed that a minimum 50,000 population threshold has been established for cities to participate. In this context many towns and urban areas across the border region will not be in a position to participate in this current call.

INTERREG VA & PEACE IV Equality Training

The EU unit recently attended an INTERREG VA & PEACE IV Equality Training seminar held in Dundalk on Wednesday March 2nd. The 'Mainstreaming the Horizontal Principle of Equality' event was organised by the SEUPB to assist potential applicants in designing their projects to meet the requirements of the horizontal principle.

The seminar, which was delivered by equality expert John Kremer, focused on how best to implement Equality and Equality best practice into applicants' project development, application and implementation. Through discussion groups and a variety of case studies, participants covered topics such as fairness, equality of opportunity, inclusion, engagement, and discussed current anti-discrimination legislation in both Ireland and Northern Ireland.

The event gave participants the opportunity to discuss and reflect on the ways of mainstreaming equality and diversity considerations into the fabric of INTERREG VA and PEACE IV Projects. Applicants into both programmes are required to demonstrate in their application how their project will make a contribution towards the horizontal principle of equality and in particular, equality between men and women and people with disabilities.

For further information please contact the EU Unit Donegal County Council Tel.: 074 9153900



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Boord O Owre Ocht UE Projects



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