



Comhar na nOileán CTR

Guide to LEADER

Rural Development Programme (LEADER) 2014 – 2020

Welcome

Comhar na nOileán is delighted to announce the launch of the **Rural Development Programme (LEADER) 2014 - 2020** in County Mayo, County Donegal & County Cork.

This LEADER programme is a little different from previous programmes, so we have developed this guide to give you an idea of what's included and excluded for LEADER funding.

This LEADER budget is a lot smaller than previous programmes but we are confident that it will still result in real benefits to the businesses and communities of the Irish Islands and the hinterlands.

Is mise le meas
Máire Uí Mhaoláin
CEO, Comhar na nOileán

Tá fáilte romhat an Ghaeilge a úsáid linn i gconaí fiú muna bhfuil tú lonnaithe i gceantar Gaeltachta.

LEADER in Ireland

Three Themes

These three themes apply to the LEADER programme across Ireland.

Theme 1 - Economic Development, Enterprise Development & Job Creation

- Rural Tourism
- Enterprise Development
- Rural Towns
- Broadband

Theme 2 - Social Inclusion

- Basic services targeted at hard to reach communities
- Rural Youth

Theme 3 - Rural Environment

- Protection and Sustainable use of Water Resources
- Protection and Improvement of Local Biodiversity
- Development of Renewable Energy

Nine priority objectives

1 Rural Tourism

- Support capital investment in innovative tourism projects
- Marketing, networking, events and festivals
- Training and mentoring to support tourism industry
- Increase local employment, visitor stay and spend

2 Small Business & Enterprise

- Support capital investment in new and growing businesses
- Fund research and development, networking and marketing, training and mentoring for small businesses
- Increase employment and income generation

3 Rural Towns

- Enhance streetscapes, recreational spaces and tidy towns
- Maximise the potential of festivals, markets and events

4 Broadband

- Fund broadband research, pilot projects and training
- Support small-scale investment in broadband infrastructure, works and equipment

5 Community Facilities and Services

- Develop and enhance community facilities, including recreational facilities and social enterprises
- Support social initiatives and community services
- Provide training in a wide variety of community skills

6 Rural Youth

- Support investment in services and facilities for young people, such as clubs, youth cafés and recreation facilities
- Fund youth development initiatives and enhance youth participation in disadvantaged areas
- Mentoring, training, training for volunteers

7 Water Conservation

- Support training, feasibility studies, seminars and awareness programmes in water conservation
- Fund practical water conservation projects such as area plans and recycling schemes

8 Biodiversity

- Support training, seminars and awareness programmes on the topic of local biodiversity
- Fund capital projects including parks, nature corridors and habitat creation and conservation

9 Renewable Energy

- Support training and awareness on environmental issues
- Fund capital projects implementing energy conservation measures or use of renewable energy technologies
- Support energy conservation in community buildings

These objectives came from public consultation meetings in late 2015, and are part of the LEADER Local Development Strategy

What kind of projects can be funded?

Rural Tourism

- Marketing and promotion activities
- Tourism Accommodation (in certain areas)
- Festivals and Events
- Develop new and existing tourism businesses
- Tourism Networks
- Agri-tourism businesses

Small Business

- Artisan food and drink businesses
- Renewable Energy projects
- Feasibility studies for new business ideas
- Social and community enterprise
- Creative sector including crafts, software development, design and media

Rural Towns

- Town renewal schemes and restoration projects
- Multi-purpose community buildings
- Social events, markets and festivals
- Recreational spaces and tidy towns

Broadband

- Local actions that complement national initiatives
- Basic computer training to certain groups
- Skills development for installing broadband
- Feasibility studies and funding for small scale equipment

Basic Services in Hard to Reach Communities

- Develop and enhance community facilities
- Social inclusion and cultural integration
- Community training programmes
- Community/social enterprise projects

Rural Youth

- Develop youth facilities such as youth cafés, arts and recreational spaces
- Improve access to ICT for young people
- Youth development projects

Protection & Sustainable Use of Water Resources

- Support water conservation awareness
- Specialist training programmes
- Community water improvement plans
- Projects involving use of green technology

Protection & Improvement of Local Biodiversity

- Actions to promote and protect biodiversity
- Nature networks
- Upgrading parks, river walks and habitats
- Restocking/replanting schemes for native species

Development of Renewable Energy

- Community energy audits and strategies
- Energy efficiency programmes for business and communities
- Energy conservation initiatives
- Small scale renewable energy projects

Don't see your project or idea listed?

These are just some examples of projects that are listed in the LEADER programme operating rules. If you have a project in mind that is not listed here, please contact us.

LEADER Grant Rates and Amounts

Project Type	Applicant Type	Max. Grant Rate	Max. Funding
Investment & other supports (capital, equipment, marketing, animation)	Private	50%	€150,000
	Community	75%	€200,000
	Community under Basic Services targeted at hard to reach areas	90%	
Analysis & Development	Private	75%	€30,000
	Community	90%	
Training	Private individual, business or community	100%	€50,000
	Specialised and/or countywide training initiatives	100%	€150,000

Minimum Grant: Under the rules, grants of less than €1,250 are not allowed

Business Size: <20 employees, annual turnover and/or balance sheet ≤ €4million

Important: Please note that these are the highest grant rates and amounts available. In some cases these rates may be reduced, for example where:

- Other grant schemes are available for similar projects.
- LEADER funds become more limited as time goes on.

Eligible costs include:

- ✓ Construction or renovation work
- ✓ Purchase of machinery and equipment
- ✓ Professional/Technical Fees (up to 12% of project capital costs)
- ✓ Marketing (including group marketing activities)
- ✓ Tailored and specialised training programmes
- ✓ Analysis and Development (e.g. feasibility studies, prototypes)
- ✓ Voluntary Labour (community/farm diversification projects only)
- ✓ Donations (community projects only)
- ✓ Purchase of land (with/without buildings) - community only

Costs which are **not eligible** include:

- × Working capital (including stock, running costs and reclaimable VAT)
- × Conventional motor vehicles (including cars, vans and buses)
- × Planning application fees
- × Insurance costs
- × Loans or leasing

This information comes from the operating rules that apply to the LEADER programme in Ireland.

Sectors and activities which are **not eligible** include:

- × Mainstream Agriculture
- × Fisheries
- × Conventional retail operations (except community/farm based shops selling local produce)
- × Training which is part of normal education programmes, secondary or higher level systems
- × Horticulture (including bee-keeping)
- × Improvements to private residential property (except for heritage projects in exceptional cases)
- × Childcare
- × Healthcare activities
- × Nursing homes
- × Housing
- × Race and sport horse industries
- × Greyhound industry

Very Important

Costs already incurred are **not** eligible for funding.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

How do I apply for a LEADER grant?

The LEADER application process involves two steps as follows:

Step 1 - Expression of Interest

All applicants must complete an Expression of Interest (EOI) for each project.

Step 2 - LEADER Grant Application

If your Expression of Interest is eligible in principle, you will be invited to make an application for LEADER funding.

What happens when I send in my Expression of Interest?

We will acknowledge your Expression of Interest and it will be assessed for eligibility. If your project is eligible, you will be given an application form and invited to submit an application for LEADER funding.

What happens when I send in my application form?

When your application is complete, your Project Officer will present it to an Evaluation Committee. This committee makes a recommendation to the LCDC LAG whether to fund the project or not. The LCDC LAG Board makes the final decision on your grant application.

How long will it take to get approved for funding?

This depends on how quickly you can put the necessary information together. In general, it will take a number of months to work through the application process. Your Project Officer will guide and help you during this time.

Need help to apply for a grant? You will be assigned a LEADER Project Officer to help you with your application.

If my project is approved, what happens?

If your project is approved, you are given a contract (letter of offer), which must be signed and returned before you start your project or spend any money.

If my project is refused, what happens?

If your project is refused, you will receive a letter, outlining the reason/s for refusal. You can appeal the decision, and information about the appeals process will be included in your refusal letter.

What are open calls?

This just means that we take each application as it comes in for funding. However, we

can only do this for up to 60% of our funding. If your project type has been listed under our closed call programme, you will have to wait until that closed call is announced before you can progress your application.

What are closed calls?

At least 40% of the LEADER programme must be approved in closed funding calls. This is where projects of a certain type (for example community playgrounds or festivals) are all invited to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) by the same deadline date. These EOIs are assessed together and successful applicants will be invited to make a full LEADER application. Applications must all be submitted by the same deadline date, and compete against each other for the funding available.

The reason for closed calls is to ensure that LEADER funding is targeted where it delivers the most value and secures equal opportunities for all potential applicants.

If you have more questions, just contact us and we will answer your LEADER queries.

Who is involved in LEADER?

Local and Community Development Committee Local Action Group (LCDC LAG), is the contract holder for the Rural Development Programme (LEADER) 2014-2020 in Co. Mayo, Co. Donegal & Co. Cork. **Comhar na nOileán** is one of many LCDC LAG's Implementing Partners.

The programme has a number of Implementing Partners in various regions:

- The local Implementing Partner for the Irish Islands & parts of mainland West Cork is Comhar na nOileán CTR.

The programme also has a Financial Partner:

- Mayo County Council, Donegal County Council and Cork County Council

Glossary of Terms

LCDC LAG - The LCDC LAG makes the final decision on LEADER grant applications in the county.

Implementing Partner - These are the companies that support the LCDC LAG in managing the day-to-day operations of the LEADER programme in the various counties.

Animating Partner - These are the companies that support the LCDC LAG in creating awareness of the LEADER programme in their areas of operation.

Financial Partner - This is the group that is responsible to monitor and manage all the financial aspects of the LEADER programme.

Who do I contact for more information?

If you are based on the **offshore islands of Mayo, Donegal or Cork or Zone 2 of West Cork**, please contact us. All of our contact details are on the back of this booklet.

If you are unsure who to contact, just give us a call and we will point you in the right direction.

Contact Comhar na nOileán

Our Website: www.oileain.ie
Email Us: fios@oileain.ie
Call our main Office: 099 75096
Write to Us: Inis Oírr, Oileán Árann, Co. na Gaillimhe.

Meet our LEADER Project Officers

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Important

Please note that this is a summary guide to LEADER, and does not include every programme detail. If you have a project idea, but are not sure about eligibility, please talk to a LEADER Project Officer and they will be able to talk to you about your specific project.

All information is correct at time of printing, but may be subject to change. Comhar na nOileán accepts no responsibility for any errors or omissions.

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