

Cross-Border Partnership to Improve Water Quality in Ireland and Northern Ireland

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A groundbreaking cross-border project has been awarded £26 million to address water pollution issues in the Fermanagh, Tyrone, Leitrim, Sligo, Cavan, Monaghan, and Donegal regions.

The Water Enhancements through Sustainable Treatment (West) project, a joint initiative between NI Water and Uisce Éireann, aims to improve water quality in Lough Erne, Lough Melvin, and Donegal Bay. These areas have been affected by pollution from agriculture, forestry, urban runoff, and wastewater discharges.

The project will involve the development of comprehensive catchment management plans and the implementation of innovative wastewater treatment solutions. By addressing these issues, the project will benefit local communities, the environment, and the tourism industry.

SEUPB chief executive Gina McIntyre said: “Our natural environment is one of our most important assets and continued enhancement and protection is critical to future economic and social development.

“A clean, green and accessible environment makes a major contribution to people having long, active, healthy lives as well as creating a place where people want to live, visit and invest. With environmental pressures going beyond borders, the innovative West project considers the entire catchment as a single ecosystem, aiming to promote a greener, lower-carbon environment and decrease threats to local natural habitats. Underpinned by a strong collaborative approach, the project will introduce unique cross-border catchment models and strategies which, although common in Europe, have never before been trialled on this scale on the island of Ireland.”

The project is funded by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) under the PeacePlus program. The

funding will be used to finance wastewater treatment upgrades, catchment management plans, and other initiatives to improve water quality and protect the environment.