



An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail
Department of Rural and
Community Development



LEADER Programme 2014-2020 Case Studies from Ireland



National Rural Network





Prepared by the National Rural Network team at NUI Galway and Irish Rural Link on behalf of the Department Rural and Community Development (DRCD) and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM).

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Compiled and designed by Dr. Shane Conway, Postdoctoral Researcher at NUI Galway and the National Rural Network.



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Department of Rural and
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The European Agricultural Fund
for Rural Development:
Europe investing in rural areas



Ireland's European Structural and
Investment Funds Programmes
2014-2020

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Minister's Foreword

I am very pleased to launch this publication as a testament to the great impact that the LEADER 2014-2020 Programme has on the communities and businesses in rural Ireland.



The LEADER Programme will celebrate 30 years of supporting Irish rural communities and businesses in 2021 and the positive impact it has made is very evident in every corner of Ireland. The LEADER 2014-2020 Programme is co-funded by both the European Commission and the Irish Exchequer. The programme has supported projects across a range of diverse themes such as enterprise development, rural tourism, enhancement of rural towns, the provision of services targeted at hard to reach communities, and the rural environment. The programme provides support in all aspects of rural life, from business supports to rural youth programmes, biodiversity and renewable energy projects.

When I signed the Funding Agreement with the Local Action Groups in July 2016, at the outset of this programme, I noted that one of the great strengths of the LEADER programme is that it puts funding decisions into the hands of local communities; it is great to see the evidence of this within this publication.

As the current programme draws to a conclusion, this compilation provides great insights into the variety of projects that have benefited from LEADER support. These projects range from the purchase of a Bionic Exoskeleton Rehabilitation Suit in Donegal which allows people in the North West to access this state-of-the-art rehabilitation service within their community, to the fit-out of the Butterfly Club Sensory room facility in Limerick as a social club for children and teenagers with special needs. These projects showcase the benefits of the LEADER programme to rural communities.

The rural economy has also seen substantial investment and growth through LEADER interventions as demonstrated by the support provided to Macamore Buffalo Farm in County Wexford, helping it to develop an innovative food business, and to Dungarvan Precision Engineering, enabling it to create additional jobs. LEADER will continue to provide vital investment to rural communities and rural economies as we deal with the new challenges faced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I would like to compliment the National Rural Network, and in particular Dr. Shane Conway, for compiling this excellent showcase of projects supported by each Local Action Group and Implementing Partner throughout Ireland.

I hope that those planning to invest in their own business or community projects will find inspiration from the success stories illustrated in this publication and that it will be a springboard for rural communities and businesses across Ireland to work together to deliver similar projects to improve the quality of life and support economic activity in rural areas.

Heather Humphreys, T.D.
Minister for Rural and Community Development



**An Roinn Forbartha
 Tuaithe agus Pobail
 Department of Rural and
 Community Development**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Heather Humphreys'.

The LEADER Programme at the Heart of Rural Development in Ireland

The demise of Ireland's infamous 'Celtic Tiger' brought great economic and social change to the country and its people. Rural Ireland felt the economic downturn keenly, with the loss of SMEs, infrastructural development and most of all a cohort of its youth. In the past ten years, the country has remained steadfast in its endeavour to rise out of the ashes and return to some form of stability. Within a rural context, **the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme (RDP)** became part of the solution for rural Ireland with funding and programmes focused on agriculture, the broader rural community and the environment. The **LEADER** Programme is a key element of Ireland's RDP, providing funds for rural and community development focusing specifically on economic development, enterprise development and job creation; social inclusion and the environment.



In 2021, the **LEADER** Programme, a European Union initiative supporting rural development projects at a local level, will be thirty years in existence. During this time, rural Ireland has benefited enormously from the programme; not only through capital invested, but more specifically through the enhancement and accumulation of social capital in rural areas. Evidence of social capital or 'the glue that holds communities together' is all too apparent in the projects and programmes funded under the 2014-2020 LEADER Programme, some of which are outlined in this booklet. For example, the pride and passion for our communities which can be uncovered, when towns and villages come together in celebration during festivals such as; **The Charlie Chaplin Comedy Film Festival** in Kerry or **The Fingal Farmers Festival** in Dublin, both funded under the LEADER Theme of Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation. The enterprise opportunities made possible through LEADER funding are also well documented in this booklet, with successful examples, such as Jonathan O'Meara's **Mid Ireland Adventure** business in Westmeath, which was nominated for a European Rural Inspiration Award, or **Coilte Sláintiúil**, a start-up enterprise in South Cork, providing a range of woodland conservation solutions. The enhancement and protection of the rural environment, its waterway and biodiversity as well as the development of renewable energy is a welcome consideration within the LEADER framework. Funded projects such as, **The Westport Beekeeper Association** in Mayo and **The Louth Village Biodiversity Plan** are highly beneficial to the environment, but also allow communities to expand their knowledge base around key environmental considerations.

The case studies featured in this booklet are only a small fraction of the vast array of ventures funded under the LEADER programme in every small village and town in rural Ireland. The Local Action Groups and Implementing Partners are the bedrock of the LEADER Programme, with Rural Development Officers, playing a key role in assisting every community group and individual to bring each project to fruition. In putting this booklet together, Ireland faced an unprecedented health crisis. The Covid-19 pandemic will leave our country economically distressed and socially transformed and rural Ireland will not escape damage. Rural resilience alongside programmes such as LEADER will however, allow communities and entrepreneurs to rebuild, redevelop and create an innovative and sustainable way forward.

Dr Maura Farrell
NUI Galway
National Rural Network Team



The LEADER Approach Explained

The LEADER Concept

The LEADER programme, established by the European Commission in 1991, is based on the 'bottom-up' approach. A European Commission report entitled 'The LEADER Approach – A basic guide', represents the rationale behind LEADER in the following manner: 'the main concept behind the LEADER initiative is that, given the diversity of European rural areas, development strategies are more effective and efficient if decided and implemented at local level by local actors, accompanied by clear and transparent procedures, the support of the relevant public administrations and the necessary technical assistance for the transfer of good practice'.



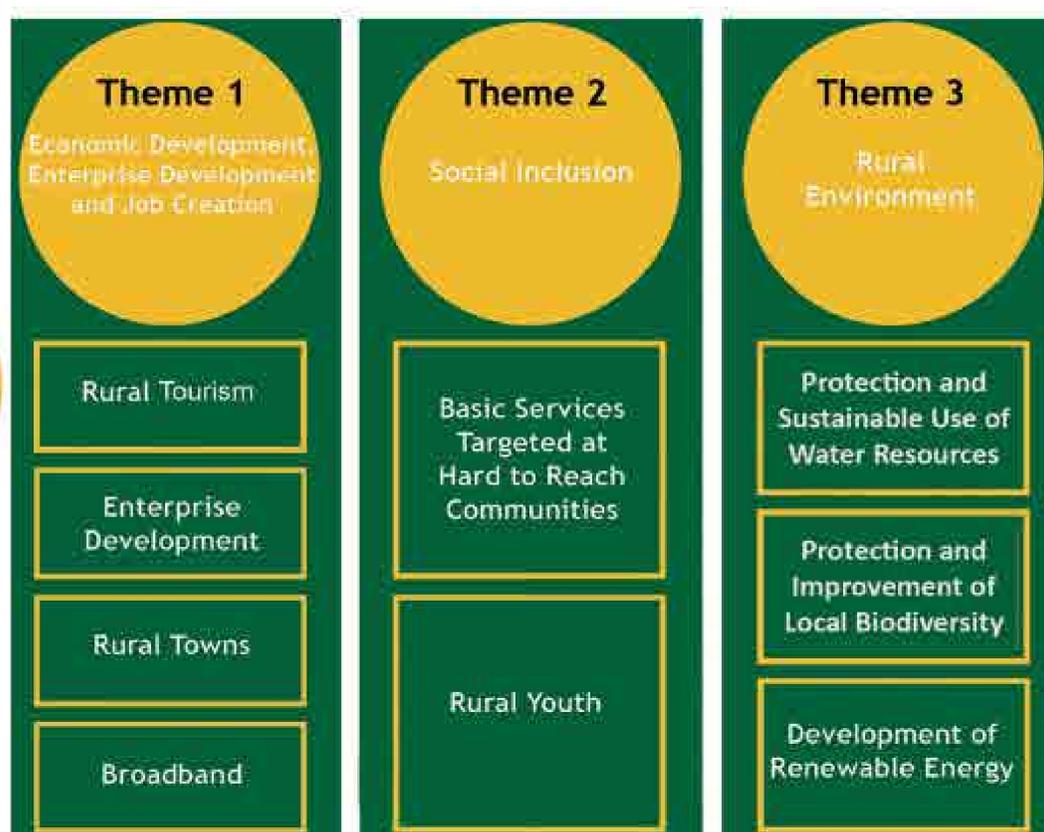
7 Key Principles of LEADER

The LEADER approach is based on 7 key principles – all of which must collaborate and positively interact for it to be successful. Indeed, it is important to consider these 7 principles as a toolkit, rather than as separate entities, that can work together to safeguard and build a brighter future for rural communities.



LEADER 2014-2020 Themes

The LEADER Programme 2014-2020 targets funding towards key areas in need of support. Projects are supported in three thematic areas (1. Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation, 2. Social Inclusion & 3. Rural Environment). These three themes are broad enough to enable funding of a diversity of community-led projects both from private enterprise and community groups.



Local Action Groups (LAGs) and Implementing Partners (IPs)

Decisions on LEADER funding applications are made at a local level by a network of 29 Local Action Groups (LAGs). They approve applications that align with the objectives of their Local Development Strategy, which is developed in consultation with the local communities. Local Development Companies in each area are responsible for the day to day management and co-ordination of the LEADER Programme, either as Implementing Partners (IPs) in a wider LAG or by acting as the LAG itself. Applications for LEADER funding are made to these Local Development Companies. Project Officers within these companies are the first port of call when thinking about applying for LEADER funding.

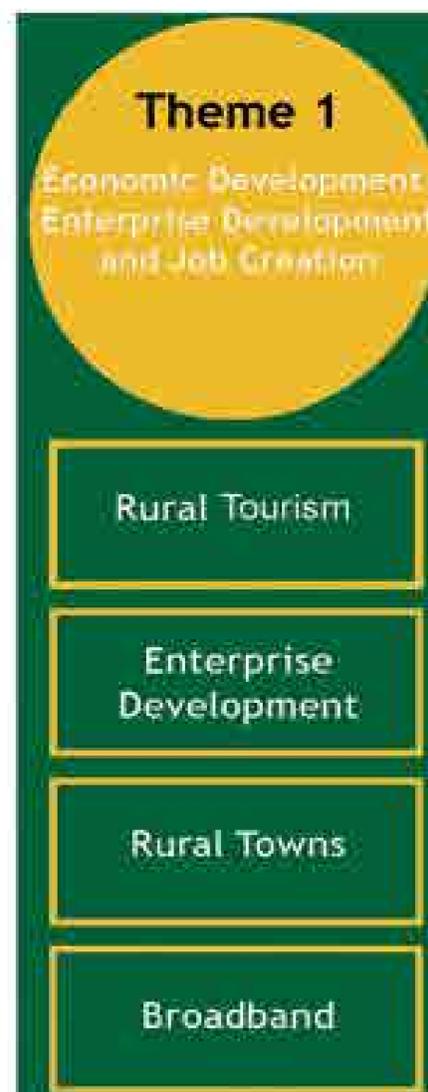
LAGs may operate a 'rolling call' for LEADER funding applications and accept applications on an ongoing basis. Targeted calls allow LAGs to concentrate funding in specific strategic areas of need or opportunity.

Depending on the nature of the project and the applicant type, different rates of funding aid apply. For example, analysis and development projects from a private business can be funded up to 75% of the total project costs while for community applicants it is up to 90%.



LEADER Programme 2014-2020

Theme 1: Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation



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LEADER Program

Theme 1: Economic Development and Job Creation

1  Lands of Éogain Heritage Festival

2  Slí Mara Thoraí Teoranta (Tory Island Charters)

3  Leitrim Design House Flagship Further Development Project

4  Purchase of Computer Equipment to Expand Innovative On-line Sales and Develop Rural Tourism Business

5  IRD Kiltimagh Broadband Extension

6  Restoration of Walled Garden in Mountbellew

7  Mid Ireland Adventure

8  Archaeological Tuition - Caherconnell Archaeology Field School

9  Kilmeedy Community Café and Shop

10  Charlie Chaplin Comedy Film Festival 2017 and 2018

11  Coillte Sláintiúil

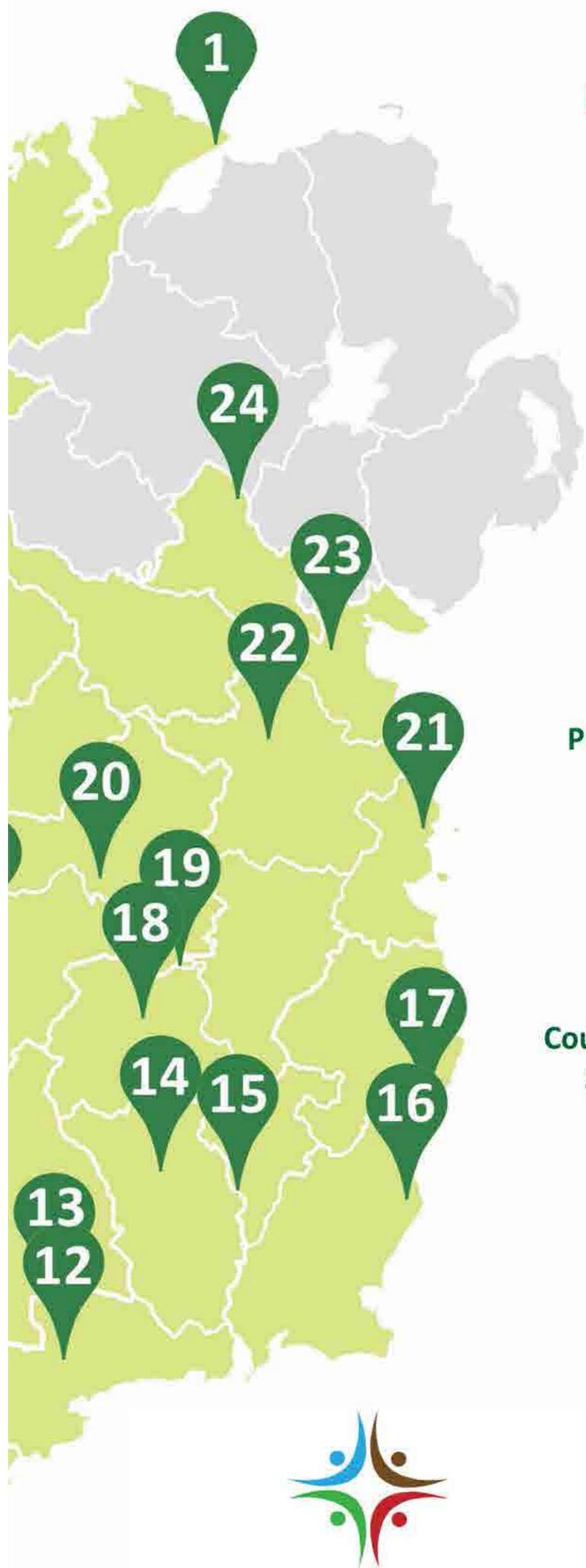
12  Dungarvan Precision Engineering



Timeline 2014-2020



Development, Enterprise Education - *Project Examples*



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hÉireann
nt of Ireland



al and Community Development

Drumlin Trails Bike Hire



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Louth Looking Good 2017



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Gizagig



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Fingal Farmers
Festival 2018



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SWEETS Community and Adult
Education Centre



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Digital Based Training
Programme to Support the
Fab Lab Facility



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Purchase of Specialist Unmanned
Aerial Venicle (UAV) Surveying Unit



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County Wicklow Partnership
Social Enterprise Strategy



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Macamore Buffalo



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Borris House Festival
of Writing and Ideas



15

Linguan Valley Tourism Training



14

Clonmel Applefest



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Lands of Éogain Heritage Festival

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LANDS OF ÉOGAIN HERITAGE FESTIVAL

Summary

Based on the Inishowen Peninsula in Donegal, the Lands of Éogain heritage group was supported through LEADER funding to run the 2017 Lands of Éogain Heritage Festival. The 2017 festival had diverse aims and a wide range of local benefits. It helped to promote Inishowen as a destination for world class heritage tourism, gathering leading academics and situating Inishowen's heritage story in an international context. It raised local awareness of Inishowen's unique cultural heritage. The festival was attended by national and international participants bringing off-peak cultural tourism to the area. This also generated wider spin-off local economy benefits such as to hospitality, food service and transport providers.

Context

Lands of Éogain is a heritage group based on the Inishowen Peninsula in the north of county Donegal. Broadly speaking, Lands of Éogain works to develop, preserve and raise awareness of Inishowen's heritage and its significance in the European historical context. The Lands of Éogain heritage group has a diverse range of aims and activities such as collating and disseminating information on Inishowen heritage, providing training opportunities, as well as running projects and seminars. The group has been involved in digs and research, such as at the Cooley Graveyard monastic settlement in the Merville area. The group recognises that local heritage has its own important innate value, but also if carefully managed and harnessed is a significant resource that can support economic

Project name: Lands of Éogain Heritage Festival

Date: August 2017 – December 2017

Local Action Group: Donegal LCDC

Implementing Partner: Inishowen Development Partnership

Type of Beneficiary: Formalised Community Group

Priority & Focus Area: Theme 1: Rural Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation / Sub theme: Rural Tourism

Project Beneficiary: Lands of Éogain Heritage Group

Address: Ballybrack, Merville, Co. Donegal

Further information: www.landsofeogain.com





Lands of Éogain Heritage Festival



LEADER 2014-2020 NRN CASE STUDY

development through supporting local cultural heritage tourism.

Lands of Éogain first held a heritage festival in 2015 aiming to share the results of excavations carried out in collaboration with the Bernician Studies Group. LEADER funding supported the 2017 Lands of Éogain Heritage Festival which acted as a focal point to celebrate Inishowen heritage, attract tourism to the area and build future momentum. A festival concept for 2017 was developed aiming to provide academic and historical information in an accessible and informative way.

In the wider context, the festival supported the goals of the Donegal Local Development Strategy. One of its objectives is to harness the potential of Donegal's world class authentic tourism offerings for the benefit of rural communities by facilitating diversification and the creation of indigenous tourism enterprises, community-based tourism initiatives and ancillary facilities. The Lands of Éogain Heritage Festival directly supports this goal as a community-based festival supporting cultural heritage tourism and education. The festival was planned for September to stimulate tourism at an off-peak time of year.

Objectives

The 2017 Lands of Éogain Heritage Festival aimed to:

- Promote Inishowen as a destination for world class heritage tourism
- Gather leading academics in the field
- Disseminate knowledge to local groups
- Raise awareness and appreciation of the unique cultural heritage of the area

Activities

The Lands of Éogain Heritage Festival 2017 was developed to have wide appeal to different groups such as tourists, students, academics and the general public, particularly those with an interest in history, archaeology and culture. Focus was placed on developing a programme including high quality speakers to build a reputation for Inishowen as a destination for world class heritage events. The Lands of Éogain heritage group has connections with international experts such as at Newcastle University and the Bernician

Studies Group. This provided links to potential speakers. The academic content was tailored to explore Inishowen's heritage story and situate it in an international context. This aimed to help elevate and enhance Inishowen's position in a cultural heritage context. The festival concept was developed to help support further establishment of expert links locally, nationally and internationally. The event also included updates on current geophysical surveying by the Bernician Studies Group of Straid Church, Clonmany, helping raise the public profile of ongoing work. The opportunity to complement other local cultural initiatives was also identified, such as the Inishowen Traditional Music Project.



Traditional music performance at the 2017 Lands of Éogain Festival. Image Credit: Lands of Éogain Heritage Group

The Lands of Éogain Heritage Festival programme in 2017 included talks, a tour, music and an exhibition, alongside book stalls and a craft market. The three-day event was held on September 8th to 10th 2017 in Clonmany, a village located along the Wild Atlantic Way. The event gathered international and national experts.

The festival opened on Friday September 8th with a keynote presentation from Dr Brian Lacey and Colm O'Brien. The opening talk was followed by a special musical performance by the Inishowen Traditional Music Project. The Saturday programme featured a full day of presentations and discussions. Speakers included those with local, national and international expertise. For



Lands of Éogain Heritage Festival



LEADER 2014-2020 NRN CASE STUDY

example, Professor Michelle Brown from the University of London spoke about the Irish contribution to early medieval manuscript culture and Dr Hermann Moisl from Newcastle University explored ecclesiastical empire building in the context of the Armagh confederation and Merovingian Gaul. Local experts included Donegal based artist and musician Seoirse Ó'Dochartaigh who discussed the clachans of Clonmany and Dr Brian Lacey who traced the 7th century connections between Inishowen and Northumbria. An art exhibition, alongside a heritage book and craft market added to the diversity of the programme on Saturday. Sunday's programme included a heritage tour and visit to Inishowen heritage sites including Cooley Graveyard, Straid Church and Fort Dunree.

"LEADER funding gave the Lands of Éogain group the capacity to offer a high quality festival that could attract world-class speakers and integrate this with local community heritage interests. Feedback from the speakers and the general community has been excellent and has generated an appetite for further events of this kind."

Dr. Trish Murphy, Lands of Éogain Heritage Group

Results

Scheduled in September, the festival increased tourism activity to the Inishowen Peninsula in the off-peak season. Attendees were diverse such as academics, students, heritage enthusiasts and wider tourist visitors. The festival was attended by national and international participants from the UK, Northern Ireland, US, Europe and North West region of Ireland. Friday September 8th was attended by 67 people, Saturday September 9th by 69 people and Sunday September 10th by 59 people. A total of 51 people took part in the guided bus tour on Sunday September 10th.

The festival also generated wider spin-off benefits to the local economy engaging services of local tourism, hospitality, food service and transport providers. The festival generated 94 bed nights for local accommodation providers. A local bus company was contracted to provide a bus for the tour. Food service providers were contracted to provide food and beverage catering for attendees.

Festival attendees also visited the military museum at Fort Dunree.

"The Lands of Éogain Festival 2017 has helped to consolidate the excellent reputation of the co-ordinating group in Inishowen and beyond. It has opened up Inishowen heritage to a wider audience locally, nationally and internationally. We look forward to further promoting Inishowen as a go-to destination for cultural and archaeological heritage."

Neil McGrory, Lands of Éogain Heritage Group

The Lands of Éogain Heritage Festival enhanced the profile of Inishowen as a hub for cultural tourism. Advertising, local media and social media coverage supported this. Promotional materials were generated, distributed and displayed (e.g. 30 A3 posters, 50 A4 programmes, pop up and outdoor banners). The festival gained local newspaper coverage such as in Donegal Now and The Derry Journal. It also gained coverage through social media such as by local (e.g. @VisitInishowen and @Inishowenmusic), national and international groups (e.g. @Berniciantweets and @FourCourtsPress).



Interactive discussion at the 2017 Lands of Éogain Festival. Image Credit: Lands of Éogain Heritage Group



Lands of Éogain Heritage Festival

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More broadly the festival provided a forum for networking and ideas exchange between groups that without the festival would not have come together. Talks generated good discussion and strong audience engagement.

“The Lands of Éogain Festival Heritage project is about local people taking ownership of their shared heritage, celebrating it and developing it for the benefit of all in the Inishowen Peninsula.”

Andrew Ward, Joint CEO, Inishowen Development Partnership

The festival also had local community benefits, increasing appreciation and understanding of local cultural heritage. The local community had the opportunity to engage in field trips to archaeological excavation sites showcasing the wider work of the Lands of Éogain Heritage group. For example, Lands of Éogain collaborates with the UK based Bernician Studies Group to study local ancient monuments using innovative geo-physical surveying methods.



Visit to Straid Church, Clonmany as part of the 2017 Lands of Éogain Festival. Image Credit: Lands of Éogain Heritage Group

Lessons

Strong potential for cultural heritage to stimulate niche tourism:

This project shows the potential for cultural heritage to stimulate niche tourism. This is particularly important as it can be harnessed at off-peak times of the year helping to extend the tourist season.

Local supports and groups important to realise the potential of cultural heritage tourism:

The existence of local community groups working to highlight and preserve local cultural heritage resources emerge as a vital part of realising the potential for cultural heritage to stimulate niche tourism in the Inishowen context. The importance of support for community heritage groups in their work, such as through LEADER, is vital to preserving and unlocking the value of local heritage.

Elevate local heritage sites through knowledge sharing demonstrating their wider significance:

The festival worked to place Inishowen at the centre of the early Christian world and explore its unique position in the ecclesiastical context of Ireland in Europe at this time. It did this by working with a range of experts, both local and international. This points to the importance of knowledge and networks to highlight the wider, deeper significance of heritage sites, helping to harness their value for cultural tourism.

Local collaboration helps to build a diverse festival programme:

Wider local cultural assets, resources and services are important to build a festival programme that incorporates different types of activities. For example, music from the Inishowen Traditional Music Project was part of the festival programme.

Funding

Total project budget (i)+(ii)+(iii) =	€6,101.64
+ (i) Rural Development Programme support (a)+(b)	€4,576.23
+ (a) EAFRD (EU) contribution	€2,873.87
+ (b) National / Regional contribution	€1,702.36
+ (ii) Private / Own funds	€1,525.41
+ (iii) Other funding sources	n/a

Contact details

Project beneficiary name	Lands of Éogain Heritage Group
Email	landsofeogain@gmail.com
Address of beneficiary or implementing body	Ballybrack, Moville, Co. Donegal



SWEETS Community and Adult Education Centre

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SWEETS COMMUNITY AND ADULT EDUCATION CENTRE

Summary

South Westmeath Employment Education and Training Services (SWEETS) is a community services project located in rural Westmeath. IT training is a core activity of SWEETS. This project facilitated SWEETS to upgrade its laptop equipment. The equipment facilitated SWEETS to deliver higher quality IT courses in a more effective learning environment. Improvements in training delivery aided better student experiences, learning and confidence building. SWEETS IT training is a vital service to the rural community supporting access and engagement with the modern digital world, bringing social and economic benefits to its local rural area..

Context

Established in 2001, SWEETS is a community services project located in Kilbeggan, county Westmeath. It provides adult education and training services and acts as a community information centre. Alongside this, SWEETS provides a wide range of other services to the community from event facilities for local groups to CV preparation, mock interview advice and practice. As a social enterprise, its training courses and wider services are a key part of its funding model. It also receives important core public funding from the Department of Rural and Community Development through Pobal.

SWEETS has been providing community adult education in Westmeath since 1997. It is an accredited FETAC QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland) training centre and is

Project name: SWEETS Community and Adult Education Centre

Date: February 2017 - February 2018

Local Action Group: Westmeath LCDC

Implementing Partner: Westmeath Community Development

Type of Beneficiary: CLG and Registered Charity

Priority & Focus Area: Theme 1: Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation/Sub theme: Broadband

Project Beneficiary Name/Organisation: South Westmeath Employment Education and Training Services (SWEETS)

Address: The Crescent, Kilbeggan, Co. Westmeath

Further information: www.sweets.ie





SWEETS Community and Adult Education Centre



LEADER 2014-2020 NRN CASE STUDY

registered with SOLAS as a training organisation. SWEETS develops its course programme in collaboration with the community. Each January and September it holds an open day where community members provide their views on local education and training needs. This flexibility and engagement is very important to develop courses of most value to the local community. For example, the recent recovery of jobs in the construction industry has created a need for Safe Pass training.

The provision of IT training is a core activity of SWEETS. In doing so it must have the most up to date equipment to maintain its reputation as a training organisation and to effectively deliver courses. The provision of grant aid has enabled SWEETS to purchase up-to-date laptops and software. Because of changes and advances in technology, updates to equipment are needed approximately on a five yearly basis, sometimes earlier.



IT course at SWEETS training centre. Image Credit: SWEETS

The project is linked with Westmeath's 2014 to 2020 Local Development Strategy objective to assist the economic and social development of rural areas in the county through the provision of ICT training and other supports to communities and enterprises.

Objectives

This project aimed to support and develop SWEETS IT training activities. Its core objectives were to:

- Upgrade equipment and software to bring it up-to-date.
- Enable SWEETS to deliver and expand its range of IT training courses to rural dwellers.
- Enable SWEETS to deliver basic IT training for priority groups to ensure availability and access to broadband services and markets for all.
- Improve access to on-line services for people living in rural and remote areas, especially those at risk of social exclusion and isolation, offering up-skilling and social contact.

Activities

SWEETS submitted an expression of interest to Westmeath Community Development in February 2017 to upgrade its laptop computer equipment. The project was fully completed in February 2018 when the LEADER grant was paid. SWEETS existing laptops were purchased in 2011. A 50% grant from the previous LEADER (2007-13) programme facilitated the purchase of these laptops. This LEADER grant provided for 75% of the cost of purchase of 16 new Dell Vostro laptops which included the Microsoft Office software.

The purchase of laptops was required for a number of reasons. One fundamental reason was to maintain the professionalism and quality of computer training provided. The current stock of laptops did not provide the capacity and quality needed by SWEETS. The age of the laptops created challenges for tutors such as technical issues arising during classes. Demand for course places at times outstripped the stock of current laptops. Prior to purchase of the new laptops front office laptops had to be used in training classes. This impacted efficiency as administrative staff were inhibited from progressing wider operational and support tasks of the organisation.

The mobility of laptops and the practical benefits this brings is vital to SWEETS delivery of computer courses outside its own training centre. Before 2011 computer courses were delivered at the training centre using desktop PCs. Investing in laptop equipment gives mobility and allows SWEETS



SWEETS Community and Adult Education Centre



National Rural Network

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tutors to deliver courses at a variety of locations. For example, if delivering computer training in the community the new laptops have longer battery life and can retain charge to allow delivery of a few hours of classes without needing recharging. Battery life is important as it minimises the need for use of cables in training locations where from a health and safety point of view their use is best avoided.

A further reason driving the need for this project was that in recent years SWEETS observed a trend among some students having preference to use their own laptops in computer training classes. This can aid learning and SWEETS encourages this practice if it is the student's preferred approach. However often student's personal laptops were younger and faster than SWEETS own. This resulted in students using equipment of different capabilities creating challenges for tutors during classes.

The project was also important to help build on the existing strengths of SWEETS supporting the organisation's future sustainability. Its location in a rural area means that training participants do not have to travel long distances to avail of training opportunities. SWEETS tends to have more female than male clients on training courses. SWEETS local accessibility facilitates access, such as day-time courses that run during school hours when parents have time to access them in-between childcare duties.

"We can't be two steps behind and the new laptops help us to move forward. We couldn't proceed without the new laptops to provide training that is fair to all students. The upgraded equipment helps us provide training to students on a level playing field".

Martha McMahon, IT Tutor, SWEETS

Results

The new equipment has enhanced SWEETS existing suite of computer training courses. The laptops mean that courses are run more efficiently. Issues with slow laptops, different keyboard layouts or software versions is eliminated in classes using these machines. The project has successfully increased accessibility to IT training in rural areas. The new equipment has allowed SWEETS to accommodate bigger

groups in computer classes. Small class sizes are important to SWEETS but classes that previously averaged around 8 people can now be increased to 10 or more.



Entrance to SWEETS training and community information centre. Image Credit: NRN

The equipment upgrade has enabled SWEETS to provide learners with the most up to date IT hardware and software enhancing the organisation's reputation and service delivery. Return clients are very important to SWEETS which enables growth of its market base. Clients who take beginner courses often move on to advanced courses. A positive initial experience is important to facilitate this.

SWEETS has found adult education in IT has strong social benefits. It instils confidence so that people can effectively engage with and benefit from the contemporary digital world. Courses provide a social space for rural people combatting social isolation. IT training improves access to online services and markets for those suffering marginalisation caused by educational disadvantage and/or rural isolation.

IT training also has socio-economic benefits. It encourages the sharing of ideas and opens opportunities leading to growth in community activity and enterprise. SWEETS QQI computer courses are a stepping-stone for people returning to education and/or wishing to pursue further education and training, as well as those seeking their first-time occupation, to advance/up-skill in their current job or change jobs. This project has assisted SWEETS sustain its current level of employees (3 full-time and 4 part-time). The



SWEETS Community and Adult Education Centre



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organisation now has one full-time IT tutor. Previously this was staffed by two part-time roles.



SWEETS location at the Crescent, Kilbeggan, Co. Westmeath.
Image Credit: NRN

Lessons

The project has reinforced the importance of its initial driver that up to date equipment is essential to providing computer training. The project had multiple, multifaceted benefits, from both the SWEETS staff and SWEETS client perspective. The equipment has facilitated tutors deliver higher quality courses in a more effective learning environment. Improvements in training delivery aided better student experiences and learning. More broadly reduction in technical issues also assists confidence building in the use of digital technologies.

Understanding the detail and depth of information required as part of the LEADER application process is important to project realisation. Overall the process took one year from initial expression of interest to grant payment. SWEETS had experience of applying for funding under the previous LEADER programme which facilitated the process. The year long timeframe was a drawback in the context of this project. SWEETS had hoped to have the new equipment in place for courses starting in September and January. There was an element of uncertainty over whether this would be

realised. SWEETS sourced bridging finance through a local community fund. This facilitated SWEETS to have the equipment in place for the start of new computer courses in January. Nevertheless, an important lesson to note is the difficulty for non-profit organisations to finance and run projects when grant supports run over a long timeframe and with uncertain timelines.

“As an adult education and training centre it is important that we have modern, up to date equipment to ensure the best outcome for our clients...our tutors are very happy to have such equipment and our clients are happy and impressed. We have to be mindful of our reputation as a QQI training centre at all times. We hope that the courses we provide will assist clients to get online for the first time, improve their skills while providing a pleasant social occasion to all of our learners”.

Brendan McGough, Manager, SWEETS

Funding

Total project budget (i)+(ii)+(iii) =	€8,919.24
+ (i) Rural Development Programme support (a)+(b)	€6,700.68
+ (a) EAFRD (EU) contribution	€4,208.03
+ (b) National / Regional contribution	€2,492.65
+ (ii) Private / Own funds	€2,218.56
+ (iii) Other funding sources	n/a

Contact details

Project beneficiary name	South Westmeath Employment Education and Training Services (SWEETS)
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Address of beneficiary or implementing body	The Crescent, Kilbeggan, Co. Westmeath



Restoration of Walled Garden in Mountbellew



National Rural Network



RESTORATION OF WALLED GARDEN IN MOUNTBELLEW

Summary

In the long term, the Mountbellew Heritage and Tourism Network aims to rejuvenate, conserve and develop the 18th century walled garden in Mountbellew, County Galway. Developing this existing heritage resource will provide a new amenity for the area. It will also complement other local heritage and recreation assets helping attract visitors to the area stimulating rural tourism. LEADER supported shorter-term goals of the project funding the preparation of a Development Plan for the walled garden site which is a protected structure. In the long term, this project will involve significant work, for example conserving original structures such as the limestone wall. The network aims to develop the project in line with best conservation practice and the Development Plan forms a key step in supporting restoration of the walled garden in line with this approach. LEADER funding has helped build research and evidence to guide the future development of the walled garden.

Context

The Mountbellew Heritage and Tourism Network was established in 2011. Its core objective is to: "Research, conserve and enhance the natural and built heritage of Mountbellew and its environs, for the benefit of the area". It has developed a wide range of projects supporting heritage and tourism in the area. These include the Bobby-Joe Gathering in 2011 targeting return migrants, fundraising for and erection of World War I and 1916 Easter Rising commemoration plaques. The Bobby-Joe Horseshoe

Project name: Restoration of Walled Garden in Mountbellew

Date: June 2018 - June 2019

Local Action Group: Galway Rural Development Company

Implementing Partner: Galway Rural Development Company

Type of Beneficiary: Community Group

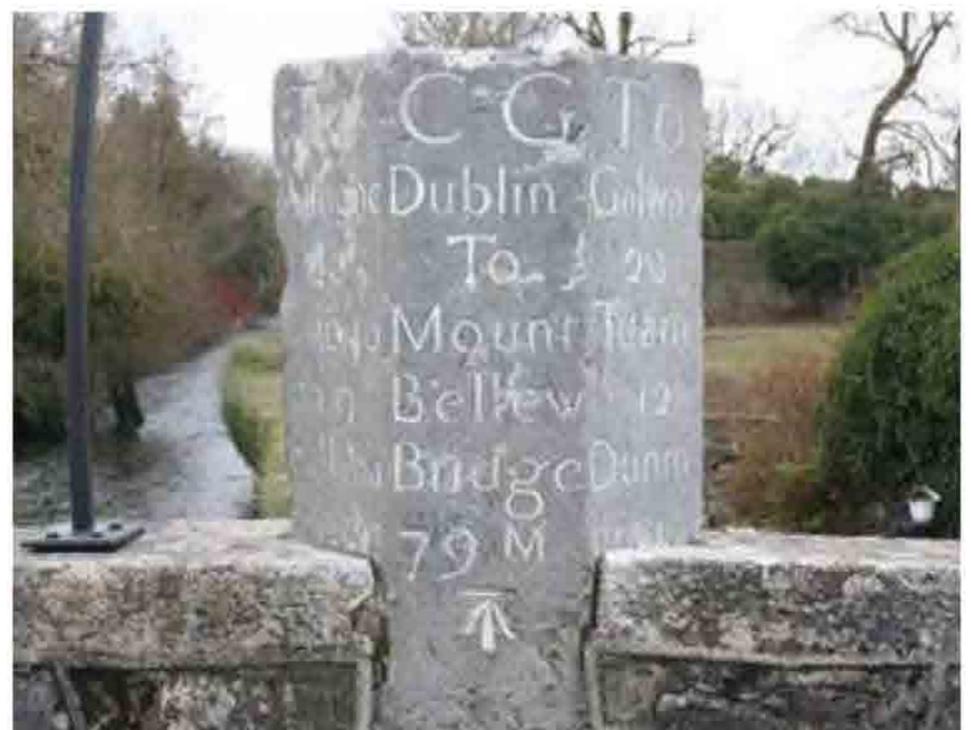
Priority & Focus Area: Theme 1: Rural Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation /Sub theme: Rural Towns

Project Beneficiary Name/Organisation: Mountbellew Heritage and Tourism Network

Address: Mountbellew, Co. Galway

Further information:

www.mountbellewheritagetourismnetwork.word





Restoration of Walled Garden in Mountbellew



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Throwing Competition and a local arts competition with the national school are regular annual events organised by the network.

Restoring and rejuvenating the Walled Garden in Mountbellew is a larger scale, longer term project core to the network's mission. A working group has been established to progress this project. Formerly part of the extensive Bellew estate, the 1.7 ha (4.2 acre) garden site is surrounded by six-meter-high limestone walls. It is a protected structure and an important part of Ireland's cultural and architectural heritage. Original features in need of restoration include the network of gravel stone paths and remains of a peach growing house and potting shed.



*Aerial view of the walled garden site in Mountbellew.
Image Credit: Mountbellew Heritage and Tourism Network*

The network has tapped into community resources such as community employment and student volunteers. This has supported work on specific tasks such as ivy removal from the limestone walls and exposing original pathways. But to move the project forward in the longer term requires additional resources. Research and evidence is a central resource and starting point to spearhead the future sustainable development of the walled garden site. The need for a comprehensive survey to assess the site and its needs was identified to ensure preservation and restoration of this protected structure in line with best practice. LEADER funding was accessed through Galway Rural Development to support historical research and a professional survey of the conservation needs of the Bellew Walled Garden site. The project was funded under the

'Rural Towns' LEADER theme and local development objective to 'Provide environmental and cultural awareness, development of the countryside and built heritage'.

The Bellew Walled Garden project also fits into local tourism development goals and complements other projects. The community envisions that alongside the Walled Garden, a number of projects will complement each other to develop a strong activity tourism offering in the area, such as the existing Forge Museum, adjacent forest walks and future development of amenities such as at Carrownagappul Bog Special Area of Conservation.

Objectives

- Prepare a Development Plan for the Bellew Walled Garden site.
- Development of a strong evidence base detailing the extent and nature of work needed to rejuvenate, preserve and develop the Bellew Walled Garden including historical research, conservation needs assessment and works programme.
- Assess the possibility of developing awareness raising measures relating to this conservation work, such as a training programme in conjunction with wall restoration, talks and/or an exhibition.
- Use this evidence base to inform future funding applications supporting the next phase and long term goals of the project's development.

Activities

The walled garden site is owned by Coillte. The network has built a strong relationship with its local Coillte office and both work together to realise common goals. The network secured a year-long lease to begin work on the site in 2017 and successfully gained a long term lease for the site in 2018. With long term access secured, research could begin on gathering evidence to help plan future physical works at the walled garden. The Mountbellew Heritage and Tourism Network contracted Pat Meaney of Galway Building Surveyors as project manager to lead on research, surveying and analysis, as well as prepare the Development Plan. A comprehensive condition report has been carried



Restoration of Walled Garden in Mountbellew



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out assessing work needed to preserve original features such as the surrounding limestone walls, gravel stone paths, peach house and potting shed. This work also included assessment of any concealed features. Grid mapping of the site and cross referencing to official Ordnance Survey maps was conducted. This has helped identify the network of gravel stone paths that need careful uncovering.



*Project Manager, Pat Meaney, Galway Building Surveyors, carrying out mapping of the walled garden site
Image Credit: Mountbellew Heritage and Tourism Network*

Separate but complementary to the Development Plan preparation, the garden has also been surveyed by a professional garden designer. In 2017, the Walled Garden was among seven projects selected from over 50 applications by the Heritage Council under the 'Adopt a Monument' scheme. Projects are provided with specialist expertise and mentoring. Members of the network have received training under the Adopt a Monument Scheme, such as a day-long training course in tour guiding. This scheme also supported renowned garden designer Finola Reid, with expertise in Victorian and Georgian garden projects, to carry out a review of the garden site in July 2018. Her report makes a series of recommendations that provide good practice guidance to shape the restoration and development of the walled garden. This report works hand in hand with the LEADER funded project.

The network actively engages the local community, such as through public meetings and educational events at the walled garden site. For example, in 2018 events included

tree planting with the local national school and a workshop on the traditional skill of hot lime mortar. Public meetings are important to update the local community on the project's progress, gain input to direct the project in line with community needs, as well as motivate increased engagement and support. In January 2019 approximately 100 community members attended a public meeting discussing achievements, challenges and next steps for the project.

"When we started working on the walled garden first people from the parish came to me and said that they didn't know the walled garden was there at all. They knew there was a large, high wall but they didn't necessarily know the hidden gem that was behind it".
Jimmy Noone, Chairman, Mountbellew Heritage and Tourism Network

Results

The Development Plan for the Bellew Walled Garden site is expected to be complete in March 2019. The final Development Plan will include historical site research, a comprehensive condition report and works programme accounting for ecological considerations. It will also assess the possibility of including a training programme on stone wall repair and other relevant conservation work as part of future development, alongside other awareness raising measures.

To progress the project beyond its preliminary phase, the Mountbellew Heritage and Tourism Network plans to apply for further LEADER funding to support implementation of the evidence-based actions emerging from Finola Reid's garden design report and the LEADER funded Development Plan. The project has increased awareness of local cultural heritage and the walled garden site. Network members note how locals were aware of the limestone walls, but did not always have knowledge of the heritage value of what is located behind them.

Expected future results include the development of a heritage-based local tourism amenity that can support local job creation. It is also expected that in the long term this



Restoration of Walled Garden in Mountbellew



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project will have strong return on funding investment. Once the project is fully completed it aims to become self-sustaining, generating its own income from tourism. Long term, up to 10-year plans, may for example include the development of a coffee shop and interpretive centre at the walled garden site.

“The money invested in the community is for the good of the community. This is a major project but at the end we hope there will be jobs and a tourist attraction there. Linking with other local attractions such as the Forge Museum, adjacent forest walks and local raised bog, we should have a full day package”.

Jimmy Noone, Chairman, Mountbellew Heritage and Tourism Network

Lessons

The Mountbellew Heritage and Tourism Network is proactive and continuously taps into private community and business funding. A weekly 50/50 lotto draw gives the network a small but regular income. Alongside this, a variety of public funding sources and supports have come together to progress the walled garden project in Mountbellew. But these are often small amounts of finance. Larger scale funding is limited and LEADER support is vital to the project. Raising adequate finance to support projects of this scale, as well as support their phased nature, would not be possible without funding sources such as LEADER.

A combination of local and external expertise is important to develop heritage restoration projects in a sustainable manner in line with best practice. The Mountbellew Heritage and Tourism Network is well connected and effectively accesses support available from a range of local and national organisations that help it effectively combine local and expert knowledge. These include Galway County Council, Coillte and The Heritage Council. The group has also actively worked to engage and gain input from the wider local community in the walled garden project, so it develops in line with community opinion and needs.

The Mountbellew Heritage and Tourism Network has learned the importance of not expecting short-term results but to focus on long term benefits. The members need to have a strong commitment to the project. The group is focused on an evidence based best practice approach to heritage restoration and conservation which supports effective project development.

“A challenge for our network was to accept that restoring the walled garden wasn’t going to happen in 12 months or even two years. Having the external expertise on board is crucial to ensure we work within best practice. The LEADER funding went towards research and analysis to produce a history and survey report. LEADER was very important to support this as we would not have that level of funding. The evidence is crucial as we don’t want a situation that we look back in a few years and we think we shouldn’t have done it that way”.

Jimmy Noone, Chairman, Mountbellew Heritage and Tourism Network

Funding

Total project budget (i)+(ii)+(iii) =	€18,222.78
+ (i) Rural Development Programme support (a)+(b)	€16,400.50
+ (a) EAFRD (EU) contribution	€10,299.51
+ (b) National / Regional contribution	€6,100.99
+ (ii) Private / Own funds	€1,822.28
+ (iii) Other funding sources	n/a

Contact details

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Address of beneficiary or implementing body	Mountbellew, Co. Galway



Mid Ireland Adventure

LEADER

Community-Led Local Development



National Rural Network



MID IRELAND ADVENTURE

Summary

Mid Ireland Adventure is a start-up company addressing the growing demand for adventure sport activities in rural locations. Company founder Jonathan O'Meara identified a gap in the market in the Offaly region, alongside strong natural amenities to base adventure sport activities. LEADER funding supported the development of Mid Ireland Adventure facilitating the purchase of essential equipment such as mountain bikes and paddle boards. This growing business now provides a range of adventure sports activities to a diverse local and international client base. This includes mountain bike tours in the Slieve Bloom Mountains and stand up paddle board safaris on the river Shannon.

Context

Set in the heart of Ireland, Mid Ireland Adventure is a start-up company providing a wide range of both land and water-based adventure sports activities. These include mountain bike tours, guided walks, summer camps, stand up paddle board safaris and adventure races. The company has a base in Banagher and at Kinnitty Castle in county Offaly. Mid Ireland Adventure focuses its activities in the natural and heritage landscapes of the Irish midlands, including the river Shannon, Grand Canal, Offaly Way, Slieve Bloom Mountains and Kinnitty Castle. Adventure sports equipment rental, such as stand up paddle boards and mountain bikes, is another aspect of this business's activities. Company founder Jonathan O'Meara in a Banagher native who grew up immersed in water sports on the river Shannon. He is a long-serving, active member of

Project name: Mid Ireland Adventure

Date: January 2017- February 2018

Local Action Group: Offaly LCDC

Implementing Partner: Offaly Local Development Company

Type of Beneficiary: Micro Enterprise

Priority & Focus Area: Theme 1: Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation/
Sub theme: Rural Tourism

Project Beneficiary Name/Organisation:
Mid Ireland Adventure

Address: Banagher On the Shannon and Kinnitty Castle, Co. Offaly

Further information:
www.midirelandadventure.ie





Mid Ireland Adventure



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the Shannonside Sub Aqua Club which Jonathan's father is a founding member of. Jonathan is also a journalist specialising in sports reporting. He has worked for the Longford News and continues to write for the Westmeath Independent.

"Availing of the LEADER grant was a huge help in the early stages, it allowed the business some breathing space in the first couple of years of operation."

Jonathan O'Meara, Mid Ireland Adventure

Jonathan identified a gap in the market and growing demand for adventure sports activities in a countryside location. The Offaly region has not fully capitalised on the potential for adventure sports based around local natural amenities. Mid Ireland Adventure works to address this gap. Jonathan has also invested heavily in up-skilling, gaining a number of instructor certificates in adventure sports and water safety. It was the LEADER programme funding that facilitated the business to move beyond this initial development phase. The grant supported Mid Ireland Adventure to acquire a range of essential equipment and begin providing adventure sport activities to a diverse client base.

Objectives

This project supported the development of Mid Ireland Adventure, an early stage start-up business through grant support to:

- **Facilitate the purchase of mountain bikes, paddle boards and wetsuits to use in adventure sports activities.**
- **Assist development of this newly established business and commencement of its core adventure sport services. Increase visibility of Mid Ireland Adventures through applying business branding to the company van.**

Activities

Over the last number of years, Jonathan O'Meara has worked to develop his business idea for Mid Ireland Adventure. Drawing on his marketing, PR, design and IT

skillset developed through his journalism career initial groundwork involved developing a website and company logo. Also central to Mid Ireland Adventure's development has been building a reputable, trusted and respected business that provides high quality adventure sport activities with safety at its core. To this end, Jonathan is a qualified Cycling Ireland MBLA Trail Cycle Leader and Academy of Surfing Instructors (ASI) Level One Stand Up Paddle Board Instructor. He is also a certified Remote Energy Care First Aid Responder and certified Water Safety Rescue Instructor. Mid Ireland Adventure is working towards becoming an ASI accredited school. This is considered to be among the world leading surf and paddle board education and accreditation organisations. Risk assessments of locations where adventure sport activities take place are also a vital part of their development.



Image Credit: Mid Ireland Adventure

An important next step for Mid Ireland Adventure was to invest in a range of adventure sports equipment. The LEADER project funding supported Mid Ireland Adventure with 50% funding to purchase equipment such as mountain bikes, paddle boards and wetsuits to use in adventure sports activities. Jonathan's knowledge gained through his extensive training informed the type of equipment chosen. Knowledge and advice on standards, good practice and safety features was put into practice when equipment was purchased. For example stand up paddle boards all have safety leashes and buoyancy aids are provided to clients.



Mid Ireland Adventure

LEADER

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The first season for Mid Ireland Adventure kicked off in 2017 with a mountain bike tour held on Good Friday. That summer, stand up paddle boarding safaris also commenced. The focus on water and land based activities provides a good balance for the business helping sustain activities year round. For Mid Ireland Adventure water based activities are more popular in summer months, but mountain hikes and bike tours are of greater focus in winter.

“I would certainly advise the LEADER process to anyone who was considering setting up a new business in rural Ireland. In my case, Offaly Local Development were able give me a definitive answer at the first point of contact if my business model was eligible under the LEADER approach. Once we established that, Offaly Local Development was always on hand to assist and offer excellent support and advice over the course of the process.”

Jonathan O'Meara, Mid Ireland Adventure

Part of the wider ethos of Mid Ireland Adventure is also to inform and inspire greater appreciation of the Offaly environment that activities take place in. During activities opportunities are availed of to enhance the adventure sport activity experience by providing information on local landscape, nature and heritage. For example, when activities are based on the river Shannon instructors also provide information to participants on the history of the river, its wildlife and the wider ecosystem. Mountain bike tours commence at Kinnitty Castle, move through the Slieve Bloom Mountains and finish in Kinnitty village. The tour includes the history of Kinnitty Castle, allows time to appreciate the landscape and nature of the mountains and finishes at a replica statute of the Pyramids of Giza in Kinnitty village. The educational element also extends to other areas such as improved water safety awareness.

Results

Mid Ireland Adventure serves a gap in the local market for a tourism product based around adventure sports. The business also taps into wider trends of active lifestyle and

demand for rurally based weekend adventure sports activities. The business capitalises on and harnesses the untapped value held within the midlands environment to develop an adventure sports business.

Economic impacts include the new rural employment created. Jonathan is the main employee of the company and one seasonal position was created in 2018. As the company grows future job creation is expected. The mountain bike trails under construction in the Slieve Bloom mountains will also facilitate this, improving the local outdoors sports infrastructure.



Image Credit: Mid Ireland Adventure

Mid Ireland Adventure attracts greater visitor numbers to the midland's area, which does not have the visitor volumes of busier tourist regions. The company's adventure sport activities have attracted a local, national and international client base to the region. International clients have come from a diverse geography, such as Europe, the US and South America. Activities are also tailored to the needs of specific client groups and occasions, such as birthday celebrations, stag and hen parties.

Increased visitor numbers also have additional spin-off benefits to the local economy. For example, Mid Ireland Adventure's mountain bike tour finishes in Kinnitty village with coffee and scones at a local café. Visitors also use local retail, hospitality and accommodation services. A strong,



Mid Ireland Adventure



National Rural Network

LEADER 2014-2020 NRN CASE STUDY

supportive local business network also exists in the area. For example, tourist service providers help promote each others services helping build the local tourist economy.



Image Credit: Mid Ireland Adventure

The positive spill-over impacts of Mid Ireland Adventure's presence in the Offaly region go beyond economic benefits. Mid Ireland Adventure supports increased local environmental, cultural and historical awareness as part of its activities by also building an educational element into tours. It has also added new life to Banagher town.

Lessons

Businesses providing experiences for tourists are important to rural tourism development in less traditional tourism hotspots of Ireland. Mid Ireland Adventure has built a business driven by the specialist skill of its founder that also harnesses value from local natural assets.

The relatively slow LEADER funding timeframe, from expression of interest to approval and grant repayment, can slow the pace of start-up business development. In the case of Mid Ireland Adventure while a faster turnaround would have been more beneficial to this business, the funding was still crucial to this start-up and a vitally important support to business development. This benefit could be increased and local impacts seen sooner if the application process was faster.

Because of going through the LEADER application process, Mid Ireland Adventure is now well connected to Offaly Local Development Company which has a good

understanding of the business and its objectives. This has opened a communication channel with potential access to new networks, information and business promotion opportunities.

In relation to developing a start-up enterprise, lessons learned included being realistic about goals, having patience and perseverance. The importance of creating a digital profile for an adventure tourism business is also noted, for example through social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. This helps visualise and communicate the adventure sport experience to potential and return clients.



Image Credit: Mid Ireland Adventure

Funding

Total project budget (i)+(ii)+(iii) =	€20,956.40
+ (i) Rural Development Programme support (a)+(b)	€10,478.40
+ (a) EAFRD (EU) contribution	€6,580.44
+ (b) National / Regional contribution	€3,897.96
+ (ii) Private / Own funds	€10,478.00
+ (iii) Other funding sources	n/a

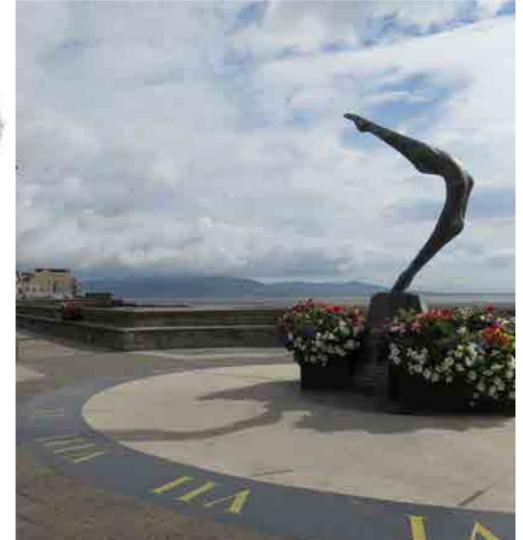
Contact details

Project beneficiary name	Mid Ireland Adventure
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Address of beneficiary or implementing body	Banagher, Co. Offaly



Louth Looking Good 2017

Local Action Group	Louth LCDC
Implementing Partner	Louth LEADER Partnership
Project Name	Louth Looking Good 2017
Promoter Name	Louth Tidy Towns Together
Address	Co. Louth
LEADER Theme	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation
LEADER Sub-theme	Rural Towns
LEADER Grant Amount	€8,930.29



Project Overview

Louth Looking Good is a county-wide campaign with the primary objective of encouraging, motivating and assisting local communities, residents and businesses to play an active part in the environmental presentation of their towns, villages and housing estates. Louth Tidy Towns Together is the central, coordinating stakeholder and represents the voluntary sector and local Tidy Towns groups. Louth Leader Partnership, Louth County Council and the corporate sector are other key stakeholders. This project provided an independent assessment of each town and village participating in the competition. The annual public awards ceremony brings local people together providing a space for formal acknowledgment and celebration of local efforts, networking and idea sharing.



Fingal Farmers Festival 2018

Local Action Group	Dublin Rural LEADER
Implementing Partner	Fingal LEADER Partnership CLG
Project Name	Fingal Farmers Festival 2018
Promoter Name	Fingal Farmers
Address	Newbridge House, Newbridge Demesne, Donabate, Co. Dublin
LEADER Theme	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation
LEADER Sub-theme	Rural Towns
LEADER Grant Amount	€58,275.41



Project Overview

Organised in conjunction with the Fingal Country Show 'Flavours of Fingal', the Fingal Farmers Festival brings an international farm show to the Fingal region. Holding the festival in conjunction with 'Flavours of Fingal' has infrastructural and promotional benefits. The 2018 show had an international element, with Timber Team Ireland holding a timber chopping competition with competitors from six countries. The festival also included livestock competitions, featuring breeds such as native Moiled cattle, as well as vintage farming demonstrations showcasing traditional agricultural heritage. Hosted in the 'Village Hall' tent, a farmer and food producers market focused on showcasing and selling local produce.



Charlie Chaplin Comedy Film Festival 2017 & 2018

Local Action Group	Kerry LCDC
Implementing Partner	South Kerry Development Partnership
Project Name	Charlie Chaplin Comedy Film Festival 2017 & 2018
Promoter Name	Charlie Chaplin Comedy Film Festival Waterville CLG
Address	Waterville, Co. Kerry
LEADER Theme	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation
LEADER Sub-theme	Rural Towns
LEADER Grant Amount	€20,783.54



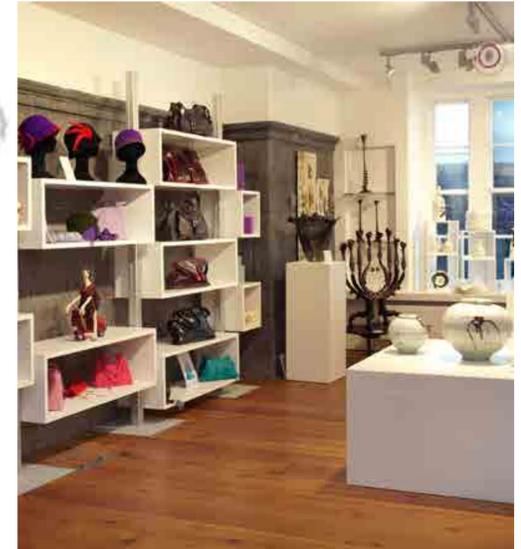
Project Overview

The Charlie Chaplin Film Festival is an annual festival that runs every August celebrating the connection between Charlie Chaplin and Waterville in Kerry. This community-based festival is organised by a local committee of volunteers, which has grown and developed since its establishment in 2011. Support from LEADER has enabled the festival to continue to advance and develop a more diverse programme by providing funding for equipment and programming costs. The festival has a range of local benefits. It raises the profile of the area creating an association with an iconic comedy figure tapping into a niche tourist market. The visitors it attracts generate spin off benefits for the wider local economy and the annual nature of the festival encourages visitors to return.



Leitrim Design House Flagship Further Development Project

Local Action Group	Leitrim LCDC
Implementing Partner	Leitrim Integrated Development Company CLG
Project Name	Leitrim Design House Flagship Further Development Project
Promoter Name	The Leitrim Design House
Address	The Dock Arts Centre, St Georges Terrace, Carrick On Shannon, Co. Leitrim
LEADER Theme	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation
LEADER Sub-theme	Enterprise Development
LEADER Grant Amount	€ 6,830.75



Project Overview

The Leitrim Design House is a non-profit network of the craft, art and design practitioners in Leitrim working to support the development of the creative sector. It also operates a retail space with local and national products that fit the Leitrim Design House ethos to focus on quality, design and innovation. This project developed the visual storytelling potential of the Leitrim Design House illuminating the story behind products and their producers. LEADER funding supported the installation of visual aids to tell product and maker stories through video and imagery, as well as lighting and display aids. It has both a physical and online shop. This project also brings visual storytelling beyond the physical retail space and also into virtual space on its e-commerce website.



Coillte Sláintiúil

Local Action Group	Cork South LCDC
Implementing Partner	Údarás na Gaeltachta
Project Name	Coillte Sláintiúil
Promoter Name	Coillte Sláintiúil
Address	Dronmagrel, Cill na Martra, Maigh Chromtha, Co. Chorcaí
LEADER Theme	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation
LEADER Sub-theme	Enterprise Development
LEADER Grant Amount	€20,000.00



Project Overview

Coillte Sláintiúil is a start-up enterprise providing a range of woodland conservation solutions, such as the containment of invasive species and diseases for example. Invasive species are a major threat to woodland biodiversity loss and the need to preserve Ireland's woodlands is both a local and national issue. The name 'Coillte Sláintiúil' is Irish for Healthy Forests, and the business is based in the Muscraí Gaeltacht area, Co. Cork. LEADER assisted Coillte Sláintiúil to reach the next stage of their development by providing them with grant support to purchase new equipment. This has resulted in building Coillte Sláintiúil's reputation, networks and capacity to take on more complex conservation projects, providing important environmental needs in the woodland context.



Gizagig

Local Action Group	Meath LCDC
Implementing Partner	Meath Partnership
Project Name	Gizagig
Promoter Name	Gizagig
Address	Bloomsbury Road, Oristown, Kells, Co.Meath
LEADER Theme	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation
LEADER Sub-theme	Enterprise Development
LEADER Grant Amount	€26,794.00



Project Overview

The GizaGig platform aims to change how live acts and clients connect. GizaGig.com provides a system for live bands and entertainment acts to showcase their work and for clients to book acts for gigs. It is a cloud based, live entertainment management, promotion and instant booking system. The system also includes a specialist calendar so existing gigs can be added to prevent double bookings. Entertainers such as musicians can sign-up to GizaGig.com and create a profile including videos, a song list and band biography. Client users can search for and book live entertainment acts. LEADER funding has supported mobile app prototyping and web development expertise, as well as marketing of the finished platform and training on its use.



County Wicklow Partnership Social Enterprise Strategy

Local Action Group	Wicklow LCDC
Implementing Partner	County Wicklow Partnership
Project Name	Social Enterprise Strategy
Promoter Name	County Wicklow Partnership
Address	3rd Floor, Avoca River House, Bridgewater Centre, Arklow, Co. Wicklow
LEADER Theme	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation
LEADER Sub-theme	Enterprise Development
LEADER Grant Amount	€ 6,840.00



Project Overview

Among the aims of the Wicklow Local Development Strategy 2014-2020 is to support existing and new social enterprises, as well as to develop a broader facilitative environment for social entrepreneurship in the county. To build an evidence base, identify the challenges, opportunities and supports needed, LEADER funding supported the development of County Wicklow Partnership's Social Enterprise Strategy. To gain an insight into the sector research was carried out involving social enterprises, as well as state and local development agencies. The research findings included that the supports needed are varied and complex, differing significantly from private sector enterprise supports. This strategy provides a pathway towards building a sustainable, vibrant social enterprise sector in Wicklow and makes a series of strategic recommendations for future action.



Kilmeedy Community Café and Shop

Local Action Group	Limerick LCDC
Implementing Partner	West Limerick Resources
Project Name	Kilmeedy Community Café and Shop
Promoter Name	Kilmeedy Community Development Group CLG
Address	Kilmeedy, Co. Limerick
LEADER Theme	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation
LEADER Sub-theme	Enterprise Development
LEADER Grant Amount	€90,346.71



Project Overview

LEADER funding has supported the Kilmeedy Community Development Group to establish the Kilmeedy Community Café and Shop. This social enterprise aims to provide an innovative and essential rural community service. It provides a platform supporting the sale of local produce, such as art, craft and food, supporting the wider local economy. For example, this includes the sale of fruit and vegetables from the Kilmeedy Horticulture Garden. As well as providing retail and food hospitality services to the village and its hinterland, the Café also works to complement and support other local community projects. It also helps to combat rural social isolation by providing a meeting point for groups in the community such as youth and the elderly.



Macamore Buffalo

Local Action Group	Wexford LCDC
Implementing Partner	Wexford Local Development
Project Name	Macamore Buffalo
Promoter Name	Liam Byrne
Address	Ballygarrett, Gorey, Co. Wexford
LEADER Theme	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation
LEADER Sub-theme	Enterprise Development
LEADER Grant Amount	€19,156.90



Project Overview

Macamore Buffalo Farm is County Wexford's first buffalo meat producer. Drivers underpinning the development of Macamore Buffalo Farm included the need to diversify this third generation family farm to ensure future viability, alongside building a farm-based food business that strongly supports environmental sustainability. The buffalo meat is prized for its rich sweet taste alongside strong nutritional qualities being high in protein and healthy Omega 3 fats but low in saturated fat and cholesterol. LEADER funding has supported the development of this new innovative food business by helping to fit out a cold room facility on the farm, as well as business branding, website development and associated marketing costs.



Dungarvan Precision Engineering

Local Action Group	Waterford LCDC
Implementing Partner	Waterford LEADER Partnership CLG
Project Name	Dungarvan Precision Engineering: Expansion and New Business Development
Promoter Name	Dungarvan Precision Engineering
Address	Cappagh, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford
LEADER Theme	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation
LEADER Sub-theme	Enterprise Development
LEADER Grant Amount	€63,875.50



Project Overview

Established by two young entrepreneurs with strong expertise in high-end engineering, Dungarvan Precision Engineering is a light engineering business focused on stainless steel. The business moved into a more specialist area of the manufacture of stainless products because of its development potential. The business was established in 2009 and grew to full-time capacity in 2012/2013. It has export capacity and is also developing its own intellectual property. It has one stainless steel component registered with the Patents Office. LEADER supported the purchase of a new CNC machine and plasma cutter. This equipment enabled the company to establish a high end stainless steel manufacturing capacity in-house. Since this capacity has been developed the business has increased its activities and staffing levels.



Purchase of Specialist Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Surveying Unit

Local Action Group	Laois LCDC
Implementing Partner	Laois Partnership Company
Project Name	Purchase of specialist Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) surveying unit
Promoter Name	Aerial Agri Tech
Address	Portlaoise, Co. Laois
LEADER Theme	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation
LEADER Sub-theme	Enterprise Development
LEADER Grant Amount	€12,250.00



Project Overview

Aerial Agri Tech is an innovative start-up business established in 2015. The use of drones for specialist land surveys is at an early stage in Ireland and Aerial Agri Tech taps into a gap in an emerging market. The company uses a range of earth observation platforms and image processing technology to provide clients with a unique insight into their environment. It provides services to a range of market sectors, such as agriculture and forestry. In order to enhance its service offering, LEADER supported Aerial Agri Tech to purchase a light weight Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) drone. This equipment captures high resolution aerial imagery in an efficient manner, enabling the business to now provide a complete remote sensing service.



Clonmel Applefest

Local Action Group	Tipperary LCDC
Implementing Partner	South Tipperary Development Company
Project Name	Clonmel Applefest
Promoter Name	SuirCan Community Forum
Address	Clonmel, Co. Tipperary
LEADER Theme	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation
LEADER Sub-theme	Rural Tourism
LEADER Grant Amount	€5,010.00



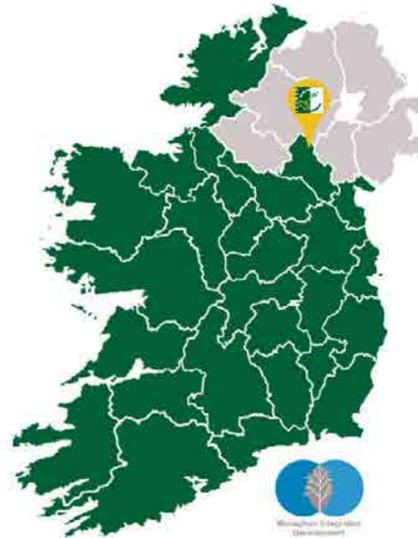
Project Overview

Clonmel Applefest is a festival focused on celebrating key aspects of Clonmel's Sense of Place. Central to this is the natural food and industrial heritage of the apple, as well as to its wider industrial and agricultural heritage. In 2017, a tree trail celebrating the apple harvest was a great success and provided an impetus for a larger scale festival. The first Clonmel Applefest was held in 2018 from September 28th to 30th with a diverse, interactive, family-friendly and community oriented programme. For example, the Apple and Heritage Fair celebrated the apple through a day of workshops, demonstrations, tastings and music. A number of funding sources supported different aspects of the festival and a LEADER grant helped with marketing.



Drumlin Trails Bike Hire

Local Action Group	Monaghan LCDC
Implementing Partner	Monaghan Integrated Development CLG
Project Name	Drumlin Trails Bike Hire
Promoter Name	Joanna Farmer
Address	Knockafubble, Emyvale, Co. Monaghan
LEADER Theme	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation
LEADER Sub-theme	Rural Tourism
LEADER Grant Amount	€13,168.93



Project Overview

Drumlin Trails is a bike hire business located in north Monaghan mid-way between Glaslough and Emyvale. Established by Joanna Farmer, Drumlin Trails builds on a bike rental business set up by her father. This small, thriving rural business has extended its range of bikes on offer to include electric bikes, as well as developing a range of bike trails using online maps. Routes include short and more extended, day-long options and are informed by the local landscape, as well as cultural and historical knowledge. LEADER supported development of this tourism business by providing grant support for purchase of ten electric bikes and related safety equipment, as well support for web based marketing, including a new website.



Linguan Valley Tourism Training

Local Action Group	Kilkenny LEADER Partnership
Implementing Partner	Kilkenny LEADER Partnership
Project Name	Linguan Valley Tourism Training
Promoter Name	Kilkenny LEADER Partnership
Address	8 Patricks Court, Patrick St, Gardens, Kilkenny
LEADER Theme	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation
LEADER Sub-theme	Rural Tourism
LEADER Grant Amount	€4,500.00



Project Overview

The Linguan Valley is located between southwest Kilkenny, Slievenamon mountain in County Tipperary and the River Suir at the southern end of the border between Tipperary and Kilkenny. The region contains an abundance of archeological and heritage sites. To the east sits the stone circle summit of Kilmacoliver Hill above the pretty village of Tullaghought and to the south lies the portal tomb at Killonerry. An amazing number of very significant heritage and tourism sites also lie in this area. This LEADER project supported training in tourism initiatives and skills to a network of community and small business groups in the Linguan River Valley region. It concentrated on promoting 'heritage tourism' and marketing the requirements of 'Ireland's Ancient East' brand.



Borris House Festival of Writing and Ideas

Local Action Group	Carlow LCDC
Implementing Partner	Carlow County Development Partnership CLG
Project Name	Borris House Festival of Writing and Ideas
Promoter Name	Festival of Writing and Ideas Ltd
Address	Borris House, Borris, Co. Carlow
LEADER Theme	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation
LEADER Sub-theme	Rural Tourism
LEADER Grant Amount	€20,751.20



Project Overview

Since 2012, the Borris House Festival of Writing and Ideas has brought a range of practitioners together including writers, artists, film-makers, political commentators, musicians and architects. LEADER provided support for marketing and advertising of the 2018 festival which ran from June 8th to the 10th. Over 70 speakers explored a diverse range of topics in fiction and factual writing such as disability, crime, gender, war, grief and religion. Over the years the festival has brought names such as Sebastian Barry, PJ Harvey, Bob Geldof, Mary Robinson and Cillian Murphy to the small rural village of Borris in Carlow. The historic, picturesque Borris House provides the main setting for the festival where a casual, relaxed atmosphere supports sharing ideas and inspiration.



Purchase of Computer Equipment to Expand Innovative On-line Sales and Develop Rural Tourism Business

Local Action Group	Roscommon LCDC
Implementing Partner	Roscommon LEADER Partnership
Project Name	Purchase of computer equipment to expand innovative on-line sales and develop rural tourism business
Promoter Name	Úna Bhán Tourism Co-operative Society
Address	Grounds of King House, Main Street, Boyle, Co. Roscommon
LEADER Theme	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation
LEADER Sub-theme	Rural Tourism
LEADER Grant Amount	€5,008.25



Project Overview

Úna Bhán Tourism Cooperative was established in 1990 to assist in the development and marketing of community based rural tourism in county Roscommon. Cooperative members cover a range of tourism-related areas such as accommodation, services and craft enterprises. Úna Bhán is also strongly involved in many community events and activities. LEADER supported the purchase of computer and printing equipment to enable Úna Bhán better use information technology and social media in its activities. Benefits of this equipment will be long lasting and examples include facilitating the development of Úna Bhán's online shop which has seen an increase in sales and visitors, as well as supporting delivery of digital training courses for the local community.



Archaeological Tuition – Caherconnell Archaeology Field School

Local Action Group	Clare Local Development Company
Implementing Partner	Clare Local Development Company
Project Name	Archaeological Tuition – Caherconnell Archaeology Field School
Promoter Name	John Davoren (Burren Forts Ltd.)
Address	Caherconnell Fort, Carron, Kilfenora, Co. Clare
LEADER Theme	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation
LEADER Sub-theme	Rural Tourism
LEADER Grant Amount	€10,000.00



Project Overview

Caherconnell Archaeology Field School and Visitor Centre is located on the Davoren family farm in the Burren. A medieval ringfort and the Caherconnell stone fort are also located on this farm. Before the field school was established in 2010, there was a lack of knowledge on its specific history, which the school has been instrumental in addressing. Caherconnell Archaeology Field School continues to develop and establish itself as an international centre of learning. LEADER supported the purchase of archaeological surveying equipment for the school. This enabled the expansion of courses offered to include a new Archaeological Surveying Course. It also facilitated the use of digital surveying equipment in all courses to support the development of highly transferable skills.



Slí Mara Thoraí Teoranta

Local Action Group	Donegal LCDC
Implementing Partner	Comhar na nOileán CTR
Project Name	Slí Mara Thoraí Teoranta
Promoter Name	Séamús Mac Ruaidhrí
Address	Baile Thiar Oileán Thoraigh Co. Dún na nGall
LEADER Theme	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation
LEADER Sub-theme	Rural Tourism
LEADER Grant Amount	€82,624.85



Project Overview

Slí Mara Thoraí Teoranta is a newly established marine tourism business based in Tory Island. It aims to provide the highest quality marine tourism service to visitors to the island by offering angling trips, historical tours around the island and information on local marine and bird life. LEADER funding was secured for the purchase of a P5 licensed boat, equipment, trailer as well as marketing. Three seasonal jobs were created by the business due to this expansion. Additionally, the attraction of more marine tourism visitors to the island has increased employment opportunities in other areas such as accommodation and food outlets. This is especially important as there is limited employment growth on Tory Island and this business has brought new energy to the island's economy.



IRD Kiltimagh Broadband Extension

Local Action Group	Mayo LAG
Implementing Partner	South West Mayo Development Company CLG
Animating Partner	IRD Kiltimagh CLG
Project Name	IRD Kiltimagh Broadband Extension
Promoter Name	IRD Kiltimagh CLG
Address	Aiden St, Kiltimagh, Co. Mayo
LEADER Theme	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation
LEADER Sub-theme	Broadband
LEADER Grant Amount	€7,887.37



Project Overview

The IRD owned Cairn International Trade Centre has an up to 1 Gbit fibre broadband connection. LEADER supported extending this connection to Enterprise House in Kiltimagh using a robust wireless link. Businesses in both buildings now have access to up to 1 Gbit fibre broadband. They also benefit from a reliable, quality broadband service because of the resilient back-up link with negligible risk of service disruption. Businesses can now collaborate effectively through digital platforms with partners in other locations. It is also a symmetrical service with reliable standard upload and download speeds of 100Mb included with the rental, with up to 1 Gbit services available. This project has benefitted existing business, supported new jobs and attracted new multinational businesses.



Digital Based Training Programme to Support Development of the Fab Lab Facility

Local Action Group	Laois LCDC
Implementing Partner	Laois Partnership Company
Project Name	Digital Based Training Programme to Support Development of the Fab Lab Facility in Portarlinton
Promoter Name	Portarlinton Enterprise Centre
Address	Canal Road, Portarlinton, Co. Laois
LEADER Theme	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation
LEADER Sub-theme	Broadband
LEADER Grant Amount	€7,161.25



Project Overview

The Innovation Hub and Fab Lab at Portarlinton Enterprise Centre opened in June 2018. It is an important resource enabling the area to harness opportunities in the digital economy. The Fab Lab is a workshop space for digital fabrication, learning and early stage prototyping. It provides access to tools such as laser cutters, computer numerical control (CNC) routers and 3D printers. The LEADER Programme supported the delivery of a training programme supporting the maintenance and use of the Fab Lab. It is comprised of two broad strands. The first trained a core group of volunteer coordinators with skills to assist in the Fab Lab's management and maintenance. The second strand provided five separate themed training programmes to potential Fab Lab users.



LEADER Programme 2014-2020

Theme 2: Social Inclusion



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The European Agricultural Fund
for Rural Development:
Europe investing in rural areas



LEADER Program

Theme 2: Social Inclusion

1 Purchase of Eskoskeleton Bionic Rehabilitation Suit



2 Sligo Cancer Support Centre Volunteer Training

3 Digital Space for Children's Artwork and Writing



4 Connemara Community Radio Studio

5 Audio Recording Facility Principally for Teenagers



6 Caltra Community Centre Development

7 Roscommon Sound and Music Bank



8 Bridgeways Family Resource Centre Youth Facilities Enhancement

9 OFFline Film Festival Animation Residency



10 Sound Equipment for Ankara Festival



11 Expressing Employability



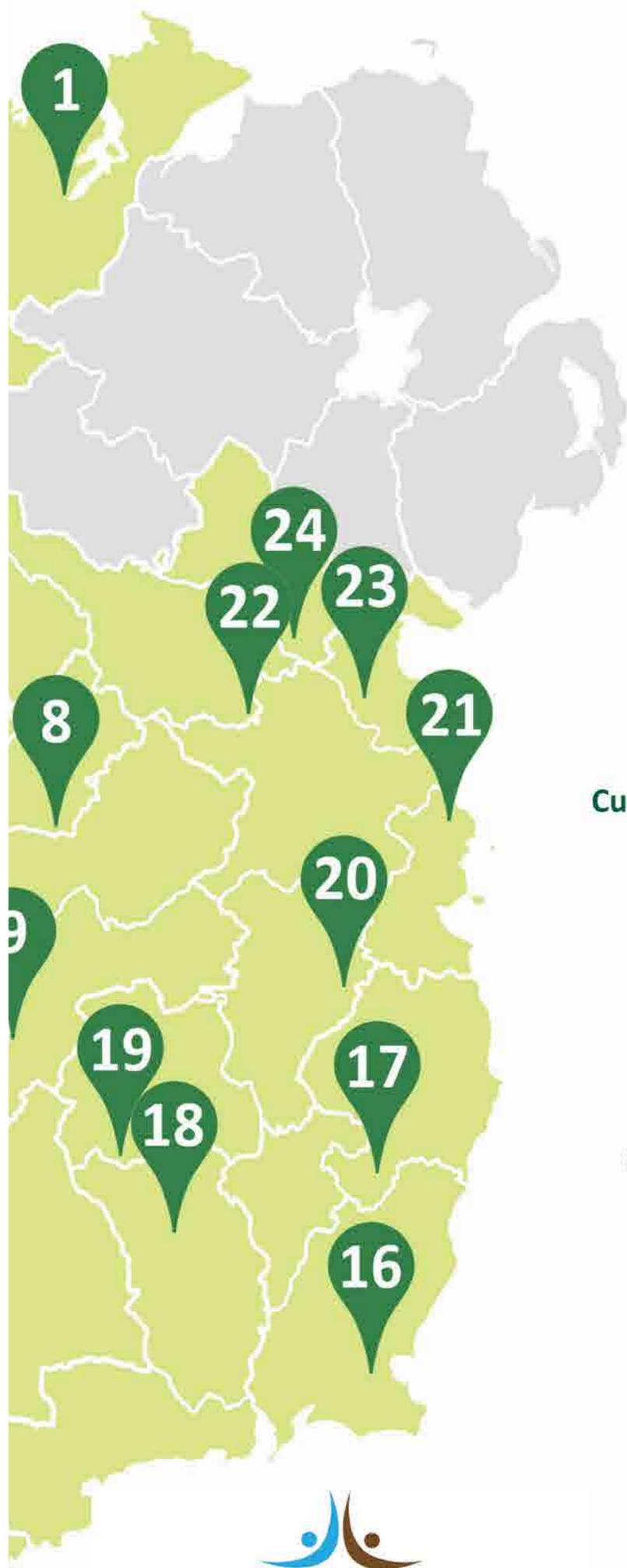
12 Fit out of Butterfly Club Sensory Room



Time 2014-2020



Timeline - Project Examples



National Rural Network

Éireann
Government of Ireland



Rural and Community Development

Corduff Raferagh Community Centre



24

Youth Creative Development Training Programme



23

Castletown Accordion Orchestra



22

Remember Us Special Needs Centre



21

Ballymore Eustace Band Hall Refurbishment



20

Cullohill Community Plan



19

iRoUTE (Integrated Rural Urban Transport Evolution) Conference



18

Tinahely Community Sports Hall Renovation



17

Sorcas Garman (Youth Circus Wexford) Training



16

Community Training and Capacity Building Programme



15

Duhallow Youth Research Project



14

Healthy Relating Programme - NEWKD



13



iRoUTE (Integrated Rural Urban Transport Evolution) Conference



iRoUTE (INTEGRATED RURAL URBAN TRANSPORT EVOLUTION) CONFERENCE

Summary

The iRoUTE conference was spearheaded by the Kilkenny Integrated Transport Action Group. Stakeholders came together to reflect on good practice towards developing an integrated public transport system, focusing particularly on rural areas. Held in June 2017, the conference was interactive and proactive. Following presentations outlining regional public transport initiatives, participants reflected during workshops and formulated ideas around an integrated public transport system for Ireland. The iRoUTE conference provided a key driver leading to the development of a Comprehensive Mobility Plan for the Kilkenny region. The knowledge and networks have also influenced broader activities of the action group and its members.

Context

The Kilkenny Integrated Transport Action Group is made up of several parties that share a concern with the development of a sustainable transport system. The group includes Kilkenny LEADER Partnership, Kilkenny County Council, Ring a Link and the Three Counties Energy Agency. It is also supported by a broader membership of community, enterprise and environment interests. The group was formed to consider the immediate and long-term issues affecting public transport in Kilkenny. Alongside this, Kilkenny LEADER Partnership's consultations for its local development strategy identified the paucity of integrated public transport as a contributor to a poor quality of life for rural residents. Public transport availability

Project name: The iRoUTE Transport Conference: (Integrated Rural Urban Transport Evolution)

Date: June 2017

Local Action Group: Kilkenny LEADER Partnership

Implementing Partner: Kilkenny LEADER Partnership

Type of Beneficiary: Community-led Local Development Company

Priority & Focus Area: Theme 2: Social Inclusion /Sub theme: Basic Services Targeted at Hard to Reach Communities

Project Beneficiary Name/Organisation: Partnership between Kilkenny LEADER Partnership, Kilkenny County Council, Ring a Link and Carlow Kilkenny Energy Agency

Address: 8 Patricks Court, Patrick Street, Kilkenny, Co. Kilkenny

Further information: www.cklp.ie





iRoUTE (Integrated Rural Urban Transport Evolution) Conference

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impacts access to services and opportunities to socialise. Public transport was also identified as a barrier to economic development in areas such as tourism and access to employment.

In 2017, Kilkenny LEADER Partnership used the 'Think Tank' model to complete a consultation process and audit of existing public transport services in the region. This resulted in the publication of the Kilkenny Transport Services Report which highlighted large gaps in basic transport services in the county. In this context of growing evidence and stakeholder organisation, the Kilkenny Integrated Transport Action Group agreed that a conference would be hosted to focus on the integration of transport provision for the Kilkenny region, with particular focus on rural areas. This would bring stakeholders together to create a vision for public transport in Kilkenny.

Objectives

- The iRoUTE conference aimed to help communities and transport stakeholders to begin their own journey to a transport system that would serve current and future needs.

The iRoUTE conference intended to:

- Inform and inspire Irish stakeholders around the potential of realising a successful integrated public transport system in the region
- Bring examples to Kilkenny from similar small EU states where they have managed to move closer to the ideal of a successful integrated public transport system
- Inspire and motivate transport stakeholders in Kilkenny to drive the development of an integrated transport system in the region.

Activities

The iRoUTE (Integrated Rural Urban Transport Evolution) conference was held on the 27th and 28th of June 2017. The conference was organised by a partnership between the four organisations that form the Kilkenny Integrated Transport Action Group.

iRoUTE explored the potential of developing a sustainable 'joined-up' transport system for rural Ireland. It focused around key themes which were:

- Improving the integration of bus services within county Kilkenny
- Improving the planning and co-ordination of transport services in Kilkenny, especially in rural areas
- Increasing usage and knowledge of public transport in Kilkenny.

The programme combined presentations, workshops, panel discussions as well as an evening networking event. Presentations focused on EU project examples such as Belbus in Flanders, flexible transport in Gelderland, the Netherlands and the best elements of the Danish approach. Speakers also came from the European Transport and Telematics Systems Ltd, the National Transport Authority and the Society of the Irish Motor Industry.

"Basic accessibility guarantees access to important social places on a demand driven basis by different means of transportation."

Odette Buntnix, De Lijn, Belgium

One of iRoUTE's unique features was the hosting of themed workshop sessions to analyse and discuss the preceding presentations. Each workshop featured groups of approximately 20 people working in smaller clusters of four or five and addressing a set of themed questions leading on from the presentations participants had just heard. The participants then used a limited number of colour-coded post-it notes to record their diverse prioritised contributions. Facilitation staff undertook comparative analysis and grouping of responses into categories on display boards for recording and further analysis.

Following the final workshops, the iRoUTE team started the process of visual analysis and display of the two days of proceedings on large display boards on the stage area. A brief account of the trends and themes emerging from the process was delivered. A clear desire emerged for



iRoUTE (Integrated Rural Urban Transport Evolution) Conference

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cooperation between transport providers and all stakeholders, as well as that the integration of services be considered in a broad fashion to include all sections of society.

The final panel discussion focused on next steps and the most important issues emerging from the conference. Irish stakeholders expressed the view that a pilot integrated transport initiative in the Kilkenny region would be worthwhile and that they would meet to consider how to advance that, armed with the evidence from iRoUTE. It was also agreed that iRoUTE organisers would look to establish a platform to help create a nationwide transport stakeholder network advocating for the development of a state-wide integrated transport system based around the principles of the Vientiane Declaration on Sustainable Rural Transport. A resolution was adopted unanimously by the participants to explore this possibility.

At the close of the event iRoUTE stakeholders had reached a common vision on the required evolution of thought and behaviour to design an integrated public transport system, not just for the Kilkenny region, but for rural Ireland as a whole. The conference also highlighted the need for better information provision to rural communities on existing transport services provided by private and publically funded operators. Alongside this, integration of these services also emerged as an important priority step forward.

“Any person or area without a local service- cannot have access to integrated system, no matter how good it is, there must be sufficient level of service at times people need to travel.”

Brendan Finn of CEO of ETTS, iRoUTE presenter.

Results

The conference was attended by over eighty transport providers, regulators, international experts, practitioners, academics and community interest groups from throughout Ireland. To progress the integrated transport initiative, the Kilkenny iRoUTE stakeholders met and

developed a project based on the concept of ‘basic mobility levels’ used in Belgium and elsewhere in the EU.

They also commissioned a study to develop a ‘Comprehensive Mobility Plan’ for the region, with the intention of using it to access resources to create the desired integrated transport system.

A number of actions emerged from this study and focused around five key areas: structures and strategic planning; representation, communication and advocacy; funding and finance; provision, integration and connectivity; and modal shift. Specific actions that were part of the plan included highlighting the need for continuance of the iRoUTE conference as a forum to build collaboration potential and share knowledge.



Image credit: Photographer - Dylan Vaughan

The potential to create a nationwide transport stakeholder network was explored through a follow up meeting. Adequate resources were not available to progress this however it remains an action to be explored as part of the Comprehensive Mobility Plan.

The iRoUTE conference publicly brought Kilkenny LEADER Partnership in contact with a Scottish LAG with similar transport concerns. This in turn has led to a trans-national LEADER cooperation project with Cairngorms LAG on the development of an integrated transport system in their respective regions.



iRoUTE (Integrated Rural Urban Transport Evolution) Conference

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The conference also helped to stimulate thinking around public transport beyond what bus transport can offer. Kilkenny LEADER Partnership is also now exploring the possibility of developing a LEADER cooperation project focusing on a public bike scheme for Kilkenny. This project would see Kilkenny LEADER Partnership working with Velenje in Slovenia, which is a similar size to Kilkenny and has a successful bike sharing scheme 'SYSTEM BICY'.

“Work closely with everybody involved; be sure to manage expectations, adopt the spirit of the Three Musketeers and stay on course even when it gets tough and a ‘Big Bang’ is not necessary; organic growth worked in Denmark.”

Finn Sorenson, FlexDanmark, Denmark

Lessons

Importance of sharing existing information and knowledge to enhance policy development:

The iRoUTE conference was the first community-based conference of its kind in Ireland. It focused on learning lessons from small EU states with similar demographics and resource limitations to Ireland. There is a great deal of information to gain from other EU states and regions. The conference provided an important forum to focus on existing information, examples and good practice to steer future policy planning and change.

Importance of networking to facilitate efficiency and cooperation on shared concerns:

Another key lesson emerging is the importance of cooperation among varied users, providers and destinations of transport when seeking to move towards the goal of an integrated transport system. This in turn means that the optimum transport service for both rural and urban areas must be integrated to avoid waste and maximise coverage. The partners also learned that there were other LAGs with an interest in improving their public transport systems, and that cooperation on a project may offer the best option to reach a solution for each locality.

Interactive conferences are an effective method of stakeholder engagement:

The conference's innovative workshop sessions allowed two-way communication between all the participants. It was a major success with learning directly of international 'best practice' and discussing the implications of these examples through workshops.

Conferences provide an important forum to reinforce and build momentum on key rural issues:

The iRoUTE conference also helped to reinforce the importance of integrated regional public transport systems connecting both rural and urban places to each other. The benefits not only relate to social inclusion, but also economic development. For example, better connecting key tourist sites in Kilkenny through integrated public transport would help harness tourism development in a more balanced manner.

“The National Journey Planner is putting in place better technology to develop the better integration of services.”

Ann Graham, CEO of the National Transport Authority

Funding

Total project budget (i)+(ii)+(iii) =	€30,971.76
+ (i) Rural Development Programme support (a)+(b)	€13,274.88
+ (a) EAFRD (EU) contribution	€8,336.62
+ (b) National / Regional contribution	€4,938.26
+ (ii) Private / Own funds	€15,667.88
+ (iii) Other funding sources	€2,029 (Ticket sales)

Contact details

Project beneficiary name	Partnership between Kilkenny LEADER Partnership, Kilkenny County Council, Ring a Link and Carlow Kilkenny Energy Agency
Contact person	Fergus Horgan
Email	info@cklp.ie
Address of beneficiary or implementing body	8 Patricks Court, Patrick Street, Kilkenny, Co. Kilkenny



Corduff Raferagh Community Centre

LEADER
Community-Led Local Development



National Rural Network



CORDUFF RAFERAGH COMMUNITY CENTRE

Summary

This project involved carrying out necessary repairs and upgrades to the Corduff Raferagh Community Centre. This has enhanced its community value and safeguarded it for future years. The project included internal and external works such as solar panels, roof repairs, stage lighting, acoustic panels and computer equipment. The community centre can now be used for a greater variety of purposes. This community driven project shows how a well organised local community can drive improvements to local resources. The project has also helped build community capacity helping gain interest from new members to become involved in their local community association.

Context

The rural communities of Corduff and Raferagh are located near Carrickmacross in county Monaghan. Corduff Raferagh Community Centre is a vital community infrastructure that serves a diverse range of needs. All sectors of the community make use of the centre and it is a hub for all community activities. Around 15 community groups use the centre each day. These include sporting, dance, heritage and drama activities. In the last decade the population has grown and demand for services provided through the community centre have increased. For example, a small housing estate developed across from the community centre and has brought a younger population into the area. Demand for playschool services running from the community centre also have had a notable increase. The Corduff Raferagh Community Association was established in the early 1980s. The community purchased land,

Project name: Corduff Raferagh Community Centre

Date: July 2017 - May 2018

Local Action Group: Monaghan LCDC

Implementing Partner: Monaghan Integrated Development CLG

Type of Beneficiary: Community/Voluntary CLG

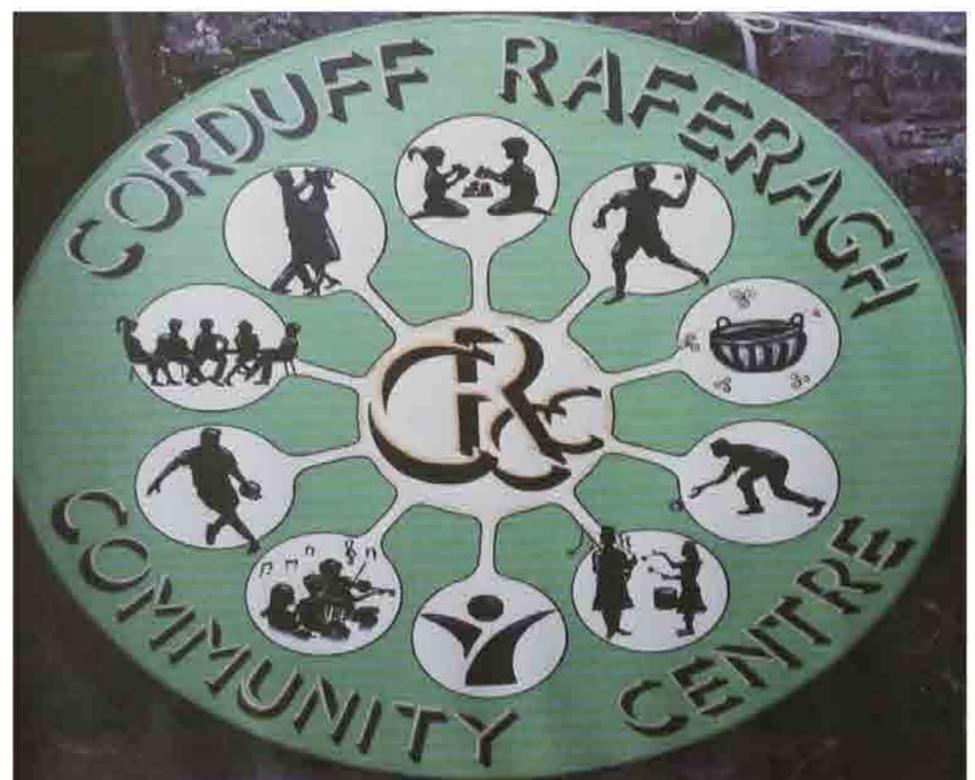
Priority & Focus Area: Theme 2: Social Inclusion /Sub theme: Basic Services Targeted at Hard to Reach Communities

Project Beneficiary Name/Organisation: Corduff and Raferagh Community Association CLG

Address: Corduff, Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan

Further information:

www.facebook.com/corduff.raferagh





Corduff Raferagh Community Centre



National Rural Network

LEADER 2014-2020 NRN CASE STUDY

developed a football pitch and built a new community centre in 1983. All associated costs from this purchase and initial development were settled by 1986. In 2003, the community centre was extended and upgraded.

In 2016 the Corduff Raferagh Community Association identified the need for repairs to the building were apparent again. The initial driver stemmed from the need to replace the roof of the community centre. Computer facilities at the centre also needed updating. A special community committee was formed to help drive and develop the project. The project proposal developed to encompass wider improvements and repairs to help enhance the centre's community value. It incorporated upgrades to the building's energy efficiency and computer training facilities.

Objectives

This project aimed to make improvements and repairs to the Corduff Raferagh Community Centre.

Its primary objectives were to:

- **Repair the roof to prevent damp and deterioration of the building's structure**
- **Improve the energy efficiency and comfort of the building**
- **Improve the aesthetics and comfort of the hall for all users**
- **Upgrade the computer suite to make it suitable for training young and old**

Activities

Initial community meetings began in 2016 where ideas were gathered around needs and the direction of the upgrade works. The Corduff and Raferagh Community Association CLG are a well organised and enthusiastic local group. They carried out a thorough local needs analysis which took into account a broad set of local groups and stakeholders. In October 2016 the group submitted an expression of interest to Monaghan Integrated Development to carry out necessary repairs and upgrades to their community centre. The group completed

procurement for the works and submitted a full application in April 2017.



Stage at Corduff Raferagh Community Centre.

Image credit: Corduff and Raferagh Community Association

In June 2017, Corduff Raferagh Community Association CLG were approved for LEADER support at a rate of 75% to a maximum amount of €133,561.50. To assist with cashflow during the works, the group were able to avail of phased payments. Between July and October 2017 most of the structural work was completed. The community had planned the project with the aim that most work could be complete during the summer months to minimise disruption, such as to the pre and afterschool club running at the centre. The project was fully complete in early 2018.



Corduff Raferagh Community Centre roof after upgrade works and installation of solar panels.

Image credit: Corduff and Raferagh Community Association

The local community also carried out fundraising to generate outstanding finance required for the project. The



Corduff Raferagh Community Centre



LEADER 2014-2020 NRN CASE STUDY

specially formed committee worked to coordinate fundraising events.

A new insulated roof and ceiling was installed to stop damp patches occurring within the building and prevent heat escaping. The heating system was insulated and solar panels installed to improve the energy efficiency of the building. Other external works were cleaning of external walls, provision of flashing on external vents and minor structural repairs. Within the hall, a new stage lighting system was installed, a projector and screen, acoustic panels on the ceiling for sound dampening, new skirting and architraves, along with painting and decorating to improve the aesthetics and comfort of the hall for all users.

A new computer suite also formed part of the project. Existing computer facilities were put in place in early 2000. The community association purchased 10 laptops that upgraded facilities provided in the dedicated computer room suitable for computer training classes. The local Vocational Educational Committee (VEC) now provide adult computer training at the community centre. The first new classes started in September 2018. Future courses that the VEC could potentially provide will be assessed and local needs evaluated. Laptops have the added benefit of mobility given the computer room's location on the top floor of the community centre. The local Active Retired Group also aims to use the new computer equipment. Laptops allow them to locate their classes downstairs which better suits their needs.

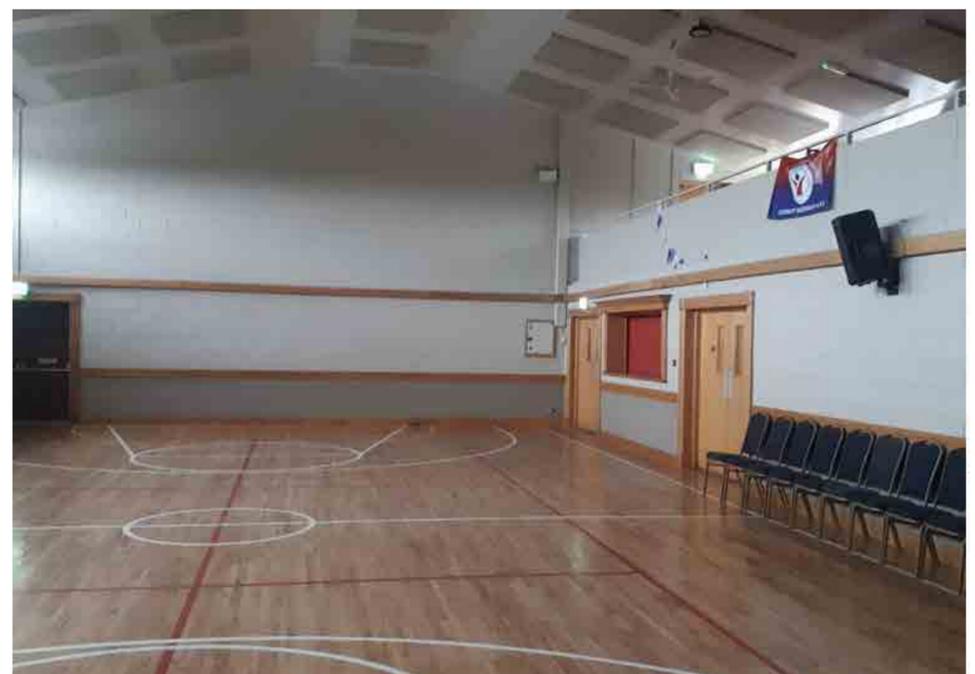
“Having the grant available to us safeguards the centre for the current groups using it and for future use. The people behind the centre can now focus on running it and not worrying or devoting time to the structural things”.

Patricia Murtagh, Assistant Secretary of the Community Development Group

Results

The upgrade works safeguard the centre for future years. The community centre is used by all ages all year round for sport, arts and culture, music, dance and drama, numerous fundraising events, training, education and socialising. The

Corduff Raferagh Community Centre caters for local functions and social events in the area. The community has a strong musical tradition. A social dance is held fortnightly and other types of dance held regularly include Céilí, Irish, Sean-nós and set dancing. The centre also provides facilities for all sporting organisations in the community including the Bowls Club, Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) Club, Handball Club, Ladies GAA, Juvenile Club along with the Community Association, Active Retirement group, Irish Farmers Association, Water Scheme Committee, Community Alert, Pipe Band, Pioneers, Heritage Group, Parent and Toddler Group and Drama Club. The improved facilities provide additional benefits for these groups using the community centre. For example, they can make use of the projector and screen to display information to assist their events.



Corduff Raferagh Community Centre.

Image credit: Corduff and Raferagh Community Association

To mark the completion of the project the community held a re-launch event in September 2018 and launched a new Corduff Raferagh Community Centre (CRCC) logo. Originally from the area, Irish meteorologist Gerry Murphy and RTÉ weather forecast presenter acted as MC for the event. This helped to showcase the facility to groups using the centre. It also helped to revive interest and re-engage groups who had used the centre less often in recent times.



Corduff Raferagh Community Centre



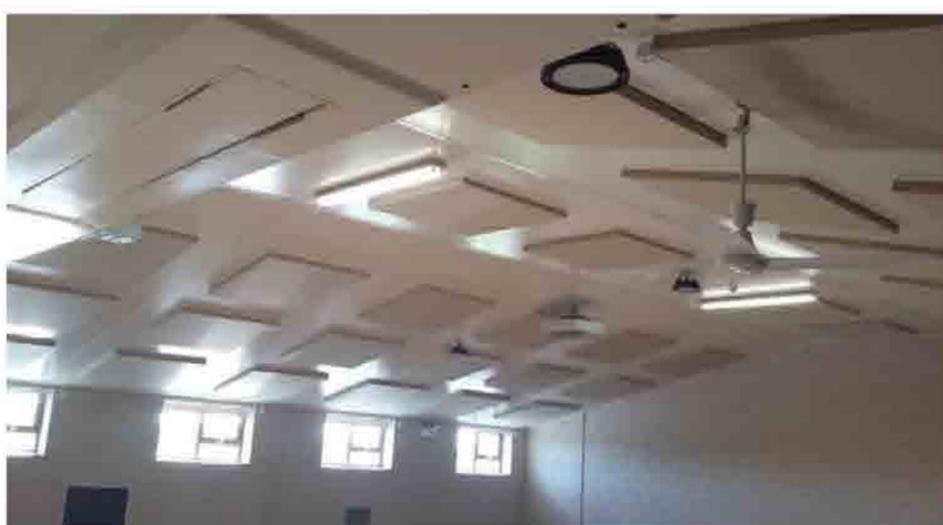
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The community centre has now reduced its carbon footprint and running costs. Electricity bills have reduced. A 6.8 kWp solar PV system was installed on the centre's roof. According to Activ8 Solar Energies who installed the system, based on its operation from November 2017 to September 2018 the solar PV system has exceeded expected production (SAP) to date by 10%. The solar PV system off-sets the equivalent amount of carbon as a five-acre forest.



Ceiling of Corduff Raferagh Community Centre before upgrade works. Image credit: Corduff and Raferagh Community Association



Ceiling of Corduff Raferagh Community Centre after upgrade works. Image credit: Corduff and Raferagh Community Association

different aspects and demands of the project as it progressed. Holding a re-launch event at the end of the project helped to highlight the upgraded community centre facilities to the wider community. It helped mark the achievement and impacted a strengthening community spirit. It also helped bring community groups back in to the centre. The project also gained the interest of new individuals to become part of the community association, bringing new ideas and energy to the group.

From the Local Action Group perspective, the project highlights the critical importance of the animation support function in LEADER as a developmental programme and its role in guiding the group through the whole project lifecycle. The group worked very effectively with John Toland, the LEADER Development Officer at Monaghan Integrated Development. The animation process was very effective with no major issues holding up the project. The LEADER Development Officer worked closely with the group to ensure that the funding application progressed smoothly from expression of interest to final payment. Public procurement and general compliance with LEADER Operating Rules are areas where community and voluntary groups can struggle. If not undertaken correctly, this can lead to the project being stalled or even being rejected completely during the final stages of assessment.

Funding

Total project budget (i)+(ii)+(iii) =	€178,082.00
+ (i) Rural Development Programme support (a)+(b)	€133,561.50
+ (a) EAFRD (EU) contribution	€83,876.62
+ (b) National / Regional contribution	€49,684.88
+ (ii) Private / Own funds	€43,521.00
+ (iii) Other funding sources	€1,000 (Community & Environment Scheme 2017 Monaghan County Council)

Lessons

The importance of the Corduff Raferagh Community Association and the special local committee that formed to steer and drive the project was important to its success. The committee was multi-skilled which helped deal with

Contact details

Project beneficiary name	Corduff and Raferagh Community Association CLG
Address of beneficiary or implementing body	Corduff, Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan



Cullohill Community Plan

LEADER

Community-Led Local Development



DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMUNITY PLAN FOR CULLOHILL

Summary

This project developed a five-year Community Plan to support the sustainable development of Cullohill village in county Laois. Through a community-led planning process, it worked to establish a shared vision for the village. Challenges and opportunities were identified, alongside short and long term actions to support development. O’Leary and Associates, an external consultant with strong experience in community development, was appointed to work with the community to develop the plan. The community engaged strongly with the planning process which also activated wider community-led development projects. The project puts in place building blocks to create a more resilient and enterprising community with greater potential for local job creation.

Context

Cullohill is a small rural village located in county Laois with a population of around 400 people. Its natural environment, heritage and strong community spirit are among its positive assets. Local natural and heritage amenities include the Cullohill Mountain Trails, the Erkina/Goul River, Cullohill Castle, the Old Church and Lime Kiln. Local industry is concentrated in the agriculture sector. Cullohill residents can benefit from employment opportunities in urban areas within a commutable distance. However, poor broadband speeds exist and a lack of enterprise or industrial space in the community are examples of significant issues impacting development.

Project name: Development of a Community Plan for Cullohill

Date: January 2017 – January 2018

Local Action Group: Laois LCDC

Implementing Partner: Laois Partnership Company

Type of Beneficiary: Community Group

Priority & Focus Area: Theme 2: Social Inclusion/
Sub theme: Basic Services Targeted at Hard to Reach Communities

Project Beneficiary Name/Organisation: Cullohill Community Council CLG

Address: Cullohill, Co. Laois



Cullohill Community Plan
2018



Cullohill Community Plan

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Before the M7 motorway opened in 2010 Cullohill was located on the route between Dublin and Cork, two of Ireland's main cities. Up to 2010, it experienced a strong through-flow of traffic connecting it to a source of passing trade. The opening of the motorway left the village disconnected from this main transport route bringing positive and negative consequences. Traffic congestion ceased but there was also a significant drop in passing trade. New directions were needed to steer Cullohill's future development.

Alongside this, the strong community spirit in the area was not translating into strong engagement with public funding programmes that could support development. The Laois Local Development Strategy identified Cullohill as one of six areas not engaging effectively with public funding programmes and an area for development. In this context, the Cullohill Community Council was established in 2016. This voluntary community group is an umbrella organisation for all local clubs and groups in the area. To strategically steer future development, the Cullohill Community Council applied for LEADER funding from Laois Partnership Company to develop a five-year Community Plan for the area.

Objectives

The overall aim of the project was to develop a community plan for Cullohill. This would establish a shared vision for the future of the village and assess development potential aligned with wider local and national policy. This was achieved by:

- Consultation working intensively with the community and other stakeholders
- Assessment of local challenges, needs and opportunities, such as around infrastructure, amenities and commercial development
- Producing a comprehensive Community Plan for Cullohill to inform actions for future community development
- Identifying project proposals for future funding applications

Activities

Developing a community plan for Cullohill involved a number of stages including research, profiling, consultation and monitoring. O'Leary & Associates Training & Consultancy Ltd were appointed to coordinate and manage each step and write the final community plan report. Initial work involved review of existing research and strategies of relevance, alongside baseline data analysis building a demographic, socio-economic and infrastructure profile of the area.

The project was overseen by the Cullohill Community Council. Alongside this, consultation with the wider local community was a vital part of the process. This involved a public meeting and online survey. This process was central to developing priority areas of action. These focused around strategic themes, objectives and actions such as developing infrastructure, enterprise, tourism and community facilities. Where actions require funding potential sources are identified in the plan. Many of the actions identified rather than requiring significant financial support primarily rely on community resources such as time, organisation and coordination skills.

"It has been hugely beneficial for us as a community to engage in the community planning process and ultimately now have a plan which will provide a road map for Cullohill for the next 5 years."

Marian Mahony, Secretary, Cullohill Community Council

The Cullohill Community Plan makes an extensive series of recommendations to direct the future development of Cullohill. In relation to infrastructure recommendations include redevelopment of the community centre, engagement with key stakeholders around high-speed broadband provision and developing a masterplan for the improvement and expansion of the GAA pitch site. In relation to tourism recommendations include conducting a feasibility study on developing bike trails on Cullohill Mountain and developing a brand for Cullohill as an activity-based tourism destination. In relation to enterprise, recommendations include carrying out a feasibility study on the development of a multi-purpose social enterprise



Cullohill Community Plan

LEADER

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space; lobbying for the roll-out of fibre broadband, developing a business network, securing public funding supporting the development of enterprise facilities and starting a monthly farmers' market.

The Community Plan also includes an action plan that outlines key activities, responsible actors, a timeframe for implementation and potential funding sources. Action plans have also been developed around the strategic thematic areas of infrastructure, tourism and enterprise.



Strong engagement at community consultation workshop. Image credit: Laois Partnership Company

The project also involved working directly with the Cullohill Community Council to strengthen the core committee structure and to establish working groups/sub-committees as appropriate to support the implementation of the plan. Three sub-committees were suggested in the community plan (tourism and marketing; facilities; environment and tidy towns), with a member of the Cullohill Community Council Executive chairing each group.

Results

A Community Development Plan has been prepared which provides a blueprint for future community development focusing on enhancing Cullohill as a place to live, work and visit. The Cullohill Development Plan was launched by Minister Charlie Flanagan in Cullohill Community Centre on Thursday 21st February 2019.

The process of preparing this plan also required analysis and reflection on the strengths, issues and opportunities in Cullohill's future development at the community level. The community has engaged very strongly with the planning

process. The public meeting held in February 2018 was attended by approximately 70 people.

"There has been little development in the area in the past but thanks to consultative nature of this planning process, the success of The Folly Festival, our local sports teams, our Tidy Towns efforts etc. there is a real pride and desire within the community to make Cullohill, not only a great place to live but also to visit and work."

Marian Mahony, Secretary, Cullohill Community Council

Even before completion of the community-led planning process a number of strong outcomes had begun to emerge. A community development committee was established to coordinate positive development for the area. The committee coordinated a fundraising drive accumulating a community fund. It plans to strategically align tourism development plans with the county Laois Tourism Strategy and the Ireland Ancient East tourism marketing initiative. A community managed and coordinated 'education hub' has also been established providing weekend extra tuition to small groups and hosted in the community centre. Surplus funds generated are added to the community fund. The community are looking to exploit opportunities to provide incubation space to host local businesses and also to provide hot desk facilities which will provide commuting alternatives for locals. Other plans include redevelopment of the local community centre as a universal access and multi-use facility. The community has worked on securing title of their community centre which will enable them to realise this goal.

Another interesting initiative has been the development of a festival concept to raise funds for community projects. In July 2018, The Folly Music, Comedy and Culture Festival took place in the grounds of the majestic 14th century Cullohill Castle. This festival, which is supported by Electric Picnic, is the first gender balanced festival in Ireland, staging equal numbers of male and female performers. This festival afforded the Community Council to showcase the beauty of the area and also to capitalise on the village's link with the



Cullohill Community Plan



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O'Connell family's culinary profile and reputation. Rory O'Connell and his sister Darina Allen who co-founded the world renowned Ballymaloe Cookery School are originally from Cullohill. Included in the weekend's event was the Irish Porridge Making Championships, a mountain walk, Family Fun Day, Art Exhibition, Dog Show and Food Market. The Porridge Making Championships involved people from all over Ireland competing to represent Ireland in the World Porridge Making Championships. The community applied for LEADER programme funding to develop and market this event. The project also supports cross-cutting LEADER objectives of innovation, climate change and environment. The project will assist establishing Cullohill as a sustainable community. The community have also used the sustainable community plan as a platform to register with the Sustainable Energy Communities programme, managed by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI). This innovative programme provides assistance to communities to reduce their energy usage by targeting the commercial, residential and transport sectors. The project is expected to have significant benefits into the future. It puts in place the building blocks to create a more resilient and enterprising community with greater potential for local job creation.

"It is easy for groups/clubs to compile 'wish lists' in terms of local development, but the Community Development Plan process has prioritised the areas for development taking cognisance of the wishes of the whole community and without any bias. We also firmly believe that the plan will assist us greatly in securing funding into the future. As always, we very much appreciate the support of Laois Partnership Company."

Marian Mahony, Secretary, Cullohill Community Council

Lessons

Wider community support essential to future planning:

The community engaged strongly with the community planning exercise. But this energy needs to be sustained. Beyond the Cullohill Community Council, encouraging volunteering from the wider community will also be an important part of effectively implementing the plan. The

success of the plan will need continued local community support.

Spill-over benefits can emerge from community-led planning:

The process of community-led planning can also stimulate new activities. Before the plan's completion a number of community driven activities and projects had begun to emerge such as the establishment of a community development committee and alignment of the local tourism strategy with county and national level initiatives.

Inventive, novel ideas can help to increase a village's profile and visitor interest:

Linking events to quirky, novel concepts and high-profile locals can also help to attract visitors and media attention. The local festival based around Ireland's first national Porridge Making Championships gained coverage in national media.



Promotion of the Folly Festival in Cullohill.

Image Credit: Laois Partnership Company

Funding

Total project budget (i)+(ii)+(iii) =	€15,990
+ (i) Rural Development Programme support (a)+(b)	€14,391
+ (a) EAFRD (EU) contribution	€9,037.55
+ (b) National / Regional contribution	€5,353.45
+ (ii) Private / Own funds	€1,599
+ (iii) Other funding sources	n/a

Contact

Project beneficiary name	Cullohill Community Council CLG
Address of beneficiary or implementing body	Cullohill, Co. Laois



Purchase of Exoskeleton Rehabilitation Suit



PURCHASE OF EXOSKELETON REHABILITATION SUIT

Summary

The 'No Barriers Foundation' has made an Exoskeleton Bionic Rehabilitation Suit operational in a rural setting allowing those with Neurological injuries and illnesses, such as spinal injury, stroke and MS, to rehabilitate in their own communities. The Suit is available in satellite locations around Donegal and can be hired by making an appointment. It is always accompanied by a qualified physiotherapist. This allows service users to avail of a self-sustaining and affordable service, which otherwise wouldn't exist. This project recognises a disadvantaged group in rural Donegal and gives them an opportunity to improve their social, physical and mental wellbeing.

Context

The Bionic Rehabilitation service is not feasible to roll out either privately or by the Health Service Executive (HSE). Once patients are discharged from care within the HSE, there is generally very little on-going support. The No Barriers Foundation is a non-profit organisation based in Letterkenny, Co. Donegal and their aim is to create an inclusive health facility, equipped with specialist neurological equipment allowing anyone with a disability to train and improve their current level of physical and mental health. They now provide this specialised Bionic Rehabilitation service. There is no other equipment like this being used in Ireland, in either a hospital or community setting, which is accessible to the public 5 days per week and comes fully staffed with trained physiotherapists. This

Project name: Purchase of Exoskeleton Rehabilitation Suit

Date: January 2018 - July 2018

Local Action Group: Donegal LCDC

Implementing Partner: Donegal Local Development Company

Type of Beneficiary: Not-for-profit Organization

Priority & Focus Area: Theme 2: Social Inclusion /Sub theme: Basic Services Targeted at Hard to Reach Communities

Project Beneficiary Name/Organisation: No Barriers Foundation

Address: 7 Tara Court, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal

Further information: www.nobarriers.ie



Bionic Suit is one of only 300 suits worldwide and only one of three which is publically accessible in Ireland. The No Barriers Foundation provide the use of the Bionic Suit for a very affordable €60 per session, in a rural setting. This service is only comparable to a private service run in the United Kingdom at a cost of between £9,000-€11,000 per week for this type of rehabilitation.



Purchase of Exoskeleton Rehabilitation Suit

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No Barriers Foundation signing the LEADER contract.
Image courtesy of the No Barriers Foundation

The aim of the Suit being based in Donegal is to break down barriers to recovery, exercise and physical activity. Also, it aims to promote social inclusion by allowing those with an illness or disability, based in the North West of Ireland, to access an Exoskeleton Bionic Suit and continue to rehabilitate and exercise within their community once discharged from care. This allows individuals to continue to make significant health improvements and receive the care and help they need within their own rural locations, while simultaneously allowing family members to participate and help in their loved ones' rehabilitation.

"The benefits of the suit are endless, physical and psychological, it's a great feeling to be able to meet people face to face instead of looking up at them from my wheelchair"

Gerry McCabe-Exoskeleton User



The Exoskeleton Sit to Stand.

Image Courtesy of the No Barriers Foundation

Objectives

- Allow those within the North West of Ireland to access a Bionic Exoskeleton Suit and continue to rehabilitate/exercise within their community once discharged from care
- Facilitate individuals to continue to make significant health improvements and receive the care and help they need within their rural locations, while simultaneously allowing family members to participate and help in their rehabilitation.

Activities

The No Barriers Foundation formed a number of sub committees and a fundraising committee with the aim of raising 25% capital for the purchase of the Exoskeleton Bionic Suit. This also included a service provision committee to oversee the service roll out of the Exoskeleton Bionic Rehabilitation Suit including Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists and a local General Practitioner. The Foundation fund raised 25% of the cost of the machine through local community fundraising. The LEADER grant was secured and the Rehabilitation suit was purchased.

To provide the service, a team of 4 Chartered Physiotherapists were trained by Ekso Bionics. This involved Level 1 training conducted in January 2018 and Level 2 advanced training in July 2018. An administrative infrastructure was put in place to allow all aspects of the project to operate using a cloud based clinic management system. Local operation sites within the North West were agreed upon and were kindly donated to the foundation for free. A wheelchair accessible vehicle was also secured to ensure ease of transport for the Exoskeleton Rehabilitation Suit throughout the North West region of which the



Purchase of Exoskeleton Rehabilitation Suit



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population is approximately 200,000 people. The Suit is now being used beyond Donegal county so the population catchment figure is set to increase.



Demonstrating the use of the Bionic Suit.
Image courtesy of the No Barriers Foundation

A media campaign was also launched to raise awareness of the project and its availability to those who needed it. A GP referral scheme was agreed upon by the service provision committee, with input from the Donegal GP network, and a structured referral system and was launched in January 2019 allowing an effective referral network to operate.

To date 15 patients who contacted the Foundation directly are currently using the Exoskeleton through our Pilot scheme and to date 90,000 steps have been taken within our rural community by those wheelchair users. The use of the Bionic Suit now operates at pretty much full capacity, with 25 to 30 sessions per week depending on the type of appointment. The service has full time physiotherapy staff and is now financially self-sustainable, allowing for further re- investment in capital.

Results

Since this project was started, the No Barrier Foundation has taken on 2 full time employees, with a 4 further 4 employees aiming to be subcontracted which will bring the total to 6. This project has facilitated job creation in an area where job creation is a key goal of local development.

“As a physiotherapist robotic exoskeleton rehabilitation allows me to provide more intensive gait and balance training, and improved functional outcomes for patients or varying conditions compared to many standard conventional physiotherapy treatments”

Stephen Nally, Physiotherapist No Barriers Foundation

The funding has had a massive impact on those with limited mobility / disability in Donegal. The Esko Suit ultimately allow persons with disabilities in hard to reach communities to access modern, innovative equipment which ultimately will change their lives, both mentally and physically.

While the Bionic Rehabilitation Suit has facilitated people to rehabilitate within their communities, it has also brought together a number of wheelchairs users, in particular, to train and rehabilitate side by side. Thereby, this helped developed a community in itself which helps with issues of with social inclusion and also issues of rural isolation, which is often prevalent in hard to reach communities.

“Since using the Exoskeleton, I have found the muscles in my legs are getting stronger and the pain in back has been getting profoundly less and is much stronger also. Also, the main benefits of being upright and walking is extremely rewarding” Anita Jackson - Exoskeleton User



Purchase of Exoskeleton Rehabilitation Suit



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Demonstrating the use of the Bionic Suit.
Image courtesy of the No Barriers Foundation

most notably, between those within the community, healthcare professionals and DLDC. This allowed the project to become successful when knowledge and skills were pooled to seek out funding opportunities. This also allowed for an improved structure and greater delegation of duties when seeking funding. For example, the community were instrumental in participating and contributing significantly to the fundraising activities of the No Barriers Committee and the healthcare professionals were instrumental in the operation, training, awareness raising and working with patients on a daily basis who use the Bionic Suit.

This project shows how building collaborative, strong and sustainable community partnerships is a key to funding success and in the operation of a well needed service, that couldn't otherwise be delivered.

Funding

Total project budget (i)+(ii)+(iii) =	€161,380.00
+ (i) Rural Development Programme support (a)+(b)	€121,035.00
+ (a) EAFRD (EU) contribution	€76,009.98
+ (b) National / Regional contribution	€45,025.02
+ (ii) Private / Own funds	€40,345.00
+ (iii) Other funding sources	n/a

Contact details

Project beneficiary name	No Barriers Foundation
Contact person	Johnny Loughery
Email	Johnnyloughrey2000@yahoo.co.uk
Address of beneficiary or implementing body	7 Tara Court, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal

Lessons

Cooperation between different stakeholders crucial for funding success

This project was brought about as a direct result of capacity building and cooperation between different stakeholders,



OFFline Film Festival Animation Residency

Local Action Group	Offaly LCDC
Implementing Partner	Offaly Local Development Company
Project Name	OFFline Film Festival Animation Residency
Promoter Name	Birr 20:20 Vision Company LBG
Address	Green Street, Birr, Co. Offaly
LEADER Theme	Social Inclusion
LEADER Sub-theme	Rural Youth
LEADER Grant Amount	€39,248.02



Project Overview

The OFFline Film Festival is dedicated to making and screening quality short and feature-length fiction and documentary films. LEADER supported the festival to establish an animation hub and residency, as well as aiding two talented emerging animators to participate in a six-month residency, showcasing their work at the 2018 OFFline Film Festival. The animators were provided with studio space, mentoring and post-production support, as well as accommodation and a living expenses stipend. LEADER also provided support towards the purchase of computer, software and film equipment. More broadly, the project encouraged the animators to see Birr as a potential base for future enterprises, with benefits such as affordable office space, high speed broadband and a creative culture.



Expressing Employability

Local Action Group	Limerick LCDC
Implementing Partner	Ballyhoura Development CLG
Project Name	Expressing Employability
Promoter Name	County Limerick Youth Theatre
Address	73 O'Connell Street, Limerick, Co. Limerick
LEADER Theme	Social Inclusion
LEADER Sub-theme	Rural Youth
LEADER Grant Amount	€26,550.00



Project Overview

Through application of the 'learning by doing' drama methodology the Expressing Employability project, with support from LEADER, trained learners with core employability skills and helped build self-confidence. This approach has notable benefits for the long-term unemployed and those who need to adapt their skills to the current labour market. Over 15 weeks, module one focused on developing personal (e.g. building confidence, taking initiative) and interpersonal (e.g. effective communication, problem solving) skills. Over 20 weeks, module two focused on transferable skills and utilised core employability skills to implement a range of tasks to develop a public performance, such as financial management, costume design and set construction. The public performance gave visibility to the project and the learners, enhancing their self-esteem and active community engagement.



Bridgeways Family Resource Centre Youth Facilities Enhancement

Local Action Group	Longford LCDC
Implementing Partner	Longford Community Resources CLG
Project Name	Bridgeways Family Resource Centre Youth Facilities Enhancement
Promoter Name	Bridgeways Family Resource Centre CLG
Address	Main Street, Ballymahon, Co. Longford
LEADER Theme	Social Inclusion
LEADER Sub-theme	Rural Youth
LEADER Grant Amount	€16,931.25



Longford Community Resources clg



Project Overview

The Bridgeways Family Resource Centre CLG is run by a local voluntary management committee and operates as a community development and family support project for the town. The centre hosts a variety of programmes and activities which address issues such as isolation, physical and mental health, while also hosting a youth club for teenagers among other activities. This project supported the development of a youth space for the growing number of adolescents in Ballymahon. This space is safe, friendly and provides youths with an arena to access information, engage in education and to relax and unwind. Funding was used to purchase a range of modern technology and musical instruments for the space along with water sports equipment.

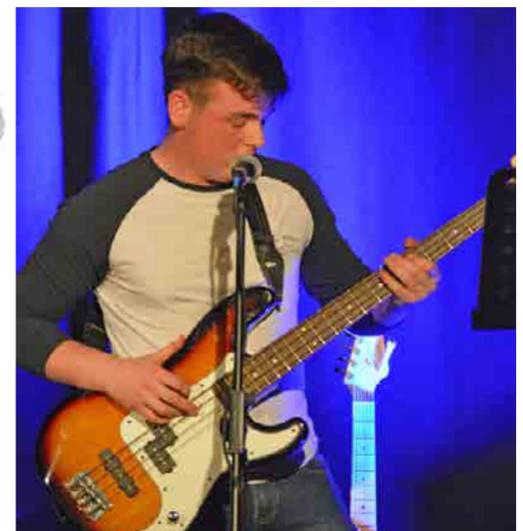


Audio Recording Facility Principally for Teenagers

Local Action Group	Mayo LCDC
Implementing Partner	South West Mayo Development Company CLG
Project Name	Audio Recording Facility Principally for Teenagers
Promoter Name	Clar Regional Centre Ltd (T/A Claremorris Town Hall)
Address	Claremorris Town Hall Theatre, Claremorris, Co. Mayo
LEADER Theme	Social Inclusion
LEADER Sub-theme	Rural Youth
LEADER Grant Amount	€16,520.43



South West Mayo Development Company Ltd



Project Overview

Clár Integrated Resource Development Company Ltd (IRD) Ltd is a voluntary community organisation committed to the integrated development of resources of within the region. Its primary aim and activity is the promotion of the development of the town of Claremorris and its surrounding hinterlands. One of the key areas of development that IRD is involved in is the development of services and resources for the rural youth. This project serves the rural youth in particular by using LEADER funding to purchase audio recording equipment for Claremorris Town Hall. This facilitates individuals, or groups of teenagers, with access to audio recording equipment to enable them to produce demo recordings of their music.



Roscommon Sound and Music Bank

Local Action Group	Roscommon LCDC
Implementing Partner	Roscommon LEADER Partnership
Project Name	Roscommon Sound and Music Bank
Promoter Name	Roscommon Public Participation Network
Address	Aras an Chontae, Roscommon
LEADER Theme	Social Inclusion
LEADER Sub-theme	Rural Youth
LEADER Grant Amount	€32,525.64



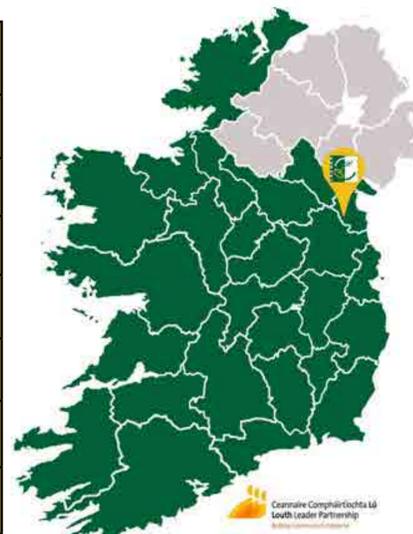
Project Overview

The LEADER Programme supported the purchase of a bank of musical instruments to be made available to the young people of the Co. Roscommon, encouraging them to take up music and enhance their musical skills. This project is particularly beneficial for those whose families may not be in a position to purchase musical instruments and allows them access to such equipment for free. By developing a music bank, all young people can test the different instruments and see which one suits them best. This project promotes social inclusion among rural youth by opening up access to everyone, particularly those who are already socially excluded, and giving them the opportunity to learn how to play a musical instrument which may not happen otherwise.



Youth Creative Development Training Programme

Local Action Group	Louth LCDC
Implementing Partner	Louth Leader Partnership
Project Name	Youth Creative Development Training Programme
Promoter Name	Ardee And District Community Trust CLG
Address	Church Hill, Ardee, Co. Louth
LEADER Theme	Social Inclusion
LEADER Sub-theme	Rural Youth
LEADER Grant Amount	€8,967.24



Project Overview

The Ardee And District Community Trust CLG (Dee Hub) is a not for profit organisation that opened a Youth and Community Resource Hub in Ardee, Co. Louth in 2016. The purpose of the Hub is to provide programmes and services to address the needs of young people in the town and surrounding area particularly those at risk of disadvantage and social exclusion. Support from LEADER enabled the delivery of a creative/digital media-training programme consisting of web development, animation, video production, games development, photography and app development. The training was targeted at 15 to 35-year-old early school leavers, unemployed, non-college attendees or individuals who have failed to complete their college course, with a view to providing them with a stepping stone to a future career in these areas.



Castletown Accordion Orchestra

Local Action Group	Cavan LCDC
Implementing Partner	Cavan County Local Development
Project Name	Castletown Accordion Orchestra
Promoter Name	Accora Orchestra
Address	Mullagh, Co. Cavan
LEADER Theme	Social Inclusion
LEADER Sub-theme	Rural Youth
LEADER Grant Amount	€10,752.83



Cavan County
Local Development



ESTD: 1981
FORMERLY THE CASTLETOWN ACCORDION ORCHESTRA

Project Overview

Castletown Accordion Orchestra was established in 1981. LEADER supported the orchestra to rebrand itself as the Accora Orchestra. Rebranding was a collaborative process involving the youth orchestra, committee and design experts. The name 'Accora' is derived from the first five letters of accordion. It is also a play on chara, a chairde and a chorus reflecting the orchestra's ethos. LEADER also supported the newly named Accora Orchestra to invest in quality musical instruments and equipment including a bass accordion, percussion instruments, an amplifier, microphones, speakers and a trailer for transport. This has helped to enhance the orchestra's overall sound with a particular emphasis on outdoor performance.



Duhallow Youth Research Project

Local Action Group	Cork North LCDC, Cork South LCDC & Kerry LCDC
Implementing Partner	IRD Duhallow CLG
Project Name	Duhallow Youth Research Project
Promoter Name	IRD Duhallow CLG
Address	James O'Keeffe Institute, Newmarket, Co. Cork
LEADER Theme	Social Inclusion
LEADER Sub-theme	Rural Youth
LEADER Grant Amount	€19,001 (€12,647 Cork North LCDC, €2,582 South Cork LCDC, €2,582 Kerry LCDC)



IRD Duhallow



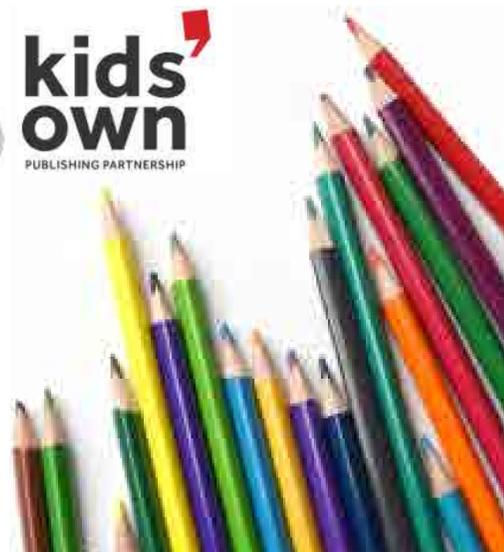
Project Overview

The LEADER Programme supported a piece of research on rural youth and families in the Duhallow region. A socio economic and demographic analysis was compiled using various data sources and a comprehensive needs analysis was also undertaken with young people up to 35 years of age in the region. This involved focus group interviews and surveys with youths, parents, teachers, sports and youth leaders to ensure that all views and opinions were included. Findings from this research resulted in the development of a 3-year plan which includes service planning and developments targeting young people and rural families. The recommendations from this research will also be actionable by both IRD Duhallow and other relevant agencies in the future.



Digital Space for Children's Artwork and Writing

Local Action Group	Sligo LCDC
Implementing Partner	County Sligo LEADER Partnership Company
Project Name	Digital Space for Children's Artwork and Writing
Promoter Name	Kids' Own Publishing Partnership
Address	40 Wolfe Tone Street, Sligo, Co. Sligo
LEADER Theme	Social Inclusion
LEADER Sub-theme	Rural Youth
LEADER Grant Amount	€14,739.75



Project Overview

Kids Own Publishing Partnership reached its 20th year in 2017. Over the years it has built an archive of children's artwork. LEADER supported the creation of a digital space to showcase this work to a wider audience than previously could be reached. It can be described as a virtual children's cultural centre containing books, art and projects. The digital space also acts as a live event platform for contemporary arts practice with children and young people, helping increase engagement and accessibility. Kids Own Publishing Partnership is the only dedicated publisher of books by children and for children in Ireland. Core aims that form part of its future plans include increasing the visibility of children's artwork and writing through publishing, exhibition and dissemination.



Ballymore Eustace Band Hall Refurbishment

Local Action Group	Kildare LCDC
Implementing Partner	County Kildare LEADER Partnership
Project Name	Ballymore Eustace Band Hall Refurbishment
Promoter Name	Ballymore Eustace Band Hall Committee
Address	Bishopsland, Ballymore Eustace, Co. Kildare
LEADER Theme	Social Inclusion
LEADER Sub-theme	Basic Services Targeted at Hard to Reach Communities
LEADER Grant Amount	€60,600.05



Project Overview

The Ballymore Eustace Brass and Reed Band are a concert band that was founded in 1875. Today, they have over 30 members playing a wide variety of music including pop, classical, Irish traditional and some brass band favourites. This band has performed on the national and international stage, however its primary focus has been on performing at local events and contributing to community life in Ballymore Eustace. Band rehearsals take place in their band hall in Ballymore Eustace on a weekly basis. The band hall is an old building however, resulting in it being particularly cold during the winter months. LEADER supported the refurbishment and future proofing of the Band Hall by installing insulation and a new heating system.



Sligo Cancer Support Centre Volunteer Training

Local Action Group	Sligo LCDC
Implementing Partner	Sligo LEADER Partnership Company Ltd
Project Name	Sligo Cancer Support Centre Volunteer Training
Promoter Name	Sligo Cancer Support Centre CLG
Address	44 Wine Street, Sligo, Co. Sligo
LEADER Theme	Social Inclusion
LEADER Sub-theme	Basic Services Targeted at Hard to Reach Communities
LEADER Grant Amount	€4,200.00



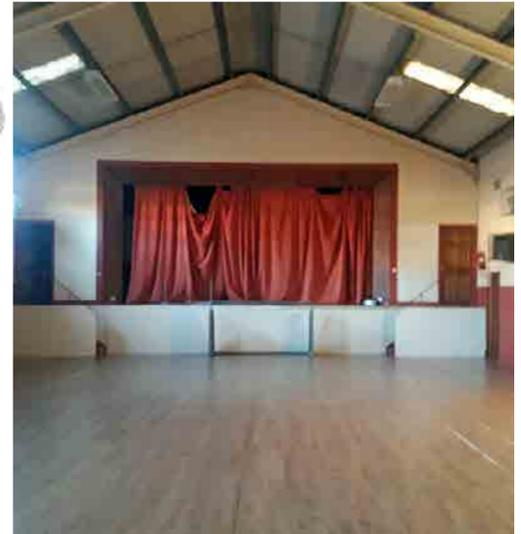
Project Overview

The Sligo Cancer Support Centre was set up in 2004 as a place of peace and hope where people with cancer and their families can access a number of services in a caring and tranquil environment in the North West of Ireland. Notably, the support centre offers a place where people can have solidarity with others on their journey. The centre offers a number of services including a drop-in service for support and advice, one to one counselling, counselling psychotherapy and bereavement counselling, as well as number of different support groups, workshops and activities such as yoga. As the centre often relies on the help of volunteers to run their services, LEADER support was obtained to provide basic counselling and client support services for their volunteers.



Tinahely Community Sports Hall Renovation

Local Action Group	Wicklow LCDC
Implementing Partner	County Wicklow Partnership
Project Name	Tinahely Community Sports Hall Renovation
Promoter Name	Tinahely Community Sports Hall Ltd
Address	Unit 18, Riverside Business Centre, Tinahely, Co. Wicklow
LEADER Theme	Social Inclusion
LEADER Sub-theme	Basic Services Targeted at Hard to Reach Communities
LEADER Grant Amount	€303,941.05



Project Overview

The Tinahely Sports Hall is an important asset in the community of Tinahely. The hall hosts a multitude of events, including handball, racquetball, trad and sean nos dancing and concerts, among other uses by different community groups. Tinahely Community Sports Hall Ltd lodged a funding application to LEADER to carry out major renovation works including the extension to front of their sports hall, and the replacement of the existing asbestos roof. These new works provide a new accessible entrance, covered porch and entrance area, kitchen, stores and new toilets. As well as a relocation of existing stairs, minor amendments to internal layout and amendments to elevations were made.



Sound Equipment for Ankara Festival

Local Action Group	Clare Local Development Company
Implementing Partner	Clare Local Development Company
Project Name	Sound Equipment for Ankara Festival
Promoter Name	Association for Nigerian Community in County Clare
Address	Ennis, Co. Clare
LEADER Theme	Social Inclusion
LEADER Sub-theme	Basic Services Targeted at Hard to Reach Communities
LEADER Grant Amount	€6,860.00



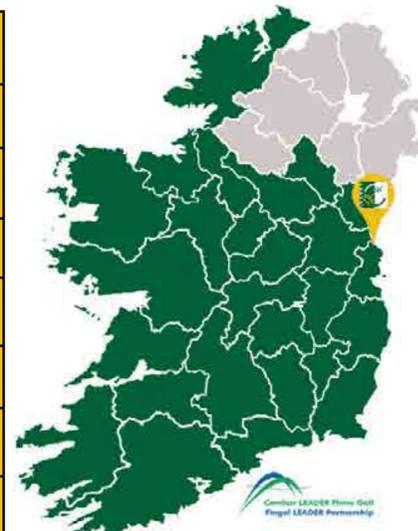
Project Overview

The Ankara Festival is a unique annual cultural event promoting diversity and social inclusion. First held in 2015, attendance has grown with people traveling from all parts of Ireland, but also the UK and Nigeria. The colourful Ankara fabric commonly worn in Nigeria gives the festival its name, representing its diverse cultural heritage. Organised by the Association for Nigerian Community in County Clare (ANCC), Ankara Festival brings the local Nigerian and wider community together to celebrate, showcase and preserve Nigerian culture through music, fashion, food, dance, song and poetry. The ANCC successfully gained LEADER support towards essential sound equipment in 2017. This equipment is available for use in all ANCC activities, and wider community activities.



Remember Us Special Needs Centre

Local Action Group	Dublin Rural LEADER
Implementing Partner	Fingal LEADER Partnership CLG
Project Name	Remember Us Special Needs Centre
Promoter Name	Remember Us Special Needs Group
Address	Unit 5, Balbriggan Retail Park, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin
LEADER Theme	Social Inclusion
LEADER Sub-theme	Basic Services Targeted at Hard to Reach Communities
LEADER Grant Amount	€200,000.00



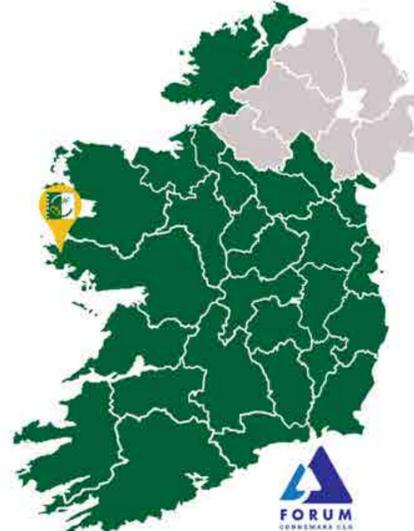
Project Overview

Remember Us is a charity established by Nora Roban in 1998 to provide an outlet for special needs children and their families, both of whom often experience severe social isolation and lack of available supports. Over 250 families now participate in the activities offered by Remember Us. LEADER helped realise a long-held dream to develop a centre of excellence to provide supports and services for special needs children and their families in one central location. Remember Us purchased their own building however it needed to be retrofitted to make it fit for purpose. The LEADER Programme supported capital investment for the fit-out of the newly established facility for children and young adults expanding the services of Remember Us Special Needs group.



Connemara Community Radio Studio

Local Action Group	Forum Connemara
Implementing Partner	Forum Connemara
Project Name	Connemara Community Radio Studio Accessibility Requirements and Equipment Upgrade Works
Promoter Name	Connemara Community Radio
Address	Letterfrack, Co. Galway
LEADER Theme	Social Inclusion
LEADER Sub-theme	Basic Services Targeted at Hard to Reach Communities
LEADER Grant Amount	€31,818.60



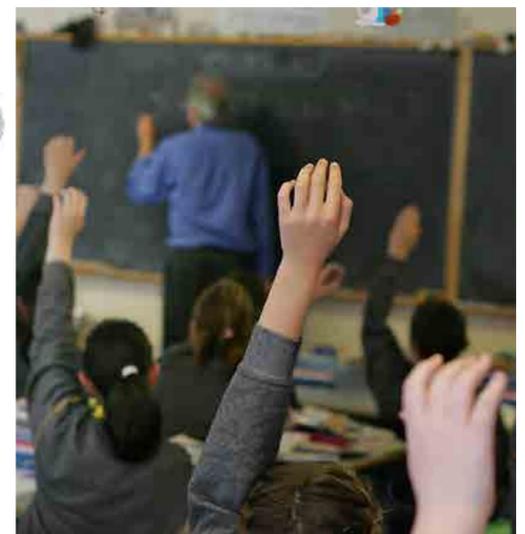
Project Overview

Connemara Community Radio is a community based, not-for-profit radio station established in 1995 broadcasting in north and west Connemara. It has been awarded a 10-year broadcasting licence from the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI), and this LEADER project aimed to help the station meet some of BAI's conditions attached to this licence by enhancing its services. LEADER supported Connemara Community Radio to adjust one of its three studios to meet accessibility requirements as well as the completion of remedial fire safety works and the installation of an efficient heating system. It also facilitated the upgrade of broadcasting equipment, further helping to improve output and meet current broadcasting standards.



Healthy Relating Programme - NEWKD

Local Action Group	Kerry LCDC
Implementing Partner	NEWKD (North, East and West Kerry Development Company)
Project Name	Healthy Relating Programme - NEWKD
Promoter Name	NEWKD
Address	Áras An Phobail, Boherbee, Tralee, Co. Kerry
LEADER Theme	Social Inclusion
LEADER Sub-theme	Basic Services Targeted at Hard to Reach Communities
LEADER Grant Amount	€66,375.00



Project Overview

The aim of the Healthy Relating Programme is to provide teenagers and young people with life skills and training in different aspects which are pertinent to modern life, especially in the realm of sex education. Training, supported by LEADER, helped inform and give young people the skills to make safe, healthy and respectful decisions in relationships in order for them to feel confident, knowledgeable and protected in the area of relationships and sexuality. Specifically, young people obtained awareness, knowledge and coping skills to deal with: early sexualisation; influence of media; youth culture; age of consent and sexual consent; gender equality; body image; Influence of internet pornography; respecting personal boundaries; value clarification and communication skills.



Sorcas Garman (Youth Circus Wexford) Training

Local Action Group	Wexford LCDC
Implementing Partner	Wexford Local Development
Project Name	Sorcas Garman (Youth Circus Wexford) Training
Promoter Name	Irish Street Arts, Circus and Spectacle Network
Address	Spawell Road, Wexford Town, Co. Wexford.
LEADER Theme	Social Inclusion
LEADER Sub-theme	Basic Services Targeted at Hard to Reach Communities
LEADER Grant Amount	€22,292.60



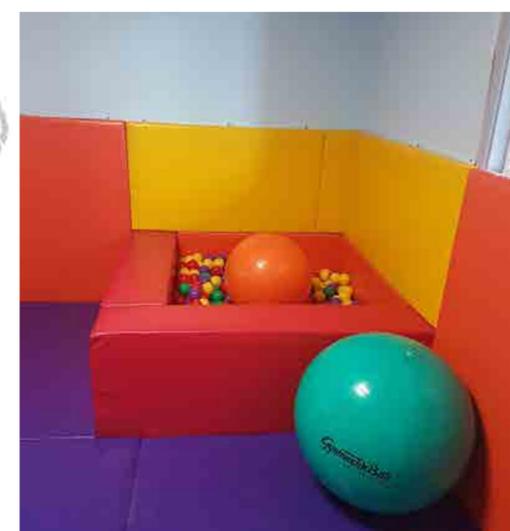
Project Overview

The Irish Street Arts, Circus & Spectacle Network (ISACS) is a voluntary organisation and Ireland's leading support and advocacy organisation for the development of Street Arts, Circus and Spectacle Art Forms. LEADER funded the development of a new social circus 'Sorcas Garman'. This initiative acts as a way to engage young people in creative and physical activity by allowing them to engage in circus activities such as juggling, stilt-walking, basic acro, hula hoop and many more. These skills promote team building, develop self-esteem, encourage safe risk-taking and increase trust and responsibility. The wide range of physical and challenging mental activities is proven to stimulate, inspire, encourage and motivate young people to learn and grow.



Fit Out of Butterfly Club Sensory Room

Local Action Group	Limerick LCDC
Implementing Partner	West Limerick Resources
Project Name	Fit out of Butterfly Club Sensory Room
Promoter Name	The Butterfly Club CLG
Address	Rathkeale Community Childcare, New line, Rathkeale, Co. Limerick
LEADER Theme	Social Inclusion
LEADER Sub-theme	Basic Services Targeted at Hard to Reach Communities
LEADER Grant Amount	€12,597.41



Project Overview

The Butterfly Club, operating in Rathkeale since 2004 and Abbeyfeale since 2009, is a social club for children and teenagers with special needs. This voluntary organisation aims to provide leisure activities in a safe, fun filled environment for children and young adults with special needs, while providing respite for parents and guardians. Due to the growing needs of the number of children wishing to attend the club, LEADER funding was availed of to support the fit out of a sensory room for children with autism and similar conditions, which will create an additional calm, safe space, and comfortable environment for them.



Caltra Community Centre Development

Local Action Group	Galway Rural Development Company
Implementing Partner	Galway Rural Development Company
Project Name	Extension to Caltra Community Centre to Provide a Stage and Storage Space
Promoter Name	Caltra Community Centre Development Association (CCFDA)
Address	Caltra, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway
LEADER Theme	Social Inclusion
LEADER Sub-theme	Basic Services Targeted at Hard to Reach Communities
LEADER Grant Amount	€96,929.00



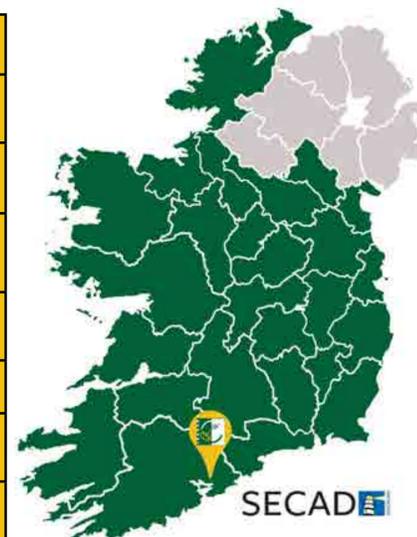
Project Overview

Caltra Community Centre Development Association (CCFDA) received funding under the previous LEADER programme (2007-2013) to initially fund a feasibility study for the construction of a new community centre in the village, followed by a capital grant of almost €500,000 to begin construction on this local amenity. In 2018, the CCFDA lodged another application to address the lack of appropriate stage and storage facilities in the Community Centre, as these were deemed to interfere with the use of the main hall for other recreational purposes. LEADER funding supported an extension to the rear of the building to include a permanent stage area and suitable storage facilities to ensure the centre can be used as a multipurpose facility, and to its full capacity.



Community Training and Capacity Building Programme

Local Action Group	Cork West LCDC & Cork South LCDC
Implementing Partner	SECAD (South East Cork Area Development Partnership CLG)
Project Name	Community Training and Capacity Building Programme
Promoter Name	SECAD (South East Cork Area Development Partnership CLG)
Address	Midleton Community Enterprise Centre, Knockgriffin, Midleton, Co. Cork
LEADER Theme	Social Inclusion
LEADER Sub-theme	Basic Services Targeted at Hard to Reach Communities
LEADER Grant Amount	€99,630.00



Project Overview

SECAD supports the development of the community sector. SECAD understands that the needs of a community can change and the capacity of a community to seek the supports to address change can be challenging. SECAD's Community Training and Capacity Building Programme, supported by LEADER, worked with communities to offer advice and guidance on project design and development and help community groups and volunteers to upskill and empower them to plan and manage their projects or activities. This training included a number of aspects, such as helping communities to identify their needs, help them to make a development plan and prepare funding applications, as well as training in aspects such as public relations, social media and effective governance.



LEADER Programme 2014-2020

Theme 3: Rural Environment



Theme 3

Rural
Environment

Protection and
Sustainable Use of
Water Resources

Protection and
Improvement of
Local Biodiversity

Development of
Renewable Energy



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The European Agricultural Fund
for Rural Development:
Europe investing in rural areas



LEADER Progra

Theme 3: Rural Environ



1 Coastal Explorers Programme



2 Inch Island Wetland Biodiversity Project



3 Bat Survey Equipment



4 Purchase of Litter Removal Equipment



5 River Tunnelling Project Training



6 Westport Beekeepers Equipment



7 Installation of Heat Recovery Units Hotel Doolin Events Barn



8 Surveillance of Harmful Blue-green Algae in Lough Derg



9 Moneygall Community Garden



10 Oola Tidy Towns Village Enhancement Plan



11 Study of In-Stream Biodiversity & the Status of Crayfish & Otters in the Maigue Catchment



12 Village and Environmental Design Plans



The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe Investing in rural areas

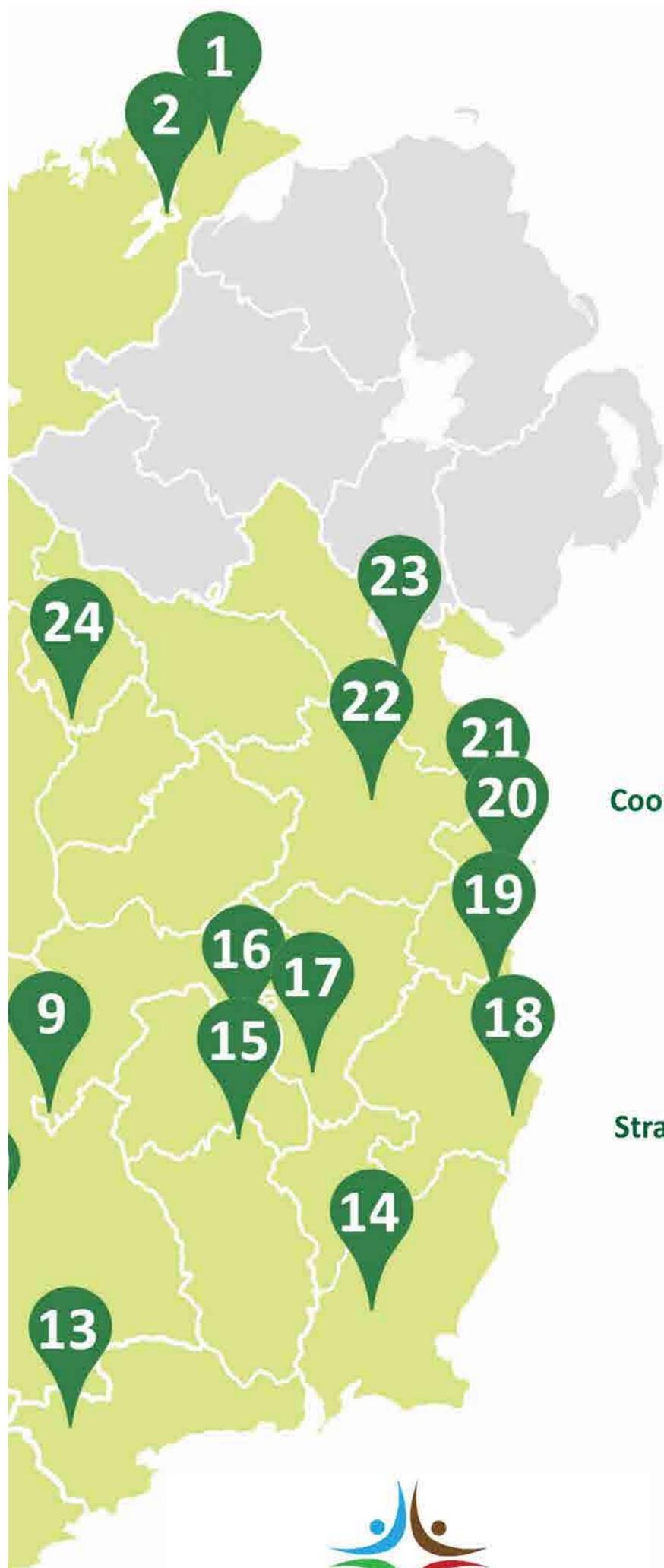


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Investment - Project Examples



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rural and Community Development

Biomass Supply Chain Upgrade



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Meadow Maintenance - Irish Wildlife Trust Laois/Offaly Branch



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Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF)



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EuroBlue Limited



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Training on Water Conservation and Water Recycling



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Biomass Supply Chain Upgrade

LEADER

Community-Led Local Development



National Rural Network



BIOMASS SUPPLY CHAIN UPGRADE

Summary

McCauley Wood Fuels is a biomass wood fuel business based in Co. Leitrim. The growing demand for woodchip biomass could not be sustained by McCauley Wood Fuels' processing capacity prior to availing of funding. LEADER funding supported the purchase of a new mobile biomass woodchipper for this business. This has helped improve the business by providing for larger capacity, and more reliable and efficient wood chipping, as well as giving it greater flexibility. Capacity now exists to chip in accordance to periodic peak demands and this has also opened the option to process smaller lots on-site for local forestry growers.

Context

Based just outside Mohill in County Leitrim, McCauley Wood Fuels was formally established in 2017. The business grew out of a landscaping business set up on the McCauley family farm during the 1990s. McCauley Wood Fuels has been growing slowly and steadily since its emergence. Its development pattern has been driven by the nature of the forestry and biomass industry, which is a relatively new and slow growing industry in Ireland. This project has helped to accelerate McCauley Wood Fuels' growth and to meet increasing demand for biomass woodchip in the North-West of Ireland.

The market for wood chip has developed and grown in Ireland from 2009 and this was driven by the availability grants for the purchase of biomass or woodchip boilers, introduced by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI). Initially, there was a slow uptake in domestic wood

Project name: Biomass Supply Chain Upgrade

Date: December 2017 - May 2018

Local Action Group: Leitrim LCDC

Implementing Partner: Leitrim Development Company

Type of Beneficiary: Small Medium Enterprise (SME)

Priority & Focus Area: Theme 3: Rural Environment / Sub theme: Renewable Energy

Project Beneficiary Name/Organisation: McCauley Wood Fuels Ltd

Address: Drumard, Mohill, Co. Leitrim

Further information:
www.facebook.com/McCauleyWoodFuels



Woodchipper in operation. Image Credit: Oakleaf Forestry

chip boilers due to the difficult economic situation, but this has improved in more recent years. A significant increase in customers is expected in 2019, as a Support Scheme Renewable Heat (SSRH) has been introduced. This will support boiler installation in hotels, swimming pools, hospitals, etc. which will allow a number of smaller scale systems to be developed. This project has supported



Biomass Supply Chain Upgrade

LEADER

Community-Led Local Development



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LEADER 2014-2020

NRN CASE STUDY

McCauley Wood Fuels to be in a position to service this market when it comes on stream.

Notably, this type of business development fits into the core priorities of the Leitrim Local Development Strategy to support a dynamic and diversified rural economy in Leitrim. Their Strategy identifies a sustainable economic development opportunity through the development of renewable energy particularly from biomass supply from forestry.

Objectives

This project aimed to support McCauley Wood Fuels to invest in a larger capacity and more efficient wood chipping machine to assist:

- **Expansion of the biomass production capacity and customer base of the business, enabling further growth**
- **Development of the regions renewable wood biomass supply chain and to support the development of the forestry/biomass sector in the region**
- **Contribute to a growth in the use of local renewable biomass fuel sources reducing the need for imported fossil fuels**

Activities

In 2009, the McCauley family expanded its business activities into wood chipping. This was driven by the increasing amounts of available raw material that were not suited to firewood production. They invested in a small wood chipper which could produce wood chip of appropriate grade which are used within the landscaping business and wider agricultural sector. This small woodchipper was not suited to producing the necessary quality of wood chip for biomass heating boilers. McCauley Wood Fuels invested in a higher spec machine to enable it to serve these demands, but by 2017 this machine could no longer serve the capacity needed to meet growing demand.

A core client type of the company is larger scale users of wood biomass. The business is also connected to clients who could in future become larger clients, such as Bord na

Mona. Bord na Mona is expected to co-fire some of its plants with biomass in the north-west region of Ireland in the coming years, such as Lanesborough, Co. Longford. The existing machine was not adequate to support servicing the needs of potential new larger scale clients, such as these. The existing machine was also well-used, had significant wear and tear which led to the need for regular repairs, which had become overly burdensome and costly.

McCauley Wood Fuels began to scope out wood biomass chippers that would suit their needs. The LEADER grant provided 50% support to purchase a Kesla Oyj chipper and loader from Oakleaf Forestry. The purchase of new wood chipping equipment has enabled increased reliability, flexibility and provides capacity to meet periodic peaks in demand. It enables the production of high quality wood chip which is required for biomass heating boilers.

Part of the business ethos of McCauley Wood Fuels is building a supply chain that is linked to locally owned forestry. It is building a business by the farmer, for the farmer. Its preferred supplier of raw materials is through members of the Western Forestry Cooperative. It was established in 1985 by the dairy co-operatives in western counties in response to a need for support services for landowners considering forestry. This also helps the business to reduce transport costs by concentrating within its local region.



Woodchipper in action. Image credit Oakleaf Forestry



Biomass Supply Chain Upgrade



National Rural Network

LEADER 2014-2020 NRN CASE STUDY

Results

This project has allowed McCauley Wood Fuels to expand its client base in the North West region, including a local swimming pool, and a number of local pig and chicken farms. It has also expanded its core base of larger clients. Almost the equivalent value of the new wood chipper has been spent in the local economy in order to source raw material. For example, since January 2018 McCauley Wood Fuels has spent €105,000 on raw materials with its core supplier the Western Forestry Cooperative. Further to this, the business works with three to four local truck drivers who transport raw material to McCauley Wood Fuels for processing and two hauliers that transport material outwards.

The existence of McCauley Wood Fuels in the region also stimulates a market for wood biomass and a move away from carbon-based fuel. The company is aware of a local hotel that is considering installation of a wood fuelled biomass boiler. Without the availability of a local supply of woodchip biomass, it would not be considering this move. McCauley Wood Fuels also expects other local businesses will follow suit. Therefore, the availability of a local biomass supply chain is vital to this type of development, aiding the move away from fossil fuels. Extraordinarily, the new biomass wood chipping machine has a processing ability to displace 75,000 litres of oil per week.

The new equipment has helped to increase the profile of McCauley Wood Fuels in the forestry and biomass sector in Ireland. It is a small industry where people know each other and reputation is vitally important. McCauley Wood Fuels has developed slowly and from a very small scale. The new machine has helped to contribute to the positive reputation and growing professionalization of the business within the forestry and biomass sector.



Lessons

Growth and Development

The gradual development of McCauley Wood Fuels allowed its founders to learn about its target market, how it worked, what influenced it and the expected growth patterns. It helped the company establish its supply chain and to grow its client base. It has learned how to balance expected customer demands, stock levels, while also looking towards new client demands, industry changes and expansion.

“Funding available through the LEADER programme has been a huge support to McCauley Wood Fuels. Biomass and forestry is a developing industry in Ireland. LEADER support has facilitated the business to avail of new opportunities in this emerging, growing market. It has helped accelerate the development of McCauley Wood Fuels enabling the business to develop its supply chain, and to achieve greater scale and processing capacity”
Kenny McCauley, McCauley Wood Fuels



Biomass Supply Chain Upgrade

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LEADER 2014-2020 NRN CASE STUDY

Realistic Timeframe

The applicant felt the LEADER application process ran well and they had expected some delays along the way. However, the timeframe that the LEADER application process, final approval and payment took was longer than expected. Locally, some unforeseen delays were also experienced, such as changes in key personnel in the Local Authority which had a knock on effect in delaying key decisions. The applicant notes that having a realistic timeframe is important, but also to have patience and stick in with the process -as it has been a huge support to the business. The long timeframe did have disadvantages however. For example, the new equipment was not available to McCauley Wood Fuels until the end of the heating season, outside the time of peak production. Ideally, they would have had the new machine six months earlier. In the interim, the company had to sub-contract another machine.

LEADER support to help rural businesses to secure new markets

McCauley Wood Fuels noted the vital importance of LEADER to support new and developing businesses in newly industries in the rural economy. LEADER can assist businesses in this type of industry to become established. Especially, in new industries where market demand can be unpredictable investment can be difficult to source. LEADER support has helped to accelerate the growth of McCauley Wood Fuels and helped it to continue to take steps forward in the industry.



McCauley

WOOD FUELS



Funding

Total project budget (i)+(ii)+(iii) =	€149,668.46
+ (i) Rural Development Programme support (a)+(b)	€74,834.23
+ (a) EAFRD (EU) contribution	€46,995.90
+ (b) National / Regional contribution	€27,838.33
+ (ii) Private / Own funds	€74,834.23
+ (iii) Other funding sources	n/a

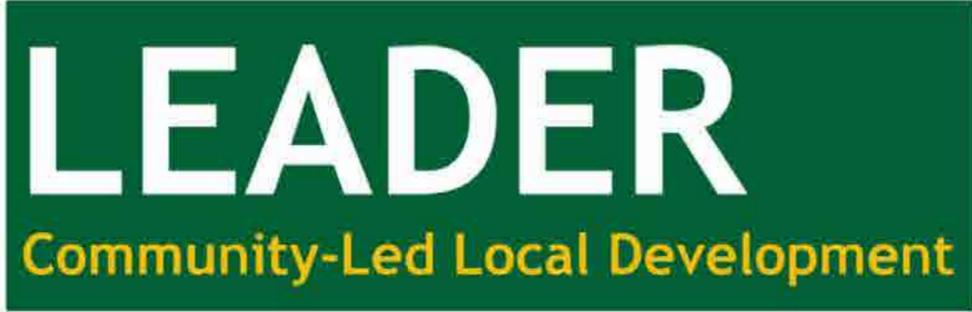
Contact details

Project beneficiary name	McCauley Wood Fuels Ltd
Contact person	Kenny McCauley
Email	mccauleywoodfuels@gmail.com
Address of beneficiary or implementing body	Drumard, Mohill, Co. Leitrim





Westport Beekeepers Equipment



WESTPORT BEEKEEPERS EQUIPMENT

Summary

Westport Beekeepers Association was established in 2010 in response to the decline in the bee population across Ireland and all over the world. Their aim is to increase interest in biodiversity by assisting and providing education and training to anybody interested in bees and beekeeping. The association now has 118 members with a strong base in Westport but this also includes members from all across the county. To keep up with this growth, this project supported the purchase of beekeeping equipment such as beekeeping suits and accessories, as well as new and a variety of different hives for training purposes.

Context

Westport Beekeepers Association has been up and running for a number of years with a growing membership base. The association meets once a month and runs a number of courses on the different aspects of beekeeping as well as practical training. The association also hosts a number of invited speakers on a range of different aspects of beekeeping including topics such as preparing for winter, spring management of hives, swarm control, queen rearing and disease control and it regularly interacts with other beekeeping associations in Mayo, such as those in Ballina, Ballyhaunis and Erris, in this regard.

The Association's approach is that people learn best by 'doing' and they provide the opportunity for 'doing' in their Training Apiary. Notably, getting involved in beekeeping and raising bees can be quite a costly investment considering the cost of hives, bees, specialised equipment

Project name: Westport Beekeepers Equipment

Date: November 2018 - June 2019

Local Action Group: Mayo LCDC

Implementing Partner: South West Mayo Development Company CLG

Type of Beneficiary: Non-profit, Non-governmental organisation

Priority & Focus Area: Theme 3: Rural Environment / Sub theme: Local Biodiversity

Project Beneficiary Name/Organisation: Westport Beekeepers Association

Address: Newport Road, Westport, Co. Mayo

Further information: www.wbkc.info



Members of the Association at the National Tidy Towns Conference 2017
Source: Westport Beekeepers Association



Westport Beekeepers Equipment

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and protective clothing. Therefore, the training apiary allows their members to trial all these aspects before investing as well as helping members develop the key skills they require to rear their own bees. The Association insists that all members sit a preliminary exam with them before they acquire their own hives.

"The support from the Association is very important when starting out" *Mary Munroe, Treasurer of Westport Beekeepers Association*



A Swarm of Bees - Source: Westport Beekeepers Association

While the training apiary has been very successful over the years, to properly utilise the asset, it required a number of new pieces of equipment and some new and a wider variety of hives so that members can get better training and more experience with a variety of hives.

upgrade and maintain their training apiary, specifically a variety of new hives to include National, the CDB Congested Districts Board (CDB) hive, widely used in the West of Ireland due to more adverse weather conditions, and Top Bar hives. The Top Bar is not the most common however; it can be suitable for people with back problems or people who find Supers too heavy to lift when full of honey. The application also included the need for the purchase of 'Nucs', or half sized hives, which are used for nurturing new colonies of bees which the Association then sells to members. While the Association is not interested in production of honey 'per se', it is beneficial to members to see how to extract honey and therefore the Association decided to purchase an extractor which they now make available to members to borrow as it would not be economically viable for them to purchase.



Visit to apiary during summer 2019 with new hives and equipment in use - Source: Westport Beekeepers Association

Objectives

- To maintain and update beekeeping equipment
- Provide a variety of new hives for beekeeper training and education purposes at the association's apiary in Knappagh, Westport, Co. Mayo

Activities

As the previous committee had submitted an application to LEADER, some members had previous experience of the application process. Therefore, first and foremost, the current committee got together to draw up a 'wishlist' of items that they required support for to write into their application. The application included a number of items to

Protective clothing is a necessity when going into an apiary and therefore the Association required these for the members for safety purposes and also to allow them to trial the different types of suits before investing in their own. Other 'hardware' items included a trough and barrel which were required for harvesting water, for mixing sugar and water; linseed oil and 'Fencelife' to paint onto hives for protection and some toolboxes to store smaller items of equipment- as well as a gas torch used to 'roughen' the interior of the new hives. The application also included the purchase of a laptop and printer to support their outreach



Westport Beekeepers Equipment



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training programmes and also their in-house training and association meetings.

The Association maintained regular contact with the South West Mayo Development Company who helped to guide and give them regular feedback throughout the LEADER application process.

Results

This investment in new equipment has resulted in more satisfied members as this allows them to gain more hands-on beekeeping experience. Following the purchase of the new beekeeping equipment, the Association ran their Beginners Course in April 2019 followed by practical exam in the apiary. The new suits that were part funded by LEADER allowed members to do their practical exams and training safely. This also allowed them to trial different styles of suits and other equipment, such as hives, before purchasing their own which can cost anywhere in the region of €300 for a hive and €80-€100 for a suit, (plus the additional cost of purchasing the bees).



Newly purchased hives in the training apiary
Source: Westport Beekeepers Association

New hive tools dedicated to the club apiary are now in use only for this apiary which helps to avoid the spread of disease. Apiary managers and committee members have

held a number of apiary visits over the summer in which current and prospective club members can attend to view the upgraded facilities. The newly purchased 'Nucs' were used to house new bee colonies which were then sold to club members and the new extractor will be used to demonstrate how to harvest honey. Overall, this project has increased pollination, continued food production, as well as helping to produce local honey and wax products and indeed resulted in happier beekeepers!

"Wouldn't have taken the chance to get into beekeeping without this experience" Member of Westport Beekeepers Association

Lessons

Deciding on what to include in your application

The Association recommends that groups applying for LEADER funding allow for plenty of discussion amongst all members regarding what the project should be about and what is needed or should be included in the application. They state that the creation of a 'wish list' should be an iterative process whereby everything mentioned should be included and this should be revised to cut it back to what is really necessary.

Funding

Total project budget (i)+(ii)+(iii) =	€8,339.19
+ (i) Rural Development Programme support (a)+(b)	€6,254.39
+ (a) EAFRD (EU) contribution	€3,927.76
+ (b) National / Regional contribution	€2,326.63
+ (ii) Private / Own funds-Subscriptions & Fundraisers	€2,084.80
+ (iii) Other funding sources	n/a

Contact details

Project beneficiary name	Westport Beekeepers Association
Contact person	Secretary - Monica
Email	secretarywbka@gmail.com
Address of beneficiary or implementing body	Newport Road, Westport, Co. Mayo



Meath River Rescue Equipment Upgrade

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MEATH RIVER RESCUE EQUIPMENT UPGRADE

Summary

Meath River Rescue Search and Recovery provide a very specialised and important voluntary service within their community of Navan. Set up in 1996, the organisation has grown and expanded its capacity over the years largely due to the help of LEADER funding. This particular project has facilitated the organisation to upgrade their equipment to allow them to carry out their life saving and life-altering search and recovery activities with up to spec equipment which allows them to deliver a more efficient, quicker service in a safe manner for their volunteers.

Context

Meath River Rescue Service is a voluntary organisation that was created in 1996 with just a handful of volunteers. The organisation was set up in order to provide a river search and rescue service across county Meath and in the adjacent counties. The demand for their services has grown year on year. The organisation is based in Navan and it operates out of a facility that was part funded by LEADER during the 2007-2014 programme. This funding, along with private funds raised on the ground, was used for a substantial project in the region of €400,000 to build and equip a boathouse where they could store their boats and equipment adjacent to the river, allowing for a better, quicker service and response time. This has facilitated the organisation to grow substantially and today it has five divers, two trained counsellors, and all members have first aid and swift water training. The equipment the service has includes seven boats, four vehicles, three jeeps and a van.

Project name: Meath River Rescue Equipment Upgrade

Date: April 2018 - May 2019

Local Action Group: Meath LCDC

Implementing Partner: Meath Partnership

Type of Beneficiary: Voluntary Registered Charity

Priority & Focus Area: Theme 3: Rural Environment /Sub theme: Water Resources

Project Beneficiary Name/Organisation: Meath River Rescue Service

Address: Meath River Rescue Search & Recovery, Beechmont Home Park, Beechmount, Navan Co. Meath

Further information:

www.meathriverrescue.ie





Meath River Rescue Equipment Upgrade

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Getting ready to launch: Source - Meath River Rescue

this project they carried out fundraising on the ground by going collecting donations from different households in the area and by having church gate collections.

“Without Meath Partnership, we wouldn’t exist”
Christopher Rennicks, Chairperson Meath River Rescue

As this was their second time applying for LEADER funding, the organisation was well familiar with the application process and organised the necessary paperwork ready to support their application. They then approached Meath Partnership and started the process.

Results

This project helped to support the purchase of 6 new safety suits and 3 new engines. These new engines that were purchased have push start buttons. The older engines that the organisation use are pull cord engines. The push start engines allow the rescue team to have a quicker more efficient start, especially in emergency situations. These new engines allow them to experience less delays that are habitual with pull cord engines, allowing them to provide a more efficient and quicker service.

This particular project was needed in order to update and maintain the equipment which has become degraded due to wear and tear over time. Conducting numerous search and rescue operations and even training can cause damage and wear on survival suits and engines as many of the riverbeds have objects in them which can cause snags and damage to diving gear and engines. Also, each suit is specialised and is custom made for each diver. This funding was used to buy six new custom-made survival suits and 3 new engines. This was to allow Meath River Rescue to keep delivering a high-quality rescue and recovery service, as well as ensuring the safety and effectiveness of the rescue team volunteers when carrying out their operations.

Objectives

- To upgrade and provide up to date equipment to allow the rescue team and volunteers to carry out their manoeuvres safely and successfully, in line with health and safety requirements, and to do so at greater capacity.

Activities

As LEADER provides up to 75% of funding for projects the organisation had to come up with the last part of the funds for this project. Fundraising is a normal part of the financing of this organisation, and as noted by their Chairperson, an area which they have been very well supported locally. For



3 new push start engines- Source: Meath Partnership



Meath River Rescue Equipment Upgrade



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The purchase of the 6 new custom-made safety suits allows the diving team to carry out searches with good quality and safe equipment. Having up to spec safety suits allows them to conduct their jobs with minimal risk to themselves and with the best equipment that meets health and safety requirements.



New Custom-Made Safety Suits – Source: Meath Partnership

Lessons

Integration with Meath Partnership

Without their relationship and integration with Meath Partnership, the Meath River Rescue Service would not be in the position it is today. They have built up a relationship with Meath Partnership that has been instrumental to their growth and development. Meath Partnership have helped to guide them through the LEADER application process on two occasions and this has been instrumental to their success. However, Meath River Rescue noted that there is a lot of behind the scenes organisation of paperwork that is required to be successful, and although particularly laborious, especially for first time applicants, it is both essential and achievable especially with guidance from your local action group.

“If you don’t have the right paperwork, you won’t get the grant”

Christopher Rennicks, Meath River Rescue Chairperson



Local support and Volunteers

Meath River Rescue rely heavily on local support and the involvement of volunteers to sustain the organisation. Fundraising is a continual activity to maintain and upkeep the boats, engines and equipment. The LEADER application process, as with any public body funding received, can be slow, and given the lifesaving service this organisation provides, equipment has to be up to standard and ready to go. Therefore, they require a lot of their own funds to maintain their crucial service. It is a combination of local voluntary work and contributions and LEADER funds that helps to sustain an excellent Meath River Rescue service and organisation.

Funding

Total project budget (i)+(ii)+(iii) =	€21,111.51
+ (i) Rural Development Programme support (a)+(b)	€15,832.53
+ (a) EAFRD (EU) contribution	€9,942.83
+ (b) National / Regional contribution	€5,889.70
+ (ii) Private / Own funds	€5,278.98
+ (iii) Other funding sources	n/a

Contact details

Project beneficiary name	Meath River Rescue Service
Contact person	Christopher Rennicks
Email	meathriverrescue@live.ie
Address of beneficiary or implementing body	Meath River Rescue Search & Recovery, Beechmont Home Park, Beechmont, Navan Co. Meath



Coastal Explorers Programme

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COASTAL EXPLORERS PROGRAMME

Summary

The Inishowen Basking Shark Study Group (IBSSG) is a member of the wider Irish Basking Shark Project (IBSP) which is an amalgamation of researchers who are regionally based and aim to educate the public on marine life in Irish waters, with a particular focus on basking sharks. This project supported the IBSSG to develop an Inishowen based 'Coastal Explorers Programme' for the youth of Inishowen using the Newfoundland (Canada) Coastal Explorer Programme as inspiration. This programme aimed to engage and inform the youth about the unique coastal heritage that the Inishowen Peninsula has to offer by helping them to develop a range of personal development and maritime based scientific knowledge and skills.

Context

The IBSP is made up of a number of researchers who are environmentalists, marine biologists and conservationists who aim to raise awareness of marine life and basking sharks in Irish waters. Outreach and education initiatives and programmes in the community form a core part of their work in raising awareness. The IBSSG is one of the key and most active members of the group and they operate in the Inishowen Peninsula. In developing this programme, the IBSSG felt that many activities and training are often targeted at disadvantaged groups and do not cater to those who are interested in marine biology and are contemplating it as a career choice. This project came about as a result of demand from the youth in the community who were interested in pursuing a career in marine biology and

Project name: Coastal Explorers Programme

Date: February 2018 - October 2018

Local Action Group: Donegal LCDC

Implementing Partner: Inishowen Development Partnership

Type of Beneficiary: Voluntary Group

Priority & Focus Area: Theme 3: Rural Environment Sub theme: Protection & Improvement of Water Resources

Project Beneficiary Name/Organisation: Inishowen Basking Shark Study Group

Address: Inishowen, Co. Donegal

Further information:

www.baskingshark.ie/coastalexplorers2



Group of participants on the Coastal Explorers Programme - Source: IBSSG



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related industries but had little knowledge or practical experience of the sector. Therefore, this project aimed to give the young people on the peninsula experience of the best scientific equipment, training and knowledge available in the marine biology sector, while also developing their awareness about the career opportunities it can harbor. The programme was developed with two strands in mind, primarily a focus on the scientific and practical side of marine biology and also a focus on personal development skills such as leadership, communication and teamwork.

eligible for 100% funding and there would not be a requirement to provide match funding.

“To get the match funding, that was always our greatest challenge, because you have to show it as cash in your organisation and... any money that’s coming in, that’s usually from our own pockets. We don’t go looking for money or we are not part of a wider organisation that gets funding from any state bodies”

Coordinator IBSSG, Emmet Johnson



Participants at sea conducting surveys - Source IBSSG

Objectives

- **To engage and inspire young people aged 14-17 from the Inishowen Peninsula to explore and learn more about their local marine environment and heritage.**

Activities

The IBSSG already had a relationship with Inishowen Development Partnership (IDP) because they were applicants to previous LEADER programmes for outreach and education initiatives that they ran in local national schools and summer camps. They made contact with IDP to see if the Coastal Explorers Programme would be something that they were willing to fund and if it fit into the current LEADER Programme criteria. The IDP suggested that the IBSSG should apply for funding under the ‘training’ aspect of the LEADER programme, meaning they would be

The IBSSG were informed that if funding was to be given under training that they needed to establish a need for this training and provide evidence that people were interested in engaging with it. The IBSSG decided to carry out a consultation exercise to gather this information and the training provider, Blue Connections, designed this for the IBSSG on a voluntary basis prior to any funding or project approval. This exercise involved the IBSSG going to all the local secondary schools, mainly in the Inishowen area, to conduct the exercise to establish a need. They also used this opportunity to tailor the training based on the interests of the youths of Inishowen and showed them videos and other resources to show them the work the IBSSG are involved in. They also ran a series of breakout sessions to discuss interest in marine biology and to assess from the student’s perspective what skills they believe people in the sector require and what aspects would they like to see included if there was to be a training programme.

“A participative approach to design was key to the success of this training programme. Engaging with young people in the local area to gain their ideas on design and what was important to them gave the trainees a sense of ownership” *RoseMary McCloskey, Blue Connections*





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Participants taking part in a beach clean - Source: IBSSG

The IBSSG generated a report based on the information and feedback from these workshop days which helped to support their LEADER application and helped to structure the Coastal Explorers Programme based on ideas they had already developed. This exercise led to them putting a lot more focus on the practical experience out at sea, as many had students had revealed they had little or no experience out on the Inishowen Peninsula.

'Blue Connections', the training provider who has vast experience in Marine Biology and delivering training programmes in this field, developed the materials in collaboration with members of the IBSSG and were responsible for delivering this comprehensive training with help from members of the IBSSG. Much of this work was conducted by Blue Connections prior to project approval to ensure that the programme was ready to be delivered in the Spring, so this relationship between the training provider and the IBSSG proved significant in ensuring the programme was tailored to what participants and the IBSSG wanted and within the timeframe.

First and foremost, a recruitment campaign was launched and the programme was widely advertised in local schools, newspapers, radio stations, social media, community centers and local shops. The process involved an application and interview in order to recruit participants

who were the most engaged. The IBSSG received over 80 applications, but only had 20 spaces.

"Conducting informal interviews meant that young people valued their place on the training programme"

RoseMary McCloskey, Blue Connections

The course ran every week from February to April on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Wednesday evenings focused on more personal development activities and this was delivered mainly by a professional trainer. On this first Wednesday, participants were asked to develop their 'development learning plans'. These plans detailed their skills and interests and what they hoped to learn and achieve from the course. Saturdays involved more practical work out in the field which built on the learnings from the Wednesday teachings e.g. teamwork skills. The practical skills started out from more land-based studies such as river ecology and beach cleans onto sea based activities such as kayaking and surveying, depending on the weather.

"Teaching personal development skills alongside marine skills was critical for the age group of the trainees, and helped trainees recognise their progression"

RoseMary McCloskey, Blue Connections



Participants out on the Inishowen Peninsula - Source: IBSSG



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Overall, some of the aspects which participants engaged in included taking on the role of citizen scientists by engaging in practical discoveries such as wildlife and habitat surveying, identifying species, environmental sampling, developing practical marine conservation projects, data analysis and basic marine safety and boat skills. Participants shared their findings and learnings with each other via assignments and presentations at the Wednesday sessions. At the end of the course, an accumulation of their work was showcased at a 'takeover' event for the public, involving presentations on their learnings and each student was awarded with a certificate on the evening.



Learning about the river ecology on the Inishowen Peninsula
Source- IBSSG

Additional to this the IBSSG took a further 10 students from the original 20 to do a full week summer internship called 'Sea Science' which involved a more intensive and higher level of knowledge and practical skills. This involved trainees spending much of the week at sea on a host of different vessels and trainees received an RYA Level 1 accreditation in powerboating (learning how to drive, handle powerboats and approach a buoy safely). Furthermore, the trainees also spent an overnight on the 'Brian Boru' sail training vessel working on their skills and collecting data.

"We got a huge amount out of it ourselves, it's really rewarding, satisfying, and even now I meet people and the feedback is still great from the youngsters themselves and their parents"

Coordinator IBSSG, Emmet Johnson

Results

As part of the course, the participants set out what they hoped to achieve at the beginning and their level of knowledge going into the course. The trainer, Blue Connections, carried out full monitoring and evaluation activities to capture learnings from the course participants. Nearly all (95.5%) of the trainees completed the course and had full attendance over the entire course with the exception of one person who could not complete the course for personal reasons.

"Thoroughly enjoyed it from the Wednesday sessions to the more practical elements. It was all very good and well taught, and I do feel I've learned a lot about myself and what I am capable of and about marine biology and the sea"

Odhran - Programme Participant



Data collection out at sea- Source: IBSSG

Based on the evaluations it was clear that there was a significant increase in knowledge, awareness and



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appreciation of the local marine environment and biodiversity in the surrounding area. This has also helped participants to develop more pride and association with their local area and where they live. Not only this but personal development skills such as problem solving, communication and leadership were also key features. The IBSSG felt that the longer-term nature of the course, run over a few weeks, allowed participants to greatly develop these skills and form relationships within the group and with the volunteers of the IBSSG.

While other participants have gone into related industries such as the fisheries.

"I met a fella the other day and he's now a fulltime fisherman, and he had been on the course and we had a good chat and it was great, now he's a more informed fisherman"

Coordinator IBSSG, Emmet Johnson

"It was great fun. I learned a lot about marine biology. I made amazing friends and loved it so much. I became confident and learned lots of new skills"

Sadhbh - Programme Participant



Essentially, this course has given them more practical knowledge as they go forward and hopefully makes them more informed within their marine related roles.



Participants taking surfing lessons as part of the programme - Source: IBSSG

Some participants have gone on to study Marine Biology at college.

"Quite a few of them have gone on to study Marine Biology at University which has been a real positive development from it"

Coordinator IBSSG, Emmet Johnson

Lessons

Administrative Process and Timeline

The IBSSG is a voluntary group, who do not hire any staff, administrative or otherwise. The LEADER application process can be quite laborious and requires a lot of time and dedication which was all done on a voluntary basis. Timelines can also be quite long, from the expression of interest stage to each of the steps including the tender process, insurance and so the IBSSG stated that it is important to leave a sufficient amount of time for the application process if you have a project timeline in mind. The IBSSG were lucky to have such a strong relationship with Blue Connections, the training provider, who began organizing materials prior to project approval to ensure the programme could get up and running once the approval came through.

"If you wanted to deliver [a project] or you had a certain timeline, you need to be mindful of that"

Coordinator IBSSG, Emmet Johnson



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Participants taking to the waves on the Inishowen Peninsula - Source: IBSSG



One participant learning about the local marine life - Source: IBSSG

Operating Finance

This project processed their funding in 3 phased payments as it was required that they have one third of the funding in the bank to go ahead with the process. The group tried to access a community funding loan to provide bridge financing, as they are a voluntary non-profit group. However, they were advised that their money was too small and they didn't have any assets to act as collateral. In the end, it was one of the members who provided the bridge financing for the project to proceed.

"We were very lucky to be in that position, but I couldn't see many other groups being in that position. So, it's an issue that you need to have addressed right at the very start"

Coordinator IBSSG, Emmet Johnston



Funding

Total project budget (i)+(ii)+(iii) =	€47,550.00
+ (i) Rural Development Programme support (a)+(b)	€47,550.00
+ (a) EAFRD (EU) contribution	€29,861.40
+ (b) National / Regional contribution	€17,688.60
+ (ii) Private / Own funds	€ n/a
+ (iii) Other funding sources	€ n/a

Contact details

Project beneficiary name	Inishowen Basking Shark Study Group
Contact person	Emmet Johnston
Email	emmett@nature.ie
Address of beneficiary or implementing body	Inishowen, Co. Donegal



Oola Tidy Towns Village Enhancement Plan

Local Action Group	Limerick LCDC
Implementing Partner	Ballyhoura Development CLG
Project Name	Oola Tidy Towns Village Enhancement Plan
Promoter Name	Oola Tidy Towns Group
Address	Main Street, Oola, Co. Limerick
LEADER Theme	Rural Environment
LEADER Sub-theme	Local Biodiversity
LEADER Grant Amount	€14,261.62



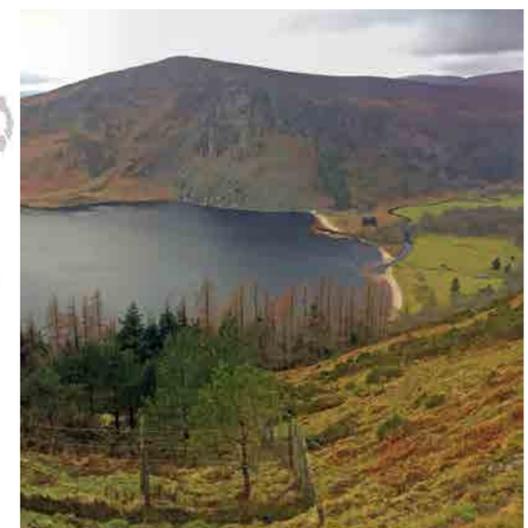
Project Overview

This project is based on recommendations derived from the 2016 Oola Tidy Towns Group 'Village Enhancement Plan' which aimed to enhance Oola village from both an environmental and aesthetic perspective by creating a biodiverse environment for native flora and fauna on the N24 roadside on both Oola village approaches from counties Tipperary and Limerick. The LEADER Programme supported the initial clearance of the area, followed by the planting of derelict public land on the roadside margins with appropriate native trees, shrubs and flowers. Such measures will impact positively on the environmental sustainability and visual presentation of the locality.



Wicklow Way Partnership - Trails Inspection Template

Local Action Group	Wicklow LCDC
Implementing Partner	County Wicklow Partnership
Project Name	Trails Inspection Template
Promoter Name	County Wicklow Partnership
Address	3rd Floor, Avoca River House, Bridgewater Centre, Arklow, Co. Wicklow.
LEADER Theme	Rural Environment
LEADER Sub-theme	Local Biodiversity
LEADER Grant Amount	€14,878.08



Project Overview

The Wicklow Way Partnership have developed an inspection template for owners and managers of recreation trails in Wicklow to ensure consistent quality and promote biodiversity across all trails in the county. Waymarked trails in Wicklow are currently under the ownership and responsibility of a wide variety of individuals and groups, each of which has a different inspection regime. The LEADER Programme supported the development of a set standard and common approach for the inspection of different recreation trails. It is envisioned that a unanimous inspection regime for the entire Wicklow Way will be established as a result of this project, followed by Wicklow's other waymarked trails.



Louth Village Biodiversity Plan

Local Action Group	Louth LCDC
Implementing Partner	Louth Leader Partnership
Project Name	Louth Village Biodiversity Plan
Promoter Name	Louth Village Tidy Towns
Address	Tullycahan, Louth, Co. Louth
LEADER Theme	Rural Environment
LEADER Sub-theme	Local Biodiversity
LEADER Grant Amount	€3,265.65



Project Overview

The LEADER Programme provided financial support to hire a suitably qualified professional to aid in the development of a sustainable biodiversity plan for Louth Village. This plan highlights actions, as well as potential project ideas that can be implemented in Louth Village. It also includes budget costings for project implementation. Findings from the biodiversity plan also lay the groundwork to further enhance the biodiversity and visual appearance of Louth Village, and to showcase the town as a possible tourist attraction, in an effort to benefit the local economy of the area.



Inch Island Wetland Biodiversity Project

Local Action Group	Donegal LCDC
Implementing Partner	Inishowen Development Partnership
Project Name	Inch Island Wetland Biodiversity Project
Promoter Name	Inch Gun Club
Address	Strahack Farm, Inch Island, Co. Donegal
LEADER Theme	Rural Environment
LEADER Sub-theme	Local Biodiversity
LEADER Grant Amount	€2,363.85



Project Overview

Inch Gun club, formed in 1970, is a strong local community organisation which has led the way on several conservation projects since its establishment. This project aimed to increase and enhance the biodiversity on Inch Island through the rejuvenation of three existing wetland habitats that had become encroached with vegetation. This encroachment has resulted in a loss of available habitat for endangered wetland species such as the Newt, Common Frog, Leislier Bat as well as resident and overwintering Wildfowl. The LEADER Programme supported the careful clearance of mature bush vegetation using mechanical and manual methods. The approach employed is in line with the standard recognised method for the preservation and enhancement of wetland sites.



Cool Planet Experience

Local Action Group	Wicklow LCDC
Implementing Partner	County Wicklow Partnership
Project Name	Cool Planet Experience (CPS)
Promoter Name	Centre for Climate Change
Address	Powerscourt Estate, Enniskerry, Co. Wicklow
LEADER Theme	Rural Environment
LEADER Sub-theme	Local Biodiversity
LEADER Grant Amount	€17,831.25



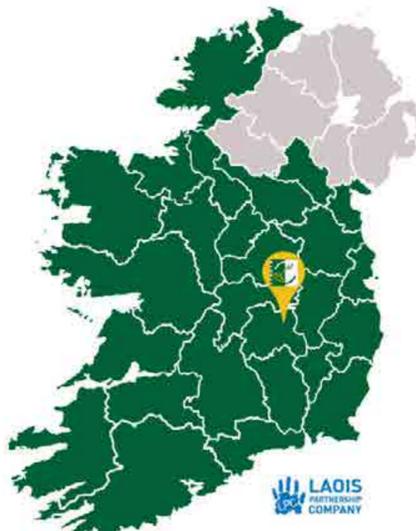
Project Overview

The Cool Planet Experience (CPE) is the first public visitor experience on climate change in Ireland. The CPE aims to educate and engage the public on the causes and impacts of climate change and to inform the public on what they can do to mitigate against it. It does so by providing an interactive experience based in the Powerscourt Estate. The LEADER Programme supported the CPE by funding the purchase of a movable dome which has allowed them to expand their operations from their existing building in which they had limited space. This dome can now facilitate a number of meetings and workshops, and as it is portable, the dome can also be used in other locations.



Meadow Maintenance - Irish Wildlife Trust Laois/Offaly Branch

Local Action Group	Laois LCDC
Implementing Partner	Laois Partnership Company
Project Name	Purchase of Meadow Maintenance Equipment and Machinery
Promoter Name	The Irish Wildlife Trust Laois/Offaly Branch
Address	5 Laurel Court, Dublin Road, Portlaoise, Co.Laois
LEADER Theme	Rural Environment
LEADER Sub-theme	Local Biodiversity
LEADER Grant Amount	€8,558.03



Project Overview

The Irish Wildlife Trust Laois/Offaly Branch is a voluntary organisation set up in 2013 that aims to promote wildlife and habitat conservation within the locality as well as the positive use and enjoyment of natural heritage within Laois and Offaly. The LEADER Programme supported the purchase of equipment and machinery to enable the organisation to successfully establish and manage wildflower meadows in the county, in partnership with local community groups. This equipment also allows for the harvest of local wildflower seed to use on these meadows, which will help increase the diversity of species within them using Irish native species. Such measures will help to deliver on the National Pollinator Plan and will also be of assistance to Tidy Towns groups in the area.



Ballyboughal Environmental Workshop Series

Local Action Group	Dublin Rural LEADER
Implementing Partner	Fingal LEADER Partnership
Project Name	Ballyboughal Environmental Workshop Series
Promoter Name	Ballyboughal Hedgerow Society
Address	Richardstown, Ballyboughal, Co. Dublin
LEADER Theme	Rural Environment
LEADER Sub-theme	Local Biodiversity
LEADER Grant Amount	€2,923.63



Project Overview

The LEADER Programme supported ten environmental workshops which were held to help promote and preserve Ballyboughal's unique hedgerow landscape. These workshops took place over the course of a year and covered topics such as bushcraft, biodiversity, hedge laying and foraging. These events aimed to promote the sustainable use of hedgerows and protect the wildlife that inhabit them by teaching the local community about the structures and life cycles within their surrounding hedgerows. Such measures may also help also foster increased rural tourism in the Ballyboughal area, ultimately benefiting the region as a whole.



Village and Environmental Design Plans

Local Action Group	Cork North LCDC
Implementing Partner	Avondhu Blackwater Partnership CLG
Project Name	Village and Environmental Design Plans
Promoter Name	Avondhu Blackwater Partnership CLG
Address	The Mill, Castletownroche, Co. Cork
LEADER Theme	Rural Environment
LEADER Sub-theme	Local Biodiversity
LEADER Grant Amount	€19,800.00



Project Overview

The LEADER Programme supported four villages in Co. Cork to develop their own bespoke Village and Environmental Design Plans for their communities. These plans helped communities realise their potential and assisted them to prepare their service and environmental needs for the growing populations, based on community members decisions. Rathcormac is one of the villages involved that developed their Village and Environmental Design Plan over several months in conjunction with the Rathcormac community, the Avondhu Blackwater Partnership, UCC's Planning and Research Unit and Cork County Council among other various state agencies. This work culminated with the completion of a village and area enhancement plan for the wider Rathcormac area.



EuroBlue Limited

Local Action Group	Wexford LCDC
Implementing Partner	Wexford Local Development
Project Name	EuroBlue Limited
Promoter Name	EuroBlue Limited
Address	Ballybrennan, Clonroche, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford
LEADER Theme	Rural Environment
LEADER Sub-theme	Renewable Energy
LEADER Grant Amount	€193,362.80 (2 Separate Projects - €92,000.00 & €101,362.80)



Project Overview

EuroBlue is an Irish owned business in Wexford that specialises in developing AdBlue solutions. AdBlue is made from urea and is used to reduce emissions from diesel vehicles including commercial vehicles, buses, farm and construction vehicles, as well as everyday passenger cars. The AdBlue solution is placed in a separate tank to the fuel and is filtered in to help reduce the amount of Nitrous Oxides being produced, thereby reducing the amount of pollution entering the atmosphere. LEADER funding was sought via two separate projects to increase Euroblue's production capacity, increase production efficiencies and also to alter their distribution network of AdBlue from mostly plastic containers to a pump system in filling stations similar to the current fuel pump system.



Straw Pelleting Facility

Local Action Group	Kildare LCDC
Implementing Partner	County Kildare LEADER Partnership
Project Name	Straw Pelleting Facility
Promoter Name	Straw Chip Ltd.
Address	Ballycullane, Athy, Co. Kildare
LEADER Theme	Rural Environment
LEADER Sub-theme	Renewable Energy
LEADER Grant Amount	€105,000.00



Project Overview

Straw Chip Ltd is based in Co. Kildare and is a family farm run operation that has been engaged in the tillage sector for many years, supplying straw. They have developed a product that takes the dust particles and waste residues of straw to bind them together into a highly absorbent product called Straw Chip that can be used for bedding and feeding of animals. Straw Chip has mainly been used by the poultry, dairy, equine sectors as well as for small animals. The LEADER Programme supported Straw Chip Ltd to expand their processing capacity to develop pellet like 'straw cubes' that can be used in biomass heating appliances in domestic, commercial and industrial sectors.



Installation of Heat Recovery Units - Hotel Doolin Events Barn

Local Action Group	Clare Local Development Company
Implementing Partner	Clare Local Development Company
Project Name	Installation of Heat Recovery Units - Hotel Doolin Events Barn
Promoter Name	Hotel Doolin
Address	Hotel Doolin, Doolin, Co. Clare
LEADER Theme	Rural Environment
LEADER Sub-theme	Renewable Energy
LEADER Grant Amount	€29,700.00



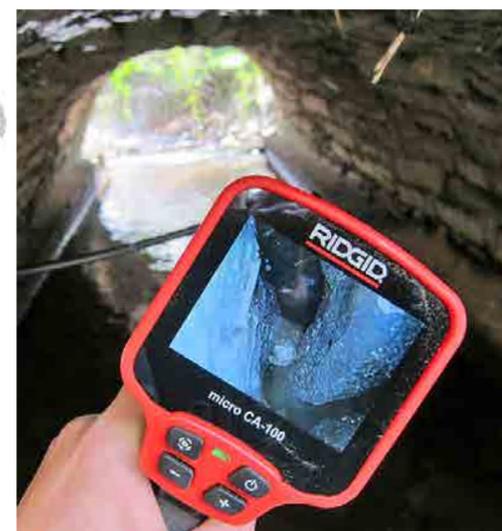
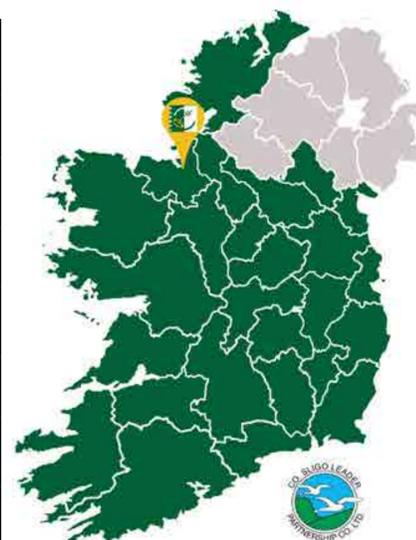
Project Overview

LEADER supported the establishment of a renewable energy heating system in the Wedding Barn at Hotel Doolin. This barn is a first for Doolin Village in Co. Clare, and bridges the traditions of a utilitarian building enclosing a courtyard and the modern needs of a low energy contemporary wedding venue. 9 Daikin Ducted Indoor Units connected to 3 Outdoor Units were installed as part of this project. Each Indoor Unit has a cooling capacity of 6kw and a heating capacity of 7kw. This energy efficient form of heating at the Wedding Barn has a coefficient of performance (COP) of 4.5. In other words, for every 1 kw of electrical power consumed it provides 4.5kw of heating. This efficiency significantly exceeds any other type of electric heating and is far more efficient than oil or gas.



Bat Survey Equipment

Local Action Group	Sligo LCDC
Implementing Partner	Sligo LEADER Partnership Company Ltd
Project Name	Bat Survey Equipment
Promoter Name	Woodrow Sustainable Solutions Ltd
Address	Woodrow Environmental, Main Street, Ballisodare, Co. Sligo
LEADER Theme	Rural Environment
LEADER Sub-theme	Renewable Energy
LEADER Grant Amount	€11,321.10



Project Overview

Woodrow Sustainable Solution Ltd forms a part of an Environmental Consultancy that was set up in 2004. They offer a wide range of services across environmental subjects including ecology, energy, sustainable construction, environmental education, training, and policy advice. In the wider aspects of environmental sustainability, they specialise in areas such as green building, energy efficiency and environmental auditing such as conducting bat surveys. Bat surveys are often undertaken to establish if bats are present before demolishing a building or before building in certain areas. The LEADER Programme supported Woodrow Consultants to upgrade their current equipment and to purchase new equipment for carrying out bat surveys.



Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF)

Local Action Group	Kilkenny LEADER Partnership
Implementing Partner	Kilkenny LEADER Partnership
Project Name	Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF)
Promoter Name	Eamon Mansfield
Address	Skehana, Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny
LEADER Theme	Rural Environment
LEADER Sub-theme	Renewable Energy
LEADER Grant Amount	€15,221.25



Project Overview

This LEADER project supported the purchase of a small scale, light weight tracked forestry machine to determine if a viable income can be generated from a Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF) plantation on sensitive upland soils of the Castlecomer Plateau, in Co. Kilkenny. This CCF could potentially deliver an output of 28 tonnes per week of thinning material from the roadside plantations. This project also demonstrated a working model of how to mobilise increased timber output from small/mid-sized plantations and/or inaccessible sites. It also illustrated the machine's suitability in facilitating the conversion of small/mid-sized private forestry plantations from 'Clearfell Management' to CCF. Results from this project also have a wider application for hardwood plantations regionally.



Surveillance of Harmful Blue-green Algae in Lough Derg

Local Action Group	Tipperary LCDC
Implementing Partner	North Tipperary LEADER Partnership
Project Name	Surveillance of harmful blue-green algae in Lough Derg
Promoter Name	Lough Derg Science Group
Address	Castlough, Portroe, Co. Tipperary
LEADER Theme	Rural Environment
LEADER Sub-theme	Water Resources
LEADER Grant Amount	€6,405.32



Project Overview

The LEADER Programme supported a study on the ecosystems of Lough Derg and its surrounding areas. Exploring its diversity, variability and controlling mechanisms, the study addressed environmental, social and socio-economic issues affecting Lough Derg, its natural resources, amenities and users. The project planned to stimulate an interest in the natural features of freshwater environments, and in the methods used to study them. Relevant agencies, organisations and the general public were also informed and advised of the problems affecting Lough Derg as part of this project.



Moneygall Community Garden

Local Action Group	Offaly LCDC
Implementing Partner	Offaly Local Development Company
Project Name	Moneygall Community Garden
Promoter Name	Moneygall Community Garden
Address	5 Rathcarn, Moneygall, Birr, Co. Offaly
LEADER Theme	Rural Environment
LEADER Sub-theme	Water Resources
LEADER Grant Amount	€7,064.37



Project Overview

The Moneygall Community Garden, opened in May 2019, was built in response to objectives set out in a Local Development Plan that identified the need to develop and sustain a garden and market space that makes the production and consumption of local food the norm for the local community. A large range of fruit and vegetables are now grown in the garden, and are then sold directly from the garden as well as from the local Cottage Market and local shops. The Garden Committee also run classes to educate people on growing their own vegetables and on other gardening elements such as composting. LEADER supported the purchase of a solar photovoltaic system, a rainwater harvesting system and an irrigation system to help maintain and water the fruit and vegetables.



Study of In-Stream Biodiversity and the Status of Crayfish & Otters in the Maigue Catchment

Local Action Group	Limerick LCDC
Implementing Partner	Ballyhoura Development CLG
Project Name	Study of In-Stream Biodiversity and the Status of Crayfish and Otters in the Maigue Catchment
Promoter Name	The Maigue Rivers Trust
Address	Kilfinane, Co. Limerick
LEADER Theme	Rural Environment
LEADER Sub-theme	Water Resources
LEADER Grant Amount	€15,940.80



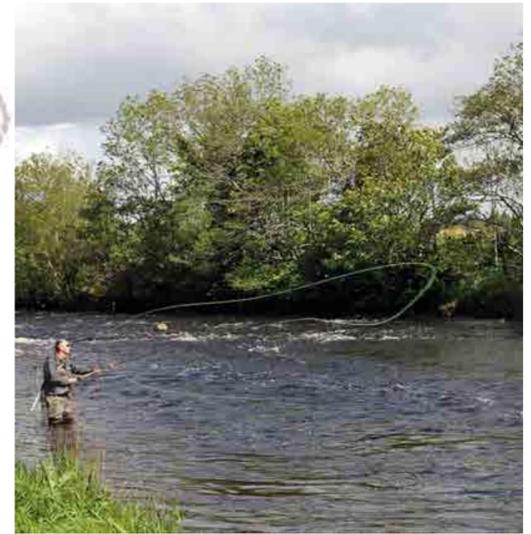
Project Overview

The Maigue Rivers Trust was established in 2016 to protect, enhance and cherish the rivers and lakes of the Maigue catchment for the benefit and enjoyment of all. The River Maigue has been known to support a high diversity of fish species; however, previous works and deterioration in water quality have had a negative impact on the fish and river ecology. The potential of the Maigue catchment to support diverse fish and invertebrate populations has long been recognized. While some fish surveys have been carried out, there is little information on other aspects of the river habitat, ecology and biodiversity. LEADER supported a river habitat survey to help fill these information gaps and enable the trust to prescribe appropriate actions and enhancement measures going forward.



River Tunnelling Project Training

Local Action Group	Mayo LCDC
Implementing Partner	South West Mayo Development Company CLG
Project Name	River Tunnelling Project
Promoter Name	East Mayo Anglers Association
Address	Market Street, Swinford, Co. Mayo
LEADER Theme	Rural Environment
LEADER Sub-theme	Water Resources
LEADER Grant Amount	€1,450,00



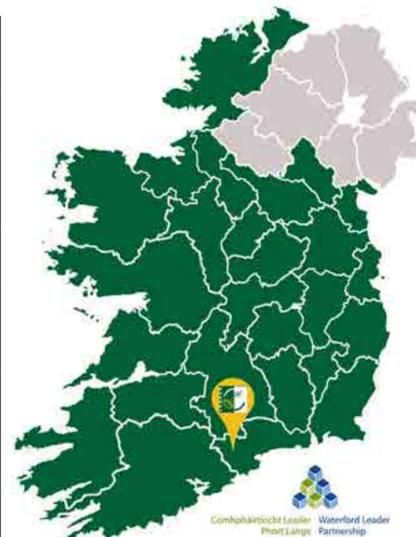
Project Overview

The LEADER Programme supported the implementation of an educational programme entitled ‘Tunnelling and Riverbank Enhancement’, developed and delivered by riverbank ecology experts. The training was available to community groups such as local angling clubs and tidy towns committees in the Moy River catchment area. It also provided participants with the correct protocols for liaising with all relevant organisations and agencies (e.g. Mayo County Council Heritage Officer & Water Community Officer, NPWS, IFI) when considering riverbank enhancement projects. The training provided a basic management template for the protection and enhancement of river banks and riparian zones, including dealing with issues such as ‘tunnelling’.



Training on Water Conservation and Water Recycling

Local Action Group	Waterford LCDC
Implementing Partner	Waterford LEADER Partnership CLG
Project Name	Training on Water Conservation and Water Recycling
Promoter Name	Waterford LEADER Partnership CLG
Address	Lismore Business Park, Lismore, Co. Waterford
LEADER Theme	Rural Environment
LEADER Sub-theme	Water Resources
LEADER Grant Amount	€11,080.00



Project Overview

Waterford LEADER Partnership CLG works on behalf of the Waterford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) who are responsible for delivering the LEADER Programme in the county. Waterford LEADER Partnership decided to seek funding under a focus area of Rural Development Programme promoting greater awareness around water usage and conservation. Under this focus area, Waterford LEADER Partnership gained LEADER funding to provide training to different groups within the local community, such as Tidy Towns Groups and Farming Organisations, on the necessity for water conservation and recycling and how different conservation and recycling techniques can be implemented.



Purchase of Litter Removal Equipment

Local Action Group	Mayo LCDC
Implementing Partner	Mayo North East LEADER Partnership Company CLG
Animating Partner	Moy Valley Resources IRD
Project Name	Purchase of Litter Removal Equipment
Promoter Name	River Moy Search and Rescue Ballina Limited
Address	Old Quay School, Ballina, Co, Mayo
LEADER Theme	Rural Environment
LEADER Sub-theme	Water Resources
LEADER Grant Amount	€73,135.76



Project Overview

Marine litter is recognised as a global environmental problem. The River Moy Search and Rescue in Ballina, Co. Mayo were the first organisation in the country to seek a LEADER project for the removal of marine litter from inland waterways. This water based, 'tidy towns like project' aimed to have a positive impact on the local marine environment. The River Moy is a special area of conservation and therefore of enormous importance locally. LEADER funding supported the purchase of a new boat, refurbishment of an existing boat, purchase of marine equipment including kayaks, an underwater camera and dive scooters, as well as a box trailer for equipment to help conduct regular marine litter removal on the River Moy.



Donabate Portrane Community Centre Water Conservation

Local Action Group	Dublin Rural LAG
Implementing Partner	Fingal LEADER Partnership
Project Name	Donabate Portrane Community Centre Water Conservation
Promoter Name	Donabate Portrane Community Centre CLG
Address	Portrane Road, Donabate, Co. Dublin
LEADER Theme	Rural Environment
LEADER Sub-theme	Water Resources
LEADER Grant Amount	€ 11,593.05



Project Overview

Donabate Portrane Community and Leisure Centre is a registered charity and aims to work with the community, individuals and groups, to provide high quality sport and leisure activities, which are accessible and available to all. The centre has high water usage driven by its 1000 gym members who avail of shower facilities and 220,000 visitors per annum who avail of toilet and handwashing facilities. Furthermore, the population of Donabate is due to increase by 4,000 in the next five years, therefore it is anticipated that the use of the centre and water usage will increase. The LEADER Programme supported the implementation of a water reduction system that reduces overall water consumption and cut water costs by 50% per annum.



LEADER Programme
2014-2020

Exploring
Lessons Learned
Leverage experience from...

NEW KD

Tá an tionscadal seo
i bhfeidhm ag an AE
aoin Achoimre den Chlár um
Fhorbairt Tuaithe Éire
2014 - 2020

The new machinery on this boat
including marine diesel engines
and associated stern gear was
part-funded by the EU under
the Rural Development Programme
Ireland
2014 - 2020

MTHolgaard

LEADER Programme 2014-2020

NRN Multi-Method LEADER Programme
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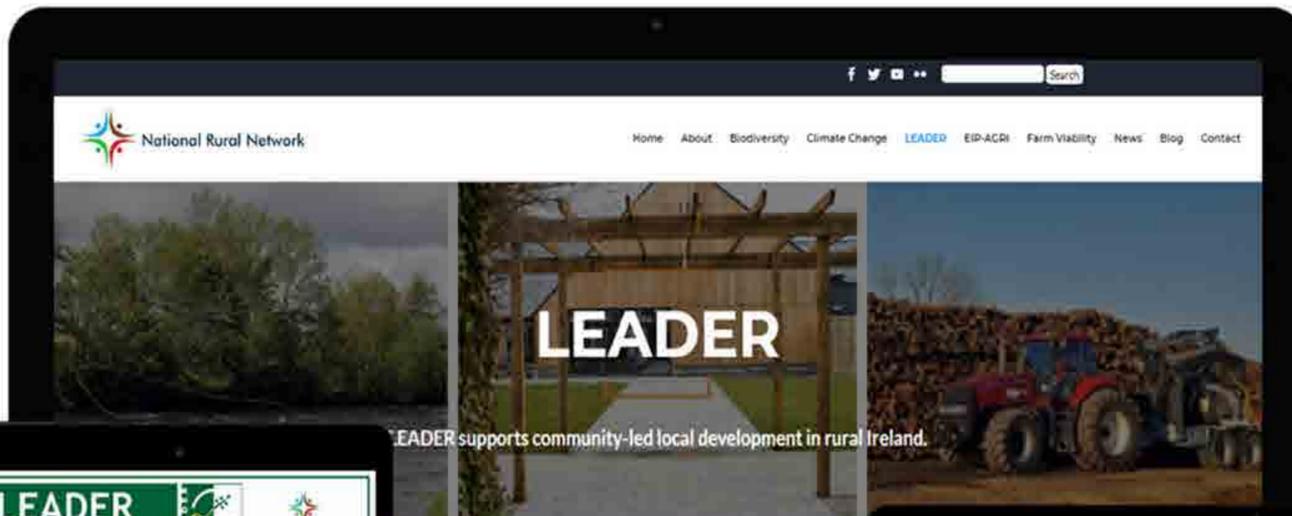
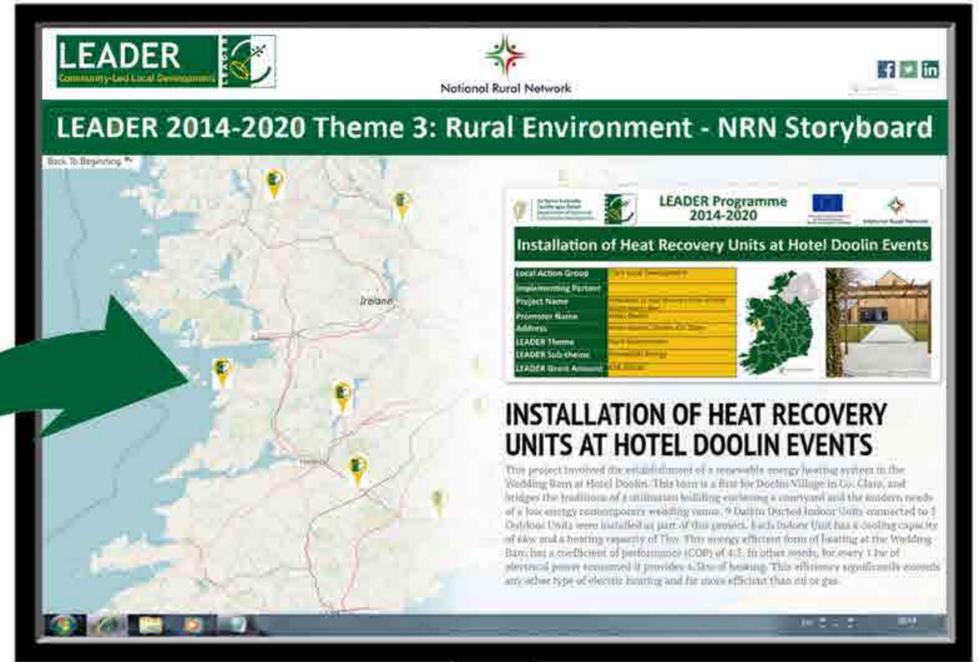
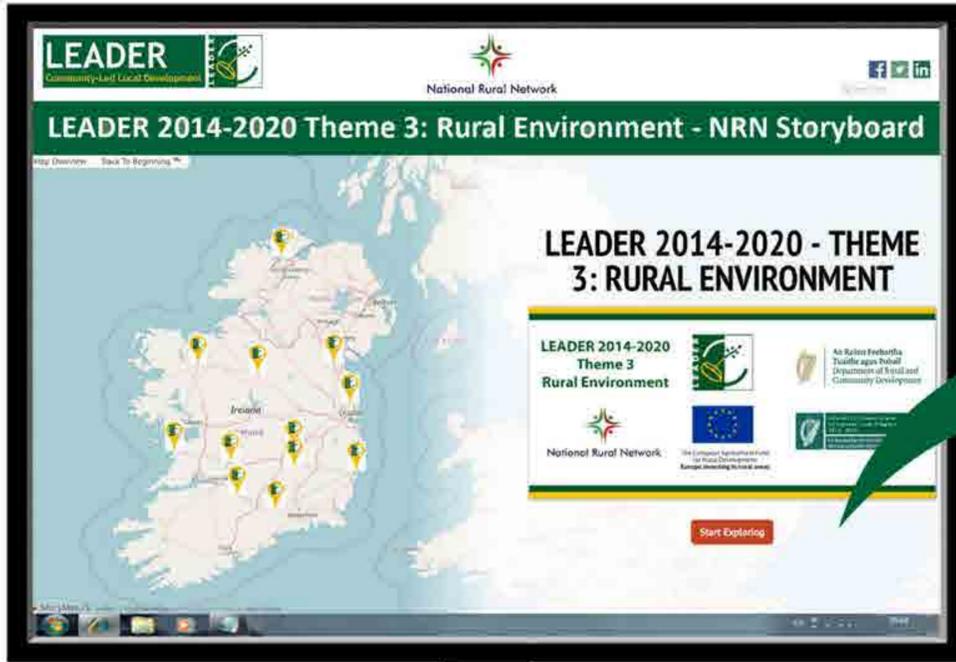
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LEADER Program

NRN LEADER Case Studies

1



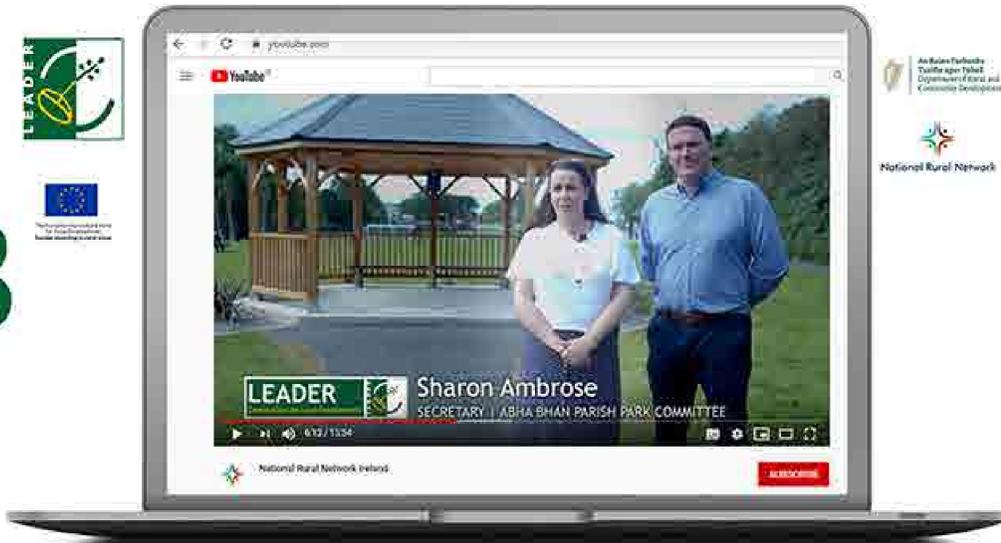
River Moy Search & Rescue LEADER Project

2



Connemara Community Radio LEADER Project

3



Abha Bhán Parish Park LEADER Project

4



Coillte Sláintúil LEADER Project



The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe Investing in rural areas



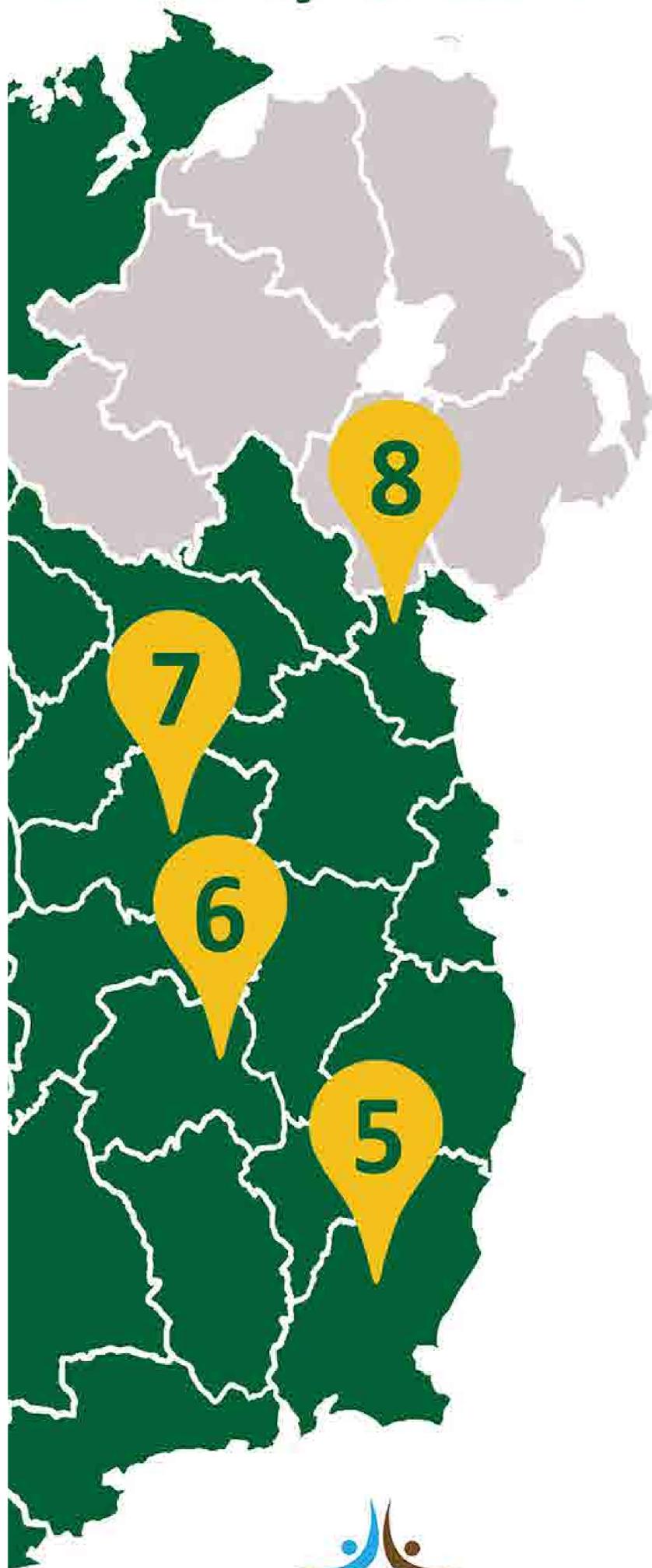
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Timeline 2014-2020



Case Study Videos



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Rural and Community Development



Louth Looking Good LEADER Project



Instrumental Outreach Programme LEADER Project



Ballykilcavan LEADER Project



EuroBlue LEADER Project

Infographic designed and produced by Dr Shane Conway (NRN/NUI Galway)



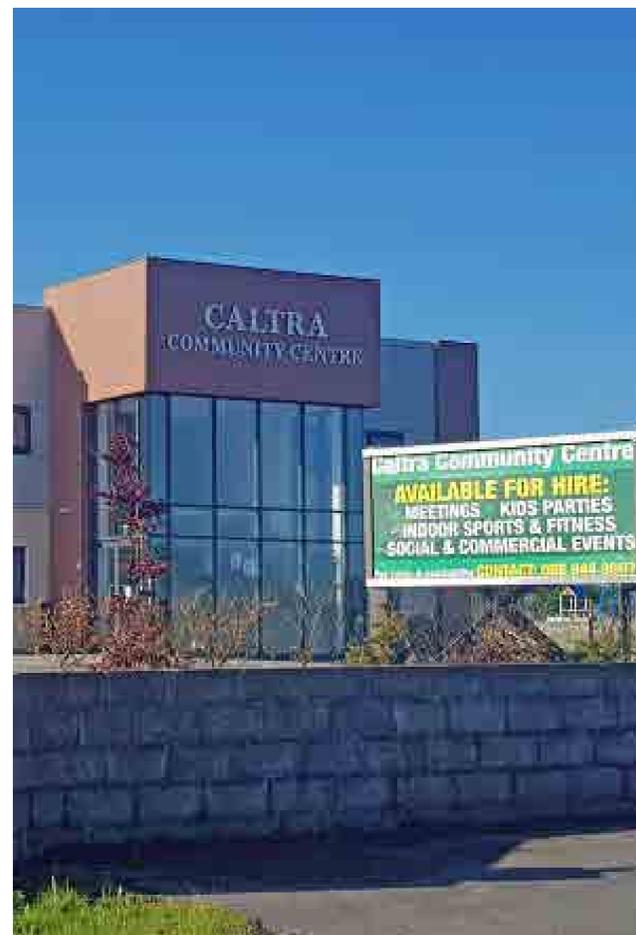
Smart Villages and Rural Towns in Ireland

Revitalising Rural Communities through Social and Digital Innovation

Overview

The EU Action for Smart Villages initiative was launched by the European Commission in 2017. Smart Villages are rural areas and communities which build on, and enhance their existing strengths and assets through creative thinking and by embracing innovation to create desirable places for rural people to live and work. In creating a Smart Village, community groups and individuals often overcome local challenges by exploring and implementing practical and tangible solutions. In particular, rural communities explore how local services, such as health, social services, education, energy, transport and retail, can be enhanced and sustained through the deployment of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools and community-led actions and projects.

As such, digitisation is key to the creation of a Smart Village; however, social innovation is also paramount. The concept of Smart Villages therefore is not prescriptive and there is an acknowledgment that there is 'no one size fits all' model that can be applied universally. This in turn allows EU Member States broad discretion on how to plan for, and implement this innovative initiative in their respective countries.



ENRD Thematic Group (TG) on Smart Villages

A European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) Thematic Group on Smart Villages, launched in September 2017, contributed to the EU Action for Smart Villages by enabling the exchange of innovative ways of creating more vibrant, sustainable and attractive rural areas, and also by exploring how Rural Development Programmes and other financial instruments can best be used to support this over the course of twelve meetings. Dr Shane Conway, Researcher at NUI Galway and the National Rural Network participated in this TG along with Dympna Harney, from the Department of Rural and Community Development's LEADER Policy and Operations Unit as well as representatives from Irish Local Action Groups (LAGs) and Implementing Partners (IPs).

Relationship with the LEADER Programme

The development of Smart Villages in Ireland and indeed across the EU can be greatly enhanced through the successful delivery of the LEADER Programme 2014-2020. Established by the European Commission in 1991, the LEADER approach is based on 7 key principles – all of which must collaborate and positively interact for it to be successful. The LEADER Programme is therefore well positioned to become the key policy ingredient and catalyst towards the 'smart' revolution of rural towns and villages in Ireland, particularly through its community-led approach to rural development.



LEADER

Community-Led Local Development





Smart Villages and Rural Towns in Ireland

Revitalising Rural Communities through Social and Digital Innovation

Relationship with the LEADER Programme

Through this 'bottom up' framework, LEADER supports the delivery of local development actions which address the overarching needs of rural communities throughout Ireland and other EU member states in an innovative, integrated and inclusive manner.

Indeed, the LEADER Programme 2014-2020 in Ireland already focuses on, and includes three core themes (i.e. (i) Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation, (ii) Social Inclusion & (iii) Rural Environment) which, taken together, constitute the fundamental principles of what the European Commission consider is needed to create and attain a sustainable Smart Village.



Creating Synergies between 'Smart Villages' & 'Smart Community'

The EU Action for 'Smart Villages' concept is also closely aligned to Ireland's 'Smart Community' initiative, launched by the Department of Rural and Community Development & the Department of Communications, Climate Action and the Environment in January 2019. This innovative initiative aimed to bring exposure to digital content and technology in rural communities, and also to support rural dwellers in discovering the value of using digital in their daily lives.

Creating synergies between the EU Action for 'Smart Villages' concept and the lessons learned from Ireland's 'Smart Community' initiative pioneered in Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo has the potential to greatly improve the quality of life for people who live and work in rural towns and villages throughout Ireland. The realisation of 'smart' rural areas and communities can play a key role in the development and sustainability of rural Ireland by tackling issues, such as depopulation, limited employment opportunities and out-migration.



For more information on the 'Smart Villages' initiative, please visit the LEADER section of the National Rural Network website and the Smart Villages Portal on the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) website to discover a plethora of inspiring networks and initiatives across the EU.





Prepared by the National Rural Network team at NUI Galway and Irish Rural Link on behalf of the Department Rural and Community Development (DRCD) and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM).

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Compiled and designed by Dr. Shane Conway, Postdoctoral Researcher at NUI Galway and the National Rural Network.



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