



PEACEPLUS

Northern Ireland - Ireland

Co-funded by the



European Union



UK Government



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Northern Ireland
Executive
www.northernireland.gov.uk

CONNECT

A project supported by PEACEPLUS, a programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).

Terms of Reference

Communications Agency



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Context

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We are supporting peace and prosperity by building connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and countries worldwide.

We work with over 100 countries across the world in the fields of arts and culture, English language and education. Each year we reach over 20 million people face-to-face and more than 500 million people online, via broadcasts and publications. Founded in 1934, we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body.

British Council is delivering the CONNECT programme funded by PEACEPLUS which is supported by SEUPB, the Special EU Programmes Body from 1 July 2025 until 30 June 2029.

The CONNECT project is led by the British Council and is implemented in partnership with Politics in Action (Northern Ireland/NI) and Create (Ireland/IRL) and with the support of Arts Council Ireland and Arts Council Northern Ireland as associate partners ensuring cross-border representation at the forefront.

We are addressing **four** challenges that provide a fertile ground for destabilisation and often disinformation in this context. These are **mistrust** between communities, community **isolation** and discrimination and **inequalities** for the most vulnerable, a **lack of skills** to critically review, assess information and act to bring positive change. All of them linked to the legacy of conflict, division, sectarianism, prejudice, and intolerance. This project aims to tackle these deep-rooted issues by fostering positive relations, respect for cultural diversity, and inclusive community engagement. The overall objective of the project is to **build strong, resilient relationships** between diverse communities across NI and IRL. By promoting social inclusion, cultural diversity, placemaking, and mutual respect, the project seeks to create opportunities for people to **participate, learn, and cooperate** with each other. The expected change is a more united and shared society where individuals from different backgrounds benefited from our project can live, learn, and socialise together free from prejudice and intolerance.

The project **directly benefits 3,464 individuals** with a focus on those from different community backgrounds (achieving SEUPB criteria for 80:20 in Ireland, 60:40 in Northern Ireland), cultural, ethnic and political backgrounds, placing an emphasis on supporting women, older people, minority communities, those living with disabilities, those from the LGBTQI+ community as well as those living with the legacy of the conflict. Project outputs include engagement and collaboration with **17 grassroots Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)**, **15 festivals, arts and community organisations** and **7 education and training providers**. The project employs a cross-border, collaborative approach to address common challenges and leverage shared opportunities between NI and IRL. By fostering cross-community interactions and joint initiatives, the project aims to bridge divides, support placemaking and cultural expression and promote mutual understanding.

Activities are built around **3 Work Packages**:



Communities Connect: A community leadership programme that aims to bring together communities with civil society to address multiple 21st century crises: from climate change, gender balance and unemployment to alienation and disconnection, to conflict and stability.

Festivals Connect: A programme aiming to engage with existing festivals of all forms and sizes, learn about their different approaches "to festival making and place making" and provide a range of opportunities, centred in cultural democratic approaches that foster interaction and expression, to improve their reach in diverse local communities, equip them with the skills to work with socially engaged artists and building sustainable structures to continually develop community-led programmes and partnerships.

Media Connect: A training programme that will weave the community and festival strand together. Cross-community workshops for journalists, digital media content creators, students, community members and representatives of CSOs/ Festivals aiming to introduce what does critical journalism for positive social change and leadership looks like and principles and values of creating content for promoting peace and reconciliation.

Key timelines and milestones:

- July 2025-December 2025: Programme Inception
- January 2026-December 2028: Implementation of activities
- February 2026: Programme launch event
- January 2029- June 2029: Closing activities and final event

Purpose of the exercise

The British Council is seeking to identify a Communications/Media Agency to design and implement the communication and visibility strategy for the CONNECT programme, in full compliance with SEUPB [PEACEPLUS Communication Guidelines](#).

About

Our communication strategy aims to create awareness and foster engagement for the programme, targeting communities in 17 regions in Northern Ireland and the border regions (11 council areas in Northern Ireland and 6 counties in Ireland). We focus on supporting disadvantaged groups, including women, older people, minority and new communities, people with disabilities, and the LGBTQI+ community. To achieve this, we will collaborate with organisations and festivals that work directly with these audiences.

We will implement targeted outreach and communication campaigns and monitor participation rates and adjust strategies to improve engagement. We will leverage partners' digital outreach, which reaches approximately 200,000 followers, and extend this reach by collaborating with local organisations and festival channels at the regional level.



We will also pitch stories to traditional local and national media to amplify the programme's impact. Additionally, we will engage participants from our Media Connect Work Package to develop and share stories from programme participants, featuring award-winning media pieces on our channels.

Audiences

- People from the 17 regional communities, especially disadvantaged groups
- Policymakers and influencers in Northern Ireland and Ireland
- Festivals, arts organisations and professionals
- Civil society organisations and activists in both countries
- Education and training providers on Media

Communication objectives and tactics

1. Reaching participants:

Aim for 3,500 participants and engagement with 39 organisations through organic and targeted paid campaigns, also leveraging the networks of programme and regional partners.

2. Capturing and disseminating best practices of organisations collaborating with communities:

Highlight how diverse institutions and organisations can collaborate with communities, building a sustainable ecosystem through relevant training and skill development.

3. Building awareness and understanding:

Showcase social action projects from 'Communities Connect' via digital channels through video interviews, infographics, and human stories. Selected cases will be featured in a final video promoted digitally and presented at the final dissemination event. Share insights from the 'Festivals Connect' strand on the role of festivals in communities, supporting artistic expression, and public access to new art forms.

4. Sharing Personal Impact Stories of various programme participants with the focus on positive changes in their lives:

Feature stories from active community members and festival organisers about the programme's impact, shared across our channels, participants' channels, and local media, challenging gender norms and stereotypes as well as other discriminatory opinions and actions using a more ethical and solution-based journalism approach.

5. On-site reporting and content production by participants:

Community members, journalists and content creators trained through Media Connect will have the opportunity to develop and publish fact-based reporting, analysis, radio reporting, photojournalism and video content through project activities. This work will be disseminated to broadly promote the project's

impact, populate the digital space with more affirmative content about community relationships, increase understanding of the key challenges we aim to address within the programme.

6. Organising key programme events, such as the programme launch event and the final celebration event will enable us to raise awareness about the programme among key stakeholders, media representative and our regional target audiences.

Communication resources and interdependencies

The selected communications agency will work directly or indirectly with the following team members:

- Senior Project Manager who has overall responsibility for programme implementation and compliance, and directly manages the Project Managers in Northern Ireland and Ireland. The Senior Project Manager provides final approval upon successful receipt of deliverables.
- Campaigns Manager who oversees the communication strategy and its implementation, contributing directly with content development, creative input, and quality review.
- Project and Communications Manager who will act as the main point of contact for the agency, coordinating service requests, monitoring delivery of actions, creating content, and supporting implementation of the communications strategy.
- Communications Managers from Politics in Action, Create, and the Arts Councils of Ireland and Northern Ireland, who will support the dissemination of programme activities and outputs through their respective channels.
- Marketing and Communications (MarComms) teams at the British Council, at country, regional, and global levels, lead on managing the corporate website and social media channels. They will be responsible for uploading content provided by the CONNECT project team.

Deliverables

Deliverable 1: Programme communication and visibility plan

To provide us with a communication and visibility plan which should include:

- Key messages
- Target Group analysis
- Communication channels
- Suggested communication milestones according to programme plan and available budget
- Suggested communication and visibility activities
- Budget required for each suggested communication and visibility activity

Deliverable 2: Visual Identity

Programme visual identity in line with SEUPB [PEACEPLUS Communication Guidelines](#) and British Council brand guidelines (to be provided up on signature of contract due to corporate re-branding undergoing)

	Requirements	Notes
1. Logo	N/A	No need for creation of new logo. Only suggestions on how/where to add title in materials
2. Illustrations	Four illustrations one generic and one per strand of work: Communities connect Festivals connect Media connect	Alternative ideas are welcome, informed by the Programme Communication Plan and the expertise of the Agency
3. Colour palette	Yes	
4. Photography	A set of approved photos per strand.	Access to British Council Asset bank will be provided. Photos from programme activities will also be added at later stage.
5. Typography	yes	
6. Templates	Ppt Word-generic Invitation Poster Roll-up Certificate of Attendance Agenda Report	Potentially in all colours/themes if we have different illustration per strand
7. Digital templates	Display banners for SOLAS Social media banners (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, linked in) Campaign monitor various sizes Zoom teams backgrounds	Potentially in all colours/themes if we have different illustration per strand

8. Video	Intro-outro	
9. Guidance for programme partners	Yes	

Deliverable 3: Dissemination of milestone events

This deliverable focuses on the strategic communication and dissemination of the CONNECT programme's milestone events, including:

- The programme launch event (scheduled for February 2026)
- Two Community Collaboration Spaces events, which will bring together participants from all programme strands (Two events one in 2026-2027 and one in 2027-2028)
- The final celebration event, to take place between January and June 2029, marking the closure of the programme

Each event will convene representatives from all programme audiences, with particular emphasis on engaging key stakeholders, such as policymakers, public authorities, civil society organisations, the arts and media sectors, especially during the launch and final events. The Agency is expected to support with:

1. Promotion for reaching participants
2. Media coverage in Ireland
3. Dissemination of programme impact
4. Webpage updates

Key tasks:

Suppliers are expected to provide the following key tasks in support of successful delivery. The suppliers should detail in their response how the key tasks will be utilised during project delivery.

Such services may include, but are not limited to:

- Paid and organic social media promotion tailored to target audiences and campaign objectives
- Graphic design services for digital and print assets
- Video shooting, editing, and production of short or long-form content
- Promotion and amplification of content produced by journalists and content creators within the Media Connect strand

- Media relations and securing media presence at key events or milestones
- Development of infographics, animations, and multimedia storytelling formats to increase audience engagement
- Support with content localisation, translation, or subtitling to ensure accessibility and inclusivity
- Strategic amplification of programme impact stories through traditional and digital media outlets

The selected Communications Agency may be requested to provide additional services based on emerging needs throughout the lifespan of the CONNECT programme. These services may arise either from the communication and visibility plan developed by the agency or from specific requests aligned with programme priorities, including but not limited to participant recruitment, dissemination of results, and visibility of key milestones. These services will be activated as needed to enhance the programme's visibility, engagement, and outreach across its various audiences and geographies.

Any additional services will be subject to prior approval and commissioned at the British Council's sole discretion.

Award Criteria

Responses from potential suppliers will be assessed to determine the most economically advantageous proposal, using the following criteria and weightings. The assessment will be based solely on the information provided in your submitted response:

Criteria	Weighting
Quality Evidence of experience in leading Communications for international programmes; proven experience in leading the communication and visibility activities of international programmes or projects, particularly those aligned with the objectives or thematic strands of the CONNECT programme. Relevant examples may include communications strategies, content development, stakeholder engagement, media relations, and the dissemination of results in programmes focused on community engagement, youth participation, social inclusion, media	30%

literacy, cultural collaboration, or similar areas. Strong evidence of impact, innovation, and the ability to engage diverse audiences will be considered an advantage.	
Methodology and Approach The supplier should provide a clear and detailed methodology outlining how they propose to deliver the required services, as specified in Deliverables 1–3 and the key task section. The methodology should demonstrate a strong understanding of the CONNECT programme’s objectives, target audiences, and communication needs. The methodology should also outline how the supplier will remain flexible and responsive to emerging needs, including requests for additional services, while ensuring timely delivery, quality control, stakeholder engagement, and effective collaboration with the project team.	30%
Commercial Itemised pricing for each of the three core deliverables and indicative fee rates for additional services under the "Key Taks" category. These may include, but are not limited to, graphic design, content creation, video production, social media promotion (organic and paid), media outreach. Fees should be presented in EUR either as hourly/daily rates or unit costs, as applicable. Services, goods and/or training provided at no additional cost will be considered as Added Value and would be assessed in an impact-based basis by its relevance and importance to the project goals and objectives. Separately, in Annex 3, please detail the cost attributable to each added value work package.	40%