



GALWAY RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Guide to LEADER 2014-2020 in East Galway



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



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

**Co-funded by the Irish Government
and the European Union**



WELCOME TO THE EAST GALWAY LEADER PROGRAMME

Galway Rural Development is delighted to announce the launch of the Rural Development Programme (LEADER) 2014 – 2020 in East Galway. The area covered by the East Galway Local Development Strategy is the following four municipal districts: Oranmore/ Athenry, Loughrea, Ballinasloe and Tuam.

This LEADER programme has many changes to the previous programmes, therefore this guide will assist you an idea of what's included and excluded for LEADER funding.

Our LEADER staff have years of experience and are available to discuss your project ideas. The LEADER Programme Manager and the Project Officers have a deep understanding of the LEADER Programme's operating rules, and use this knowledge to support as many projects as possible, within the programme limits.

The project budget for East Galway for the 2014 to 2020 programme is €5,741,888. This budget is approximately 55% less than the last programme. However, GRD is confident that the funding will still result in real benefits to the businesses and communities in East Galway.

The information contained in this document is for guidance purposes only and must be used in conjunction with the Operational Rules of the LEADER Programme, which are subject to change by the Department. GRD operates the LEADER Programme based on the rules as laid down by the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD). These rules are subject to change by the Department over the duration of the Programme.

September 2017



**This is Galway Rural Development's fourth
LEADER Programme to deliver.**

LEADER 2014- 2020

Whilst LEADER has primarily operated from a rural and economic development context, historically it has generated social inclusion outcomes for individuals and communities. The policy context for the new programming period calls for a focus on addressing poverty and social exclusion, particularly given the significant economic and social changes that have taken place within the last decade.

Who can benefit from LEADER?

- Rural businesses wishing to expand or develop a new start-up business
- Farm families wishing to diversify to increase family farm income
- Community/ voluntary organisations wishing to enhance or sustain local community activities and who have an open and representative structure (preferably with a legal basis), operate on a 'not for profit' basis, establish a policy of inclusion and demonstrate the capacity to manage and operate the proposed facilities.

The Local Development Strategy (LDS)

The LDS is a community-led plan, developed and driven by rural communities through the Galway Rural Development Co. Ltd area to address the needs identified and to achieve a defined set of local objectives. GRD completed a detailed consultation process in communities throughout East Galway. Feedback from the community and enterprise consultation events was collated and all information gathered informed the LDS for East Galway. This strategy was submitted to the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (DAHRRGA) on 31st March 2017. The strategy was independently evaluated and approved, and the contract for the LEADER programme was signed by the Galway Rural Development Co. Ltd on 5th May 2017.

LEADER 2014- 2020 will be delivered through three main areas:

As per Department Guidelines there are three main themes for the LEADER programme which guided the strategy development.

Theme 1: Rural Economic Development

Sub-themes:

- Enterprise Development & Job Creation
- Rural Tourism
- Rural Towns

Theme 2: Social inclusion through building community capacity

Sub-themes:

- Basic Services for hard to reach communities
- Rural Youth

Theme 3: Rural Environment

Sub-themes:

- Protection & sustainable use of water resources
- Protection & improvement of biodiversity
- The development of renewable energy

(*Note that Rural Environment is a cross cutting requirement for all 3 LEADER interventions)

Grant Aid Amounts and Rates for Community and Private Applicants

Rate of Aid for Community Project with no economic element				Rate of Aid for Project with economic element			
	Grant Aid % Up to Max.	Max Grant	Min. Grant		Grant Aid % Up to Max.	Max Grant	Min. Grant
Capital & Marketing	75%	€150,000	€5,000	Capital & Marketing	50%	€200,000	€5,000
Analysis & Development	90%	€30,000	€5,000	Analysis & Development	75%	€30,000	€5,000
Training	100%	€200,000	€5,000	Training	100%	€200,000	€5,000

Important:

Business size: <20 full-time equivalent Employees, annual turnover and or balance sheet <€2 million.

In some cases, these rates and amounts may be reduced, for example where;

- Other grant schemes are available for similar projects
- LEADER funds become more limited

Funding for community/ voluntary groups (with no economic element) is on a competitive basis at a rate of 75% of the total eligible project costs up to a maximum of €150,000.

Private projects can avail of up to a maximum rate of 50% for Capital and for Analysis & Development. Training projects may avail of up to 100% grant aid.

Eligible Costs	
- Construction costs including Professional fees (up to 12%)	- Marketing / Promotion
- Purchase of Machinery & Equipment	- Training
	- Analysis & Development

*Please Note: Specific calls may have lower rates of aid and lower maximum funding.

*Please Note: The rate of aid is capped at 75% for capital funding for community projects under all sub-themes.

*Please Note: Individual Calls may ring fence an amount no greater than 20%, within a call, to prioritise areas or groups that have been identified as hard to reach.

LEADER 2014-2020

LEADER Theme	LEADER Sub-theme	Local Objective	LDS Strategic Action
THEME ONE: Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation	Rural Tourism	1	SA 1.1 Strategic Supports for rural tourism enterprises
			SA 1.2 Creation and expansion of innovative tourism experiences
	Enterprise Development	2	SA 2.1 Support East Galway enterprise ideas
			SA 2.2 Support innovative enterprises in East Galway
	Rural Towns & Villages	3	SA 3.1 Urban and village renewal initiatives
			SA 3.2 Provide environmental and cultural awareness and development of the countryside and built heritage
THEME TWO: Social Inclusion	Basic Services targeted at Hard to reach communities	4	SA 4.1 Skills training in the community
			SA 4.2 Provision of capital support for community infrastructure and services
			SA 4.3 Support community based initiatives that address infrastructural recreational deficits as well as social and cultural deficits
	Rural Youth	5	SA 5.1 Youth Support Initiative
SA 5.2 The provision of capital grant support for facilities, amenities and services for Rural Youth in East Galway			
THEME THREE: Rural Environment	Protection & sustainable use of water resources	6	SA 6.1 Community – based management and conservation of water resources
	Protection & improvement of local biodiversity	7	SA 7.1 Delivery of Biodiversity Awareness Programmes
			SA 7.2 Golden Mile Initiative
Development of renewable energy	8	SA 8.1 Support for the improvement of community facilities through use of the Renewable Energy	

Galway Rural Development has been allocated a project budget of in excess €5.7 million for the period 2014-2020

Ineligible Activities

LEADER grant aid cannot be awarded or paid in respect of the following areas:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agriculture* - Fisheries - Conventional retail operations, excluding community based shops and farm shops selling locally produced produce - Courses of instruction or training which form part of normal education programmes or systems at secondary or higher levels. <i>Note; this includes Rural Development diploma & degree.</i> - Projects not identified in LDS - Loans - Working Capital (including stock) - Insurance for project promoters - Horticultural (including bee-keeping) - Payments for gifts and donations or personal entertainments - Statutory fines and penalties, criminal fines and damages - Legal expenses in respect of litigation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Costs associated with meeting a legislative or statutory requirement - Planning Application Fee - Reclaimable VAT - Insurance costs - Improvements / refurbishment of private residential property - Projects which already have other European Union funding either directly or through a national programme - Conventional motor vehicles, including cars, industrial / farm / construction vehicles, vans & buses. - General maintenance works of public bodies - Childcare - Healthcare - Nursing Homes - Housing - Race and sport horse industries - Greyhound industry
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**GRD will firstly need to ascertain if the activity/animal has been covered by any current or previous DAFM scheme. Furthermore, if the activity does not qualify for DAFM funding, that does not automatically mean that it will qualify for LEADER funding, as the core activity may still be deemed to be "agriculture" e.g. goat farming, poultry production, fruit, small scale market gardens etc.*

PLEASE NOTE any costs incurred prior to grant approval and contact are ***not*** eligible for funding.

LEADER 2014-2020

In addition, GRD have made the following policies in relation to LEADER delivery in East Galway.

<u>Galway Rural Development Policies for LEADER funding</u>			
Topic	Current Operating Rule	GRD Policy	Rationale
Maximum grant aid for targeted calls	To be announced on each call		Limited Budget
Purchase of Land	Eligible	That the costs of land purchase be deemed ineligible	Limited Budget
Commemorative statues / monuments/ plaques; townland stone signage	Eligible	Exclude	Limited Budget
Drones	Eligible	Exclude as capital acquisitions	Limited Budget
Publications	Eligible	Exclude	Limited Budget
Festivals	Eligible	Significant festivals capable of demonstrating increase in bed nights and substantial contribution to local economy, but not large enough to access Fáilte Ireland support. Co-ordinate with Galway County Council.	Limited Budget
Tourism brochures	Eligible	Only as part of a group marketing application e.g. destination.	Limited Budget
Apps	Eligible	That the inclusion of an app would only be considered as part of a larger project.	Project Integrity
Websites	Eligible	A. Refer to LEO who offer funding for 'on-line trading vouchers' B. Communities – only as part of training applications or C. As part of a larger project where LEO could not fund the website	Value for Money
Marketing	Eligible	That the inclusion of a marketing budget would only be considered as part of a larger project.	Limited Budget
Rural towns	Footpaths & ornamental lighting are eligible	That footpaths and lighting would not be eligible.	Limited Budget
Lease duration	5 years from date of payment of grant aid	7 years from date of final grant payment	Integrity of project
Applicant type	GAA Clubs & sporting organisations, sporting facilities	Such applicants must demonstrate an inclusive policy showing facilities are open to all members of the community and not just members of the club/ sporting organisation. Mainstream sporting activity of sports groups is ineligible.	Limited Budget

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Equestrian Enterprises	Ancillary Services eligible	Exclude	Limited Budget Displacement
Rural youth	Eligible	It is preferable that applications should be made by the youth group but where this is not possible e.g. difficulties in lease arrangements then the youth group should be a strong partner in the application	Build capacity
New community centres	Eligible	Targeted Call. Maximum grant aid €150,000	Limited Budget
Refurbishments of community spaces, energy retrofits	Eligible	Targeted Call	Limited Budget
New playgrounds / upgrade of existing playgrounds	Eligible	Targeted Call; co-ordinated with Galway County Council, to ensure coherent strategy	Limited Budget
Accommodation provision	Eligible	Targeted Call	Limited Budget
Car parks	Eligible	Exclude	Limited Budget
Ride on lawnmowers	Eligible	Exclude	Limited Budget
Minimum grant aid	€1,250	€5,000	Work involved in lodging an application and drawing down
Defibrillators	Eligible	Inclusion only be considered as element of larger project; not stand alone	Limited Budget
Medium enterprises	Eligible	Exclude	Limited Budget
Small enterprises	Eligible	Co-ordinate with LEO. (Maximum 20 full-time employees)	Value for Money
Micro enterprises	Eligible	Co-ordinate with LEO.	Value for Money

Other projects apart from the categories mentioned above may be subject to a Targeted Call depending on influx of Expressions of Interest Forms received because of the limited budget under LEADER 2014-2020.

Other funding initiatives through LEADER:

Artisan Food Initiative

A fund of €15 million is available to support an artisan food initiative that will operate through the LEADER methodology. The fund is intended to provide support for collaborative proposals that seek to improve product quality, enhance relevant skills, and improve market access. This will be operated in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, and further guidance will issue in due course.

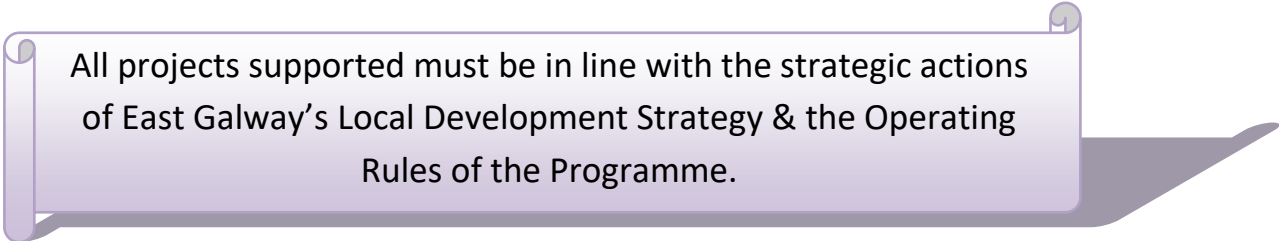
LEADER Co-operation Projects

Co-operation of a LEADER area with other geographical areas is a key component of the LEADER methodology and enhances the innovative character of local development by combining knowledge, skills and experience in thematic areas common to the strategies of each participating Local Action Group area.

Co-operation projects must demonstrate genuine added value for the areas concerned. The key drivers of co-operation projects will often be:

- The need to achieve the critical mass required for a joint project to be viable
- Encouraging complementary actions
- The pooling of know-how, or human and financial resources

LEADER will support transnational (with areas outside of Ireland) and inter-territorial (with other areas in Ireland) co-operation projects carried out by GRD, in line with the objectives of the East Galway LDS. A national allocation of €10m will be allocated by the DRCD to co-operation projects on the basis of an open call to all Local Action Groups. The requirements of the LEADER Operating Rules apply.



All projects supported must be in line with the strategic actions of East Galway's Local Development Strategy & the Operating Rules of the Programme.

Important Rules of the LEADER RDP 2014 - 2020

State Aid / De-minimis Requirements

State funding is considered as "State Aid" (De-Minimis Aid) where it is used to provide assistance that gives an entity, be it an enterprise, a not for profit organisation, or an individual, an advantage over others. State aid rules generally only apply to projects involved in economic activity, irrespective of its legal form or how it is financed, or whether it has a for profit orientation or not.

Grant aid to any one entity may not exceed €200,000 in any three-year period where the activity has an economic element. Activity offering goods and services on market is classed as economic activity regardless if the entity has a for profit orientation or not. *(The key is the date*

of award of funding, and not the date of payment of the scheme, while the three year period will examine the three previous fiscal years including the current year).

If a company is part of a group, then the €200,000 limit applies to the group e.g. linked enterprises. Funding from certain agricultural schemes managed by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine is considered de-minimis aid.

Example: If an application is received from a promoter on a date between 01 January and 31 December 2016, each of the three previous fiscal years, including the current year i.e. 2016, 2015 and 2014 will be examined.*

If a project involves economic activity, then the promoter will have to declare whether they have or have not received State Aid. Where the Promoter has received State Aid, they will have to state the said amount of aid and the dates it was received, and sign a declaration accordingly.

** A fiscal year is an accounting period of 365(6) days that does not necessarily correspond to the calendar year beginning on January 1st. The fiscal year is the established period of time when an organization's annual financial records commence and conclude.*

Deadweight

Grant aid cannot be provided where the project could proceed without LEADER funding. The analysis of deadweight is an integral part of the project evaluation process. Applications must be accompanied by a declaration by the promoter that the project is not capable of proceeding without LEADER funding.

Displacement

Grant aid cannot be provided if it will result in displacement e.g. closure/ loss of business for another enterprise elsewhere. Displacement is the degree to which the benefits resulting from an activity supported using public funds result in reduced activity elsewhere. *(Funded activities do not need to be identical to activities in existence to result in displacement).*

Displacement will be considered on a case-by-case basis and based on the market for the product or service in question, competitors in that market, and the potential impact of the new product/service in the market.

Project Matching Funds

LEADER can only provide a proportion of the funds required to deliver a project – matching funding is the additional funding which is required to meet the full costs of a project. Matching funding for LEADER projects, where required, can come from private matching funding or public matching funding *(public matching funding is permissible only in the case of applications submitted by community groups/ organisations).*

Private matching funding refers to:

- **Cash contribution from promoter.** At least 5% of the total project cost must be met by a private matching cash contribution (wherever sources by the applicant). This is required for all projects other than where training is funded at a rate of up to 100% from LEADER.

- **Contribution-in-kind** is eligible for community-led projects only, with the exception only of farm diversification projects, where labour may be accepted as a contribution-in-kind.

Public matching funding refers to: Other non-EU funding sources.

Where LEADER is working in tandem with other public funding streams, the aim, in the first instance, should be to identify separate projects, or parts of projects, to be supported through each public funding source so that collectively the separate projects can result in better outcomes for the communities concerned. An example might be a cycling trail where LEADER funds the trail itself, the Local Authority funds signage and access points for the trail, and the LEO works with specific businesses along the trail.

With a view to promoting LEADER as a main funder in its own right, this option should primarily be used where the matching funding is being provided as a contribution to the delivery of a LEADER project, rather than LEADER being used to top-up other public funds.

Public matching funds may be used as a contribution to the delivery of a LEADER project which includes:

- Cash contributions from non-EU funded sources (e.g. Local Authorities, State agencies)
- Contribution-in-kind – eligible for community-led projects only

Confirmation that public matching funds is not from other EU funds must be obtained so as to ensure that double funding does not occur. This additional public funding must be included when calculating the amount of State aid provided to the applicant, whether or not they are covered under the de-minimis rule.

Matching funding is permitted subject to the following conditions:

- Only applications submitted by community bodies are eligible.
- The overall level of public funding does not exceed 95% of total eligible project costs.
- There must be a minimum **cash** contribution of at least 5% of total eligible project costs.
- It is confirmed and evidence retained that this funding is not from another EU source.
- Must be identified in the LEADER application submitted; written confirmation must be obtained from the provider of the matching funding stating the amount it will contribute towards the LEADER project.
- All supporting documentation in respect of public matching funding must be maintained in the same manner as for all other LEADER projects.
- The public bodies providing the matching funds must not be the project applicant or beneficiary.

The LAG must not award funding to public bodies.

Evidence of Match Funding & Bridging Finance

At application stage, the project promoter must provide evidence of the required private matching funding e.g. savings, loan etc. and public matching funding, where appropriate. The promoter must also ensure that bridging finance is in place to deliver the project. Bridging finance may be by way of bank loan, loan from a social finance organization etc. and evidence of this must be provided. Where phased payments have been agreed with the promoter, evidence of 20% of the total project costs must be provided. **Failure to complete the project will result in all previous phased payments being recovered.**

Quotations / Tenders

Tenders must be obtained for each item of expenditure for which grant aid is sought. Quotations must be signed and dated and must show the VAT element separately. Quotations submitted electronically, which are accompanied by clearly identifiable date and source information, will be accepted up to the relevant thresholds.

It must firstly be determined if the applicant is a Category One or Category Two and documentary evidence must be obtained in support of this. The tendering requirement for each Category is as follows:

Category One

Project promoters that may be awarded total funding of **more than 50%** of the project costs (from LEADER and/or other public sources), and LAGs regardless of the levels of support from LEADER, must follow the National Public Procurement Guidelines.

National Procurement Guidelines		
Contract Type	Amount (excl. VAT)	Procedure
Supplies & Services	Less than €5,000	Seek verbal quotations from one or more interested and competent suppliers/service providers - these can be sought verbally but responses must be obtained in writing. (Best Practice – Seek a minimum of 3 written quotes; a record of verbal requests must be placed on file).
	€5,000 - €25,000	Seek written quotations from a minimum of 3 suppliers on the basis of responses to written specifications.
	€25,000 – EU Threshold (Currently €221,000)	Publish Contract Notice on eTenders www.etenders.gov.ie – Open Procedure
Works Related Services	Less than €50,000	Seek written quotations from at least 5 firms on the basis of responses to written specifications, or follow the eTenders process – Open Procedure
	€50,000 – EU Threshold (Currently €221,000)	Publish Contract Notice on eTenders www.etenders.gov.ie – Open Procedure

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Works	Less than €50,000	Seek written quotations from at least 5 firms on the basis of responses to written specifications, or follow the eTenders process – Open Procedure
	€50,000 - €250,000	Publish Contract Notice on eTenders www.etenders.gov.ie – Open Procedure
	€250,000 – EU Threshold (Currently €5,548,000)	Publish Contract Notice on eTenders www.etenders.gov.ie – Open or Restricted Procedure

The current thresholds remain valid until 31st December 2018.

The following list of items will be required where public procurement has been carried out:

- Request for Tender.
- Evidence of Publication to Tender Notice and seeking tenders where required.
- Responses to those tender requests.
- Tender scoring sheets used and evidence to back up the reason why the successful tender was chosen.
- Copies of letters notifying unsuccessful tenders of the result of the tender process.
- Copy of letter notifying the successful tender.

Where a project involves construction works promoters must adhere to the requirements of

www.constructionprocurement.gov.ie

The guidelines to be followed in relation to public procurement are available on the etenders website:

www.etenders.gov.ie

www.procurement.ie

Project promoters that require assistance in relation to public procurement should contact the Office of Government Procurement. The Office of Government Procurement can be contacted at:

www.procurement.ie/contact-us

Tel: 076 100 8000

E-mail: support@ogp.gov.ie

E-mail: construction@per.gov.ie

Category Two

Project promoters that may be awarded total funding of **50% or less** of the project costs (from LEADER and/or other public sources) may choose not to follow the National Procurement Guidelines; in that instance they must follow the LEADER Specific Procurement Guidelines.

National Procurement Guidelines		
Contract Type	Amount (excl. VAT)	Procedure
Supplies & Services	Less than €10,000	Seek verbal quotations from one or more interested and competent suppliers/service providers - these can be sought verbally but responses must be obtained in writing. (Best Practice – Seek a minimum of 3 written quotes; a record of verbal requests must be placed on file)
	€10,000 - €50,000	Seek written quotations from at least 3 suppliers on the basis of responses to written specifications.
	Above €50,000	Seek written quotations from at least 5 suppliers on the basis of responses to written specifications and place notice on local or National Newspaper. Alternatively, can publish Contract Notice on eTenders.
Works and Works Related Services	Less than €10,000	Seek written quotations from at least 2 firms (these can be sought verbally but responses must be obtained in writing).
	€10,000 – €100,000	Seek written quotations from at least 3 firms on the basis of responses to written specifications.
	Above €100,000	Seek written quotations from at least 5 firms on the basis of responses to written specifications and place notice in local or National Newspaper. Alternatively, publish Contract Notice on eTenders. <i>It is recommended that tenderers should complete pre-qualification document – Works Declaration LEADER (WDL) – as circulated by the Department.</i>

The current thresholds remain valid until 31st December 2018.

The importance of following correct procurement procedures cannot be over emphasised for LEADER funding.

Publicity Requirements

Promoters must acknowledge and give prominence to the EAFRD aid for their projects.

1. Where the total public support for a project exceeds €10,000: At least one poster must be displayed in a prominent position with information about the operation (minimum size A3), highlighting the financial support from LEADER.
2. Where the total public support for a project exceeds €50,000: An explanatory plaque must be displayed in a prominent position with information about the project, highlighting the financial support from LEADER.
3. Where the total public support for a project exceeds €100,000 details of the publicity requirements will be included in the Letter of Offer.

- **Posters, Plaques, Websites**

Posters, plaques and web pages must carry a description of the funded project or operation. That information must take up at least 25% of the poster, plaque or webpage. In addition, the poster, plaque, and webpage must be in both Irish and English.

- **The following logos must also be displayed:**

- Galway Rural Development
- The Union emblem and LEADER logo
- “The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in rural areas” logo.
- Department of Rural and Community Development

In addition to the above, the following text must also be included: ‘This project has been co-funded under the EU Rural Development (LEADER) Programme, implemented in this area by Galway Rural Development’

- **Websites**

- Websites must contain the six logos (as for publications)
- Mention the contribution of the EAFRD, at least on the home page.
- Include a hyperlink to the Commission website concerning EAFRD.
- Include a hyperlink to the Department (using DRDC Logo) <http://drdc.gov.ie>

- **Publication of Beneficiaries**

Details of Rural Development (LEADER) Programme beneficiaries may be published on the Department’s website. Details will include the name of the project promoter/beneficiary, the town where the beneficiary resides or is registered (*including postal code if available*), and the total amount of public funding received.

Insurance

Neither the Minister nor any official of the Department, nor Galway Rural Development, will be in any way liable for any damage, loss or injury to persons, animals or property in the event of any occurrence relating to LEADER funded construction, or other activities. The Promoter shall fully indemnify the Minister or any official of the Department, Galway Rural Development, in relation to any such damage, loss or injury, howsoever occurring during the development works or other activities.

Where construction is undertaken by a contractor, the promoter must ensure that the contractor or subcontractor has appropriate insurance cover in place e.g. employers and public liability insurance, in the event of any injury, loss, damage or other mishap occurring. The promoter must obtain a suitable written indemnity from any contractor or sub-contractor in relation to any damage or injury or other loss that might occur during the development works and, if necessary, seek professional insurance advice from an insurance broker or insurance company.

Promoters need to acquaint themselves with the provisions of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Construction Regulation 2006, and other relevant regulations.

Tax Compliance

- **VAT:** The default position is that all promoters are registered for VAT. If not registered, written confirmation from the Revenue Commissioners that the promoter is not registered for VAT is required at the time of application and before each payment is made.
- **Tax Clearance Procedures:** The tax affairs of project promoters and suppliers or contractors must be in order. Payment cannot be made if evidence of tax compliance cannot be provided on completion of work, or at payment stage. Evidence of current Tax Clearance for suppliers must be provided for payments that exceed €10,000 (including VAT) for the period of the project at the time of payment. This threshold is €650 for construction operations. As there is no specific expiry date on the online e-Tax Clearance, confirmation will be required each time a payment is made to a supplier.

Non-resident suppliers/contractors

Non-resident suppliers/contractors must also provide an Irish Tax Clearance Certificate. Further guidance on Tax Clearance for non-residents is available on the Revenue website at www.revenue.ie/en/business/running/tax-clearance.html

Payments to non-resident suppliers or contractors who have not provided evidence of a valid Tax Clearance Certificate will be deemed ineligible and the East Galway LAG (Board of GRD) must de-commit such payments and reimburse the appropriate amount to the Department.

Significant changes for LEADER in East Galway 2014 -2020

The new LEADER programme 2014 – 2020 is quite different from previous LEADER programmes. The main changes are;

A More Targeted Approach

The new LEADER Programme will be much more targeted than in previous programmes due to the approximate 55% cut in funding from RDP 2007-2013. In this regard projects will be assessed closely against the strategic actions of the Local Development Strategy (LDS) as well as national LEADER guidelines. Additional criteria may also be put in place at local level when assessing projects to ensure funding is allocated where it is needed most e.g. areas / project promoters that have not accessed LEADER funding previously may be prioritised.

Time Specific / Targeted Calls – a more competitive process

A more competitive process is now being used to assess project applications. This means that a public call will be made for Expressions of Interest (EOIs) under specified themes and sub-themes of the programme within a defined timeframe. Time specific / targeted calls will be widely publicised in local press and on GRD's website.

The purpose of time specific calls is to;

- Target funding where it delivers most value
- Award funding based on a comparative assessment
- Secure equal opportunities for all potential applicants
- Ensure funding is available for the duration of the programme.

Interaction between LEADER and other funding programmes

In August 2017, the Department advised LAGs that the previous stipulation that LEADER should not fund types of activity that may be eligible under other National / EU Programmes or Schemes, or the inference that LEADER is the “*funder of last resort*”, is not conducive to delivering on the principles underpinning LEADER or facilitating a collaborative approach between all funders at a local level. LEADER is an important mainstream funding programme in its own right and should not be seen as a subsidiary to other programmes or schemes. Therefore, the condition the LEADER may not fund types of activity that may be eligible under other National/ EU Programmes or schemes is being removed from the LEADER Operating Rules subject to the proviso that LAGS must continue to;

- **Ensure that LEADER is not double funding** a project, or the same work/ activity with another public source of funds;
- Work closely with other funding agencies to **ensure a streamlined approach to potential project Promoters at a local level**, e.g. a local agreement with the Local Enterprise Office

LEADER Call Information

Support to Make an Application

Advice, mentoring, support and training will be available to applicants to complete an EOI through GRD. Applicants that have their EOI approved at Phase 1, and are eligible to proceed with a full application to Phase 2, will be invited to develop the full application form.

Application Process – Rolling System

1. The rolling system (based on first come first served basis)
2. Each Promoter submits fully completed EOI form
3. LEADER staff will determine eligibility of EOI with LDS & Operating Rules
4. If EOI eligible, Officer meets with Promoter. Full applications will be invited when qualifying eligibility and a timeframe for completion are established. Promoter collates supporting documentation for project.
5. Project applications will be then Evaluated and Scored by Evaluation & Strategy Committee
6. Pobal will complete 1st file check for project eligibility
7. Project applications and the Evaluation Committee Recommendations will then be brought to LAG (GRD Board) for approval
8. Pobal will complete 2nd file check for project eligibility
9. Letter of Offer can be released and project can commence
10. On completion of project work, the drawdown process will occur
11. Pobal will complete 3rd check on the file. If all is deemed eligible, grant aid will be paid out.

Application Process – Targeted Call System

1. Targeted calls (will be publically advertised, have a defined budget, a call for expressions of interest and a specific closing date for completed applications, qualifying eligibility and scoring system will be available to applicants)
2. Each Promoter submits fully completed EOI form
3. LEADER staff will determine eligibility of EOI with the LDS & Operating Rules
4. If EOI eligible, send application pack and officer meet with promoter
5. Promoter will be advised on timeframe for completion of Applications & supporting documentation
6. Project applications will be then Evaluated and Scored by Evaluation & Strategy Committee
7. Pobal will complete 1st file check for project eligibility
8. Project applications and the Evaluation Committee Recommendations will then be brought to LAG (GRD Board) for approval
9. Pobal will complete 2nd file check for project eligibility
10. Letter of Offer can be released and project can commence
11. On completion of project work, drawdown process will occur
12. Pobal will complete 3rd check on the file. If all is eligible, grant aid will be paid out.

Evaluation Criteria for LEADER Projects

1. Expression of Interest

Applicants will initially complete an Expression of Interest (EOI) form. The EOI details and that of your project are entered into an IT system operated by the funding authority, the Department of Rural and Community Development. This will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

No	Score Criteria	Weighting	Min Score
1.	Does the project comply with eligibility criteria as set out in the Local Development Strategy?	Pass / Fail	Pass
2.	Does the project comply with eligibility criteria as set out in the LEADER Operating Rules?	Pass / Fail	Pass
3.	Does the project comply with the Call Criteria?	Pass / Fail	Pass

The following selection criteria will also apply to projects:

- Consistency with the LEADER programme
- Availability of other funding sources
- EU and National regulatory requirements

If deemed eligible, applicants will be invited to Stage 2 to submit a Full Application.

2. Full Application

Projects will be evaluated by the Independent Evaluation Committee following submission of fully completed applications, accompanied by all supporting documentation as required for the project. Full Applications will be evaluated based on the following scoring criteria:

No	Score Criteria	Weighting	Min Score
1.	Does the project comply with eligibility criteria as set out in the Local Development Strategy?	Pass / Fail	Pass
2.	Does the project comply with eligibility criteria as set out in the LEADER Operating Rules?	Pass / Fail	Pass
3.	Does the project comply with the Call Criteria?	Pass / Fail	Pass
4.	Deadweight - Does the project actually require LEADER funding to proceed?	Pass / Fail	Pass
5.	Displacement/Competition - Will the project be in direct competition with an existing local business and could it result in displacement of jobs or activities elsewhere?	Pass / Fail	Pass
6.	Double funding & De-minimis funding: In accordance with the 'de minimis' rule (Commission Regulations (EC) 1407/2013) which applies to both the project and the promoter, the overall limit of 'de minimis' aid shall not exceed €200,000 over any three	Pass / Fail	Pass

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	year period. Therefore, has this promoter signed the Double funding & De-minimis funding declaration?		
	Score Criteria	Weighting	Min Score
7.	<u>Compatibility with Local Development strategy</u> Do the project proposals meet the criteria set out in the LAG business plan for the relevant measure?	20	65%
8.	<u>Innovation</u> – Is the product innovative in its nature and does it displace existing enterprises?	15	65%
9.	<u>Promoter experience</u> - Does the promoter have the Training/skills, track record or experience to deliver.	20	65%
10.	<u>Financial Viability</u> – Are the project costs justifiable (reasonableness of costs) and is adequate funding available to co-fund the project?	20	65%
11.	<u>Sustainability</u> - Is the project viable and will the service continue to be delivered?	10	65%
12.	<u>Requirement</u> – Does the proposal target a specific need or address a specific gap in the market?	15	65%
	TOTAL	100	65%

In making final decisions on the funding, the LAG Board will give priority to the projects that can demonstrate strong potential for the reaching LDS outputs. Should there be more projects that score above the minimum evaluation criteria set-out, the projects will be ranked in order of their overall score until the funding is allocated.

Targeted Calls are a competitive application process with a limited fund. Projects that score above the minimum score criteria will not be guaranteed funding. Subject to Departmental approval, LEADER grant offers will be issued following the final decision of approval by the Board of GRD. There will be an appeals process for unsuccessful applicants.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can apply for LEADER Funding?

Individuals, businesses, social enterprises and community groups are all eligible to apply for LEADER funding.

A social enterprise is defined by Forfas as an enterprise;

- that trades for social/ societal purpose
- where at least part of its income is earned from its trading activity
- is separate from government
- where the surplus is primarily re-invested in the social objective.

To be defined as a community group and receive the 75% rate of aid a group must be;

- a non-profit distributing group; and
- institutionally separate from the state; and
- coming together, or has come together, to pursue a common cause or interest for the good of their community, and
- autonomous and engaged in voluntary activity; and
- promoting the interests of the wider community rather than the commercial interests of its members; and
- a group, or project whose membership does not consist of any secondary economic beneficiaries e.g. local, business people coming together as a community body to apply for funding to bring tourists into an area.

Community / voluntary groups are not required to register as a limited company or to have Charitable Status in order to apply for LEADER funding.

How do I apply for LEADER funding?

The application process now involves two steps:

- Step 1: All applicants must complete an Expression of Interest Form for each project.
- Step 2: If your Expression of Interest form is deemed eligible in principle, you will then be given an application form, and invited to submit your application for LEADER funding.

If my Expression of Interest (EOI) form is approved, does that mean my funding application will be approved?

No. An EOI will be assessed against the following criteria only;

- a) To ensure compliance and 'fit' with the LEADER Operating Rules
- b) To ensure compliance and 'fit' with the East Galway Local Development Strategy
- c) If targeted call, does the EOI 'fit' the call criteria

Can I still submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) Form even if there isn't a time specific / targeted call open for my project?

Yes. EOI forms will be accepted on a continuous basis. This will help GRD to plan effectively for the future and respond to local needs. If you submit an EOI form outside a time specific / targeted call, the enquiry will be placed on a database, and applicants will be informed of any calls as they arise.

What happens when I send in my Expression of Interest (EOI) form?

All EOI forms submitted will receive an acknowledgement. All project ideas will be assessed for eligibility and applicants informed of the outcome. If your EOI form is eligible you will be invited to make a full application for funding.

My expression of interest form has been deemed eligible in principle what happens next?

GRD will inform you of the documentation required to complete the full application and the decision making criteria and processes. This may take the form of a training seminar and information sessions on any other aspects of that project call which are deemed relevant to all project promoters; there will also be opportunities to meet with a Development Officer to discuss your proposal and get guidance on the application process.

Once my application is submitted what happens next?

GRD will assess your project application and supporting documentation against the LDS and programme operating rules and prepare a project report for the Independent Evaluation Committee. All projects are then fully assessed and scored by GRD's Evaluation Committee before going to the Board of GRD for a final decision on the projects and the levels of funding.

How long will it take to get a decision on my application?

It may take a number of months between the time that you are invited to make an EOI and a final decision is made. The timeframe will be set out in each individual funding call. This is to allow project promoters sufficient time to prepare their application and collate the documentation required. In the case of time-bound, targeted calls, no project applications will be assessed before the final deadline for submission of applications.

If my project is approved what happens?

If your project is approved, you will be issued with a letter of offer and grant contract. Once this has been signed and returned to GRD you may commence work on your project. GRD will continue to guide you through the process until your project is ready for payment.

If my project is refused what happens?

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

Forms and Templates

All forms and templates are available from GRD.

Your Business Plan

In addition to your application form the provision of a business or project plan is essential. A business plan should convince an evaluator that your project is viable in operational, management and financial terms. A project plan (for non-commercial projects) must convince the evaluator that the project is viable and has valuable benefits for the community, the natural environment or other non-commercial interests. In this context, not all of the headings below will apply to a Project Plan.

YOUR BUSINESS PLAN SHOULD CONTAIN THE FOLLOWING DETAILS:

Summary - A brief introduction to the project including the project title/ name and promoter's location.

The Promoter - Provide information on the promoter or group, including relevant skills or expertise, experience in this particular field, ability to see the project through and commitment to the project.

Background - Describe how the project has been conceived and planned. Where it is an expansion of an existing business, information should be provided on the performance of the current business and the reasons for diversification or expansion.

The Project - Describe the project in detail here focusing on elements for which funding is sought.

Market Research - What research has been done in relation to the project? Show how much you know about the market and illustrate what market share you need in order to make your project viable. Non-commercial applications need to show that there is a demand or need for their project.

Marketing Strategy - What strategy will be pursued in order to achieve the market share or demand referred to above?

Innovation - As innovation is a key principle of the LEADER programme, you should describe how your project is different.

Competition - You should identify any competitors and show how your project will not adversely affect or displace other established local businesses.

Project Costs & Project Funding - This should include a detailed breakdown of the costs involved in the project based on quotations received. A separate section should show how the funding will be sourced, including grant-aid, loans and own resources.

Financial Projections - Comprehensive three-year financial projections must be provided for most projects. These should include profit & loss projections and cash flow projections and demonstrate the viability of the project.

Project Impact - Outline the benefits or positive impact of your project for yourself, the business, the wider community or the environment. Give realistic projections for job creation, business growth, etc.

Conclusion - This is an opportunity to convince the evaluator that your project should be supported, highlight what is different about it and its suitability as a LEADER rural development project.

Sign & Date - It is essential that both the application form & business/project plan are signed and dated by the promoter(s) at the time of submission.

Quotations –Fact Sheet Quotation:

The document must be titled a quotation and not an order, an invoice, a pro-forma or any other name. It should have a quote number or reference if relevant.

From: The name, address and contact details of the person, organisation, business or company providing the quote should appear on the quote. This must include the VAT registration number of the provider if registered for VAT.

To: The quote should be addressed to the person, organisation or company which is making the application to LEADER 2014 - 2020 and this should include their address.

Date: The date on which the quotation is issued should be clear.

Details: The details of the individual items and individual aspects to which the quote refers should be clearly specified and set out in the quote. This specification should include the number of items or the number of hours, etc. and their unit cost. A total for each item or element should then be given.

NET Cost: The cost of all the individual elements / items should then be added to give a total net cost. Costs in the quote should be clearly identified in the correct currency Euro (€) or pound sterling (£) as applicable.

VAT: The VAT rate and the VAT amount should be clearly identified, should be calculated and included clearly and separately on the quote.

Total Cost: The total cost (which includes the VAT) on the quotation should also appear.

Signature: The quotation must be signed by the person providing it. Quotations submitted electronically, which are accompanied by clearly identifiable.

Audit requirements and sanctions

The Promoter(s) must submit all of the relevant documentary evidence to clearly demonstrate compliance with the relevant tendering and public procurement requirements. All quotations must be signed and dated by the tenderer to allow independent verification. Quotations submitted electronically, which are accompanied by clearly identifiable date and source information, will be accepted up to the maximum thresholds outlined above. The request for

tender document should be submitted with the quotes. Where public procurement applies, Promoters must submit an audit trail for all actions including, where relevant, copies of:

- a. Request for tender,
- b. Evidence of publication,
- c. Responses to those tender requests,
- d. Tender scoring sheets used and evidence to back up the reason for selecting the successful tender,
- e. Notification of intention to award,
- f. Copies of letters notifying unsuccessful tenders of the result of the tender process, and
- g. Copy of letter notifying the successful tender.

Where a proposed project is advertised on e-tenders (or the OJEU), the promoter must submit a printout from the etenders website of the various actions and activities during this period.

Failure to follow correct procurement procedures will result in elements of the project being disallowed and a penalty being applied using the methodology outlined in the European Commission Guidelines on applying correction for public procurement irregularities (*Commission Decisions - European Structural and Investment Funds 2014- 2020 - Regional Policy - European Commission*). Such disallowances may result in the repayment of previous phased grant payments.

Artificial Splitting of Projects

The deliberate artificial splitting of projects that exceed the thresholds allowed is strictly not permitted. For a project to be considered eligible as a phased project, it must be stand-alone and operable in its own right. Artificial splitting of projects to come in under public procurement thresholds should not occur.

List of Agricultural De minimis Schemes 2013 – 2016

Scheme Name	2013	2014	2015	2016
Premium from Kerry cattle live Calves	X	X	X	X
Bovine Viral Diarrhoea Compensation Scheme (BVD) Beef and Dairy calves	X	X	X	X
Beef Technology Adoption Programme (BTAP)	X	X	X	X
Sheep Technology Adoption Programme (STAP)	X	X	X	X
Dairy Development Programme (DDP)	X		X	
Bord Bia Quality Assurance Scheme	X	X	X	
Imported Fodder Transport Scheme	X			
Beef Genomics Scheme (BGS)		x	x	
Milking Skills Programme paid by Farm Relief Service (FRS)		x	x	x
Dairy 'Cash Plan 2014' Programme (DCP)		x	x	
Superlevy Installment Scheme				x
Fodder Damage Aid Scheme 2016				x
Emergency Flood Damage Relief Scheme 2016				x

Sample of the Documentation Checklist

Each application form must be accompanied by all or some of the following relevant documentation:

- Quotations for project cost (*depending on if Promoter is Category One/Two*)
 - 1 quote for each items under €5,000 ex. VAT
 - 3 quotes for each item between €5,000 & €25,000 ex. VAT.
 - 5 quotes for each item over €50,000 ex. VAT

Quotes must show VAT amount and the rate (*see page 24*)

E-tenders must be used for supplies & services over €25,000 & for construction work over €50,000

- Financial Projections (*3 years required to include Profit & Loss and Monthly cashflow*)
- Schedule of Quotes
- If an existing company;
 - Copies of Audited accounts (past 3 years)
 - Copy of Certification of Incorporation, Memorandum & Articles of Association
 - List of Directors and Shareholders
- Evidence of availability of match-funding e.g. Own bank account statement, letter from your Bank or financial institution sanctioning loan, other source of funds. You will need to show that you can pay for the project in advance of drawdown of LEADER grant aid.
- VAT number or a letter from the Revenue Commissioners stating that you are not registered for VAT.
- Any support letters e.g. from local complementary businesses, other development agencies, Fáilte Ireland or any other source that the promoter or GRD deems relevant.
- Evidence of ownership of property/asset (*Folio number and map*)
- Copy of lease agreement (for a community groups 7 years and a commercial business 7 years)
- Copy of buildings plans/drawings. Copy of full planning permission or alternatively evidence that planning permission is not required.
- If an architectural heritage project, appropriate letter(s) of support from Galway County Council and evidence of completion of a Heritage Review if required.

PLEASE NOTE: Additional information may be sought by the LEADER Staff, the Independent Evaluation Committee or the Board of Galway Rural Development Co. Ltd.

Contact Information

Galway Rural Development, Mellows Campus, Athenry, Co. Galway

Telephone: 091 844335

Email: leader@grd.ie

Website: www.grd.ie

PLEASE NOTE: All information is correct at the time of printing this guide but may be subject to change. This is a summary guide to LEADER and does not include every aspect of the programme guidelines in its Operating Rules.

GRD accepts no responsibility for any errors or omissions.

