



**Longford Community
Resources clg**

Submission on the draft

Territorial Just Transition Plan for Ireland

to the

Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications

1. Introduction

Longford Community Resources welcomes Irelands Draft Territorial Just Transition Plan for the Midlands Region.

The announcement of the closure of the Lough Ree Power Station in Lanesborough, County Longford and the impacts on the peat harvesting business of Bord na Móna in the territory has had a detrimental negative impact on County Longford both economically and socially. The identification in this Plan of the territories for which this transition has the most negative economic and social impact is seen as a positive. The assessment of the challenges faced, including the impact on direct and indirect jobs, and communities most affected, and creating a plan to address these challenges through the identification of development needs and actions in the territory will support the mitigation of the negative impact on the economic, social and cultural fabric of County Longford.

2. Submission in Brief

- That funding and other associated supports under the EU Just Transition Fund should be weighted based on those areas within the defined territory most negatively impacted by transition.
- Amending the scope of the actions in the draft plan to include the development of tourism, creative industries, arts, culture & heritage, micro generation of renewable energy, biodiversity, micro enterprise and social infrastructure which will further enhance the commitment to supporting a fair and equitable transition.
- Recognising communities as a key stakeholder in the process of “taking a place-based approach to” the transition to a green future, where their assets can be harnessed to create jobs and add to the sustainability of our community.
- That local development/social inclusion supports be used to resources community led innovation and development.

3. About Longford Community Resources Clg

Longford Community Resources Clg is a Local Development Company and was established in 1995 as a company limited by guarantee. The company was formed for the purpose of implementing the LEADER programme and has the main objective of promoting rural development and tackling social exclusion. The work of the company is managed by a voluntary board, comprising of directors who are representing various sectoral interests including, Business and Farming Sector, Community and Voluntary Sector and Statutory/State Agencies. It has successfully managed the planning and implementation of multiple rural, social, and economic development programmes over the last twenty-six years.

Since inception, Longford Community Resources Clg has gained extremely valuable experience and knowledge of good practice and innovative approaches – approaches that work. It has worked with almost every community across County Longford and has instigated area-based economic, social, cultural and enhancement projects that have generated employment, social benefit, improved living conditions and economic activity.

Importantly, the company has, both individually and through working in partnership with key statutory and community organisations, gained particular expertise and respect in working with hard-to-reach communities and is currently working in the most disadvantaged areas of the county implementing initiatives that assist in reducing poverty and ensuring that people have better access to services and supports. In order to resource this work effectively, the company has leveraged funding from the HSE, Department of Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Department of Social Protection, Department of Rural and Community Development, Youth Work Ireland and Longford Westmeath Education and Training Board.

Through the implementation of four LEADER programmes, the company has successfully designed and implemented development strategies for the benefit of the county over the last twenty-six years. It has initiated projects and it has administered calls for projects from private and community promoters that were in line with LEADER strategies. In addition to the LEADER Programme the company is currently managing the following development programmes; Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), Tús Community Work Placement Initiative, Rural Social Scheme, Traveller Primary Health Care Project, Longford Volunteer Centre and County Longford Youth Service.

Historically, the company was involved in the delivery of the LEADER Programme 2007-2013, LEADER II, LEADER +/- National Rural Development Programme, Rural Transport Initiative, the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme, the Millennium Fund, Eircode and Digital Switchover.

4. Observations on the Draft Territorial Just Transition Plan for Ireland

i. Territories Most Affected

We note that the research findings of EnvEcon Decision Support Ltd in their Report on Challenges, Needs and Recommended Actions for the Most Affected Territories which identifies County Longford as one of the most affected by the transition. Longford Community Resources believe that County Longford and particular communities within the county have been significantly more impacted than other counties in the territory. This impact is particularly relevant for County Longford as it is currently one of the most disadvantaged territories in the country as per the CSO Census 2016 HP Deprivation Index.

We suggest that funding and other associated supports under the EU Just Transition Fund should be weighted based on those areas within the defined territory most negatively impacted by transition.

ii. Development Need & Actions

Longford Community Resources acknowledge the identification of the development needs and the breadth of actions included within the draft plan to support and stimulate economic growth and development. However, we would propose that the scope of these actions should be expanded to include supports that have a direct relevance to the community needs. We suggest that the scope of actions be extended to include supports for the development of tourism, creative industries, arts, culture & heritage, micro generation of renewable energy, biodiversity, micro enterprise and social infrastructure.

We contend that amending the draft plan to include these areas will further enhance the commitment to supporting a fair and equitable transition (NESC 2020).

iii. Stakeholders in the Delivery and Implementation of Transition

Longford Community Resources suggest that due consideration be given to recognising communities as a key stakeholder in the process of “taking a place-based approach to” the transition to a green future. The range of assets (economic, social, cultural, environmental) that our community has at its disposal, if supported in the right way, can be harnessed to create jobs and add to the sustainability of our community.

We suggest that local development/social inclusion supports be used to resources community led innovation and development.