

Economic Development & Enterprise SPC

International Relations & EU Affairs Working Group – Request for Extension:

1. **Submitted by:** Cllr Mary Freehill, Chair of SPC Working Group
Received: 28 January 2021 16:17

Extension Request:

I think it is important that our working group continues as our work is not complete.

The areas that we need to address are

- Our international linkages
- ERDF and Recovery Fund which are out for review right now

We could also deal with any other International linkages and issues relevant to the Council.

2. **Submitted by:** Aidan Sweeney, SPC Working Group Member
Received: 16 February 2021 20:43 & 28 January 17:28

Extension Request:

The EU Recovery and Resilience Fund (2021-23) and the PEACE PLUS Cross-Border EU Fund (2021-27) had both been discussed by the working group.

- ***The EU Recovery and Resilience Fund:***

Apparently, a public consultation on the Irish priority areas for the Recovery and Resilience Fund is to be launched as early as next week. The fund is approximately 50/50 in terms of the split between grants and loans. Ireland could be expected to receive €853 for projects between 2021 & 2022. There are some initiatives such as the circular economy (e.g. Modos) that could potentially be earmarked for additional funding.

Also, there's a consultation on the Recovery and Resilience Facility (closing Monday 22 February). It would be an opportunity to re-iterate some of the projects highlighted in the submission DCC made on the ERDF/ESF consultation last year. Also, I think a number of projects under the remit of the Council could be attractive from the European Commission's perspective. 30% of the Recovery and Resilience funds go on green and climate action initiatives. There's also a heading on projects benefiting competitiveness and SMEs so there's potential to scale MODOS significantly under the fund. Separately, 20% of the fund is earmarked for digital projects. This could support Smart Cities and other digital local government initiatives led by the Council.

- ***PEACE PLUS Cross-Border EU Fund:***

Potential funding under PEACE PLUS for Dublin-Belfast projects. There is to be a consultation on this, so it might be worth having a discussion with the SEUPB.

There is to be a separate consultation on the PEACE PLUS programme. Whilst this is primarily targeted at Northern Ireland and counties Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Louth, Monaghan and Sligo; there is scope for specific projects beyond these areas. Projects related to the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor or supporting greater collaboration between Dublin & Belfast could potentially secure funding under this programme. I have attached a press release from the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform on this programme issued earlier this week. A discussion with the Special EU Programmes Body might be worthwhile.