

RDP 2014-2020 (LEADER) in County Leitrim

Information Booklet



Comhairle Chontae Leitrim
 Leitrim County Council



The European Union and The
 Leitrim Development Company
 are working in collaboration



An t-Éiríochán, Leitrim, agus
 Ceisteoir na n-Éiríochán Pobail Áiteanna

Leitrim Development Company
 are working in collaboration

INTRODUCTION

This handbook is for any group, business or individual wishing to apply for LEADER funding. It will give you an overview of the LEADER Programme in County Leitrim and the various plans and partners involved in the programme. It will also give you information on who can apply, the types of projects which are eligible for funding and the rates of funding available. It is important that you read this booklet in full in order to understand the process to be followed if you are interested in applying for LEADER funding in County Leitrim.



Signing of the contract to deliver the LEADER programme by Leitrim Local Community Development Committee and Partners.

What is LEADER?

The LEADER Initiative (Liaisons entre actions de développement de l'économie rurale - links between actions of rural development) was established by the European Commission in 1991 and is a method of mobilising and delivering rural development in local rural communities.



LEADER uses a 'bottom-up' or community led local development approach to rural development. It is part of the overall Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020 which includes a range of both on and off farm support measures for the sustainable development of rural Ireland.

While the overall RDP is delivered by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, LEADER is administered by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. The priority of LEADER is to promote social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas.



LEADER is a French acronym which roughly translates as 'Links between actions of Rural Development'. LEADER is a community led approach to local development delivering EU funding into rural businesses and communities through Ireland's Rural Development Programme 2014-2020. It promotes social inclusion, poverty reduction and the economic development of rural areas.

LEADER in County Leitrim

The Leitrim Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) is the Local Action Group with ultimate responsibility for the delivery, implementation and finances of the LEADER programme. LCDC's were established in all Local Authority areas and are part of Local Government Reform. The LCDC comprises of representatives of the Local Authority, other state agencies, community and voluntary sector and social partners.

The LEADER elements of RDP 2014-2020 will provide €5,998,474 over the lifetime of the programme to support the sustainable development of County Leitrim. Leitrim Development Company, a partner on the LCDC will be the Implementing Partner with responsibility for implementing actions in the county on behalf of the Local Action Group, the LCDC. Leitrim County Council will be the lead Financial Partner with overall responsibility for the administrative and financial management of the programme.



Local Action Group (LAG) with ultimate responsibility for LEADER. Comprises of representatives from the Local Authority, other state agencies, community, voluntary and social partners.



Lead Implementing Partner with responsibility for implementing actions on behalf of the LAG. Responsible for administration and animation of project applications. Main communication point for the programme.



Lead Financial Partner with responsibility for maintaining and retaining records of all financial aspects of the programme. Leitrim County Council will also be responsible for making payments to project promoters on behalf of the LAG.

The Local Development Strategy (LDS)

In the context of LEADER, the Local Development Strategy is a plan developed by the LAG through consultation with rural communities. Local Development Strategies are designed through a “bottom-up” process facilitating participation by any member of the rural community. Leitrim Development Company as lead Implementing Partner undertook the consultation for the development of the strategy in County Leitrim in Autumn 2015. People had an opportunity to have their say about the priorities for the programme through the consultation process.

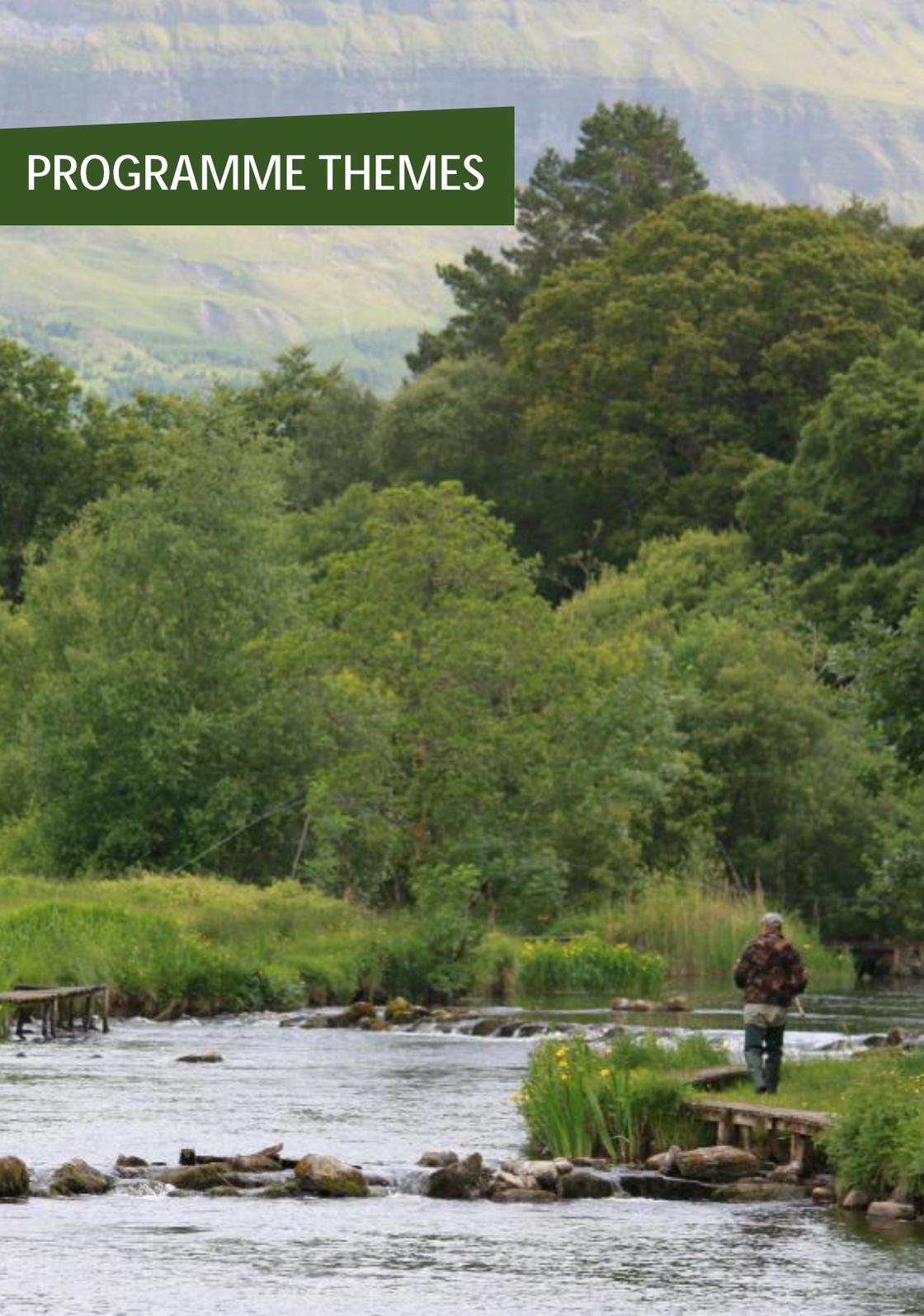
The LDS determines the needs in a local area and the LAG, the LCDC will make decisions on what types of investment are best suited to address those needs. The LDS examines the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that face the county and outline the types of actions to be supported to address these. The three programme themes are:

- Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation
- Social Inclusion
- Rural Environment.

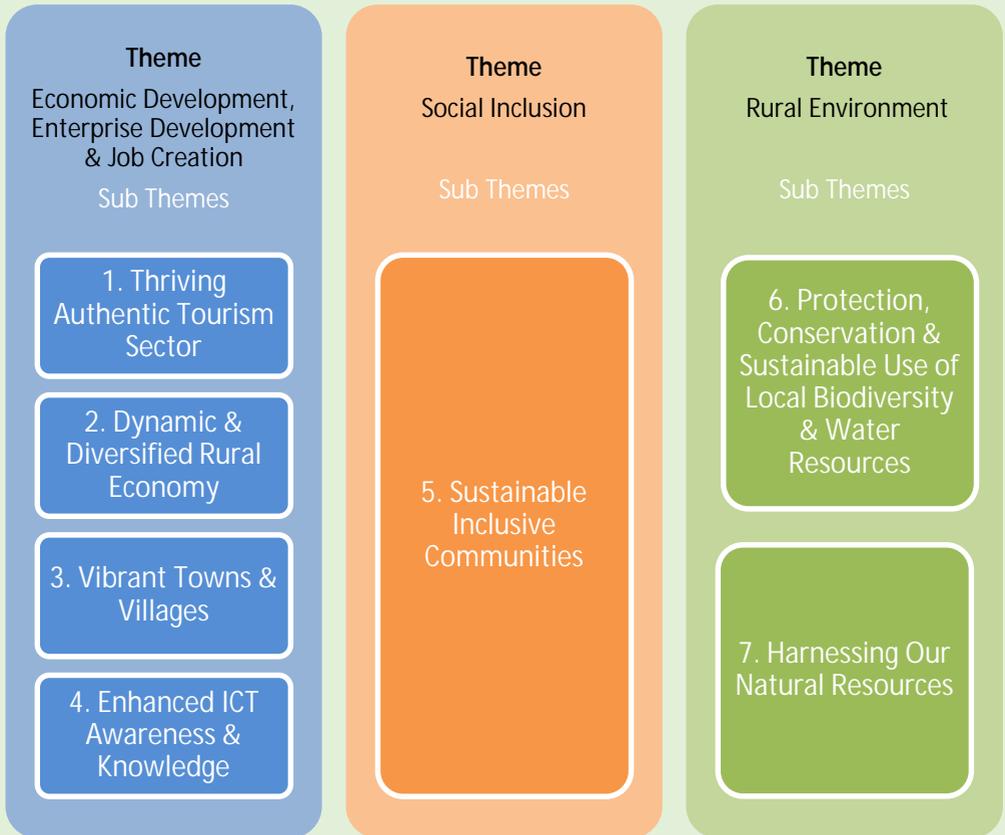
The Vision for the Local Development Strategy is;

“Through a coherent strategy, we strive towards a vibrant, healthy rural economy in County Leitrim delivering actions which will transform rural communities into stable, thriving socio economic hubs of inclusive community spirit, environmental best practice and superior quality of life.”

PROGRAMME THEMES



The Leitrim Local Development Strategy has identified a number of sub themes / priorities as set out within the three LEADER themes.



It should be noted that LEADER is delivered through the Local Development Strategy and that specific projects funded will depend on the individual needs, objectives and actions identified in the Leitrim Local Development Strategy. The Local Development Strategy is available to read on www.ldco.ie



Eligible for LEADER Funding

Who is Eligible?

To apply for LEADER funding the applicant, or their project must be located in County Leitrim. Applications can be made by rural businesses and rural community organisations.

Applications must be from any of the following:

Sole Traders
Farmers
Formalised Community/Voluntary Groups
Companies Limited by Guarantee
Designated Activity Company limited by shares
Registered Charities
Community Councils
Trusts
Partnerships
Limited Companies
Private Individuals
Companies having share capital
Co-operative Societies

What Projects are Eligible?

Under the LEADER Programme funding is available under the three themes of Economic Development, Enterprise Development & Job Creation, Social Inclusion and Rural Environment.



The Local Development Strategy outlines the seven sub-themes of the programme under which there are a series of objectives and actions. The seven sub-themes are as follows;

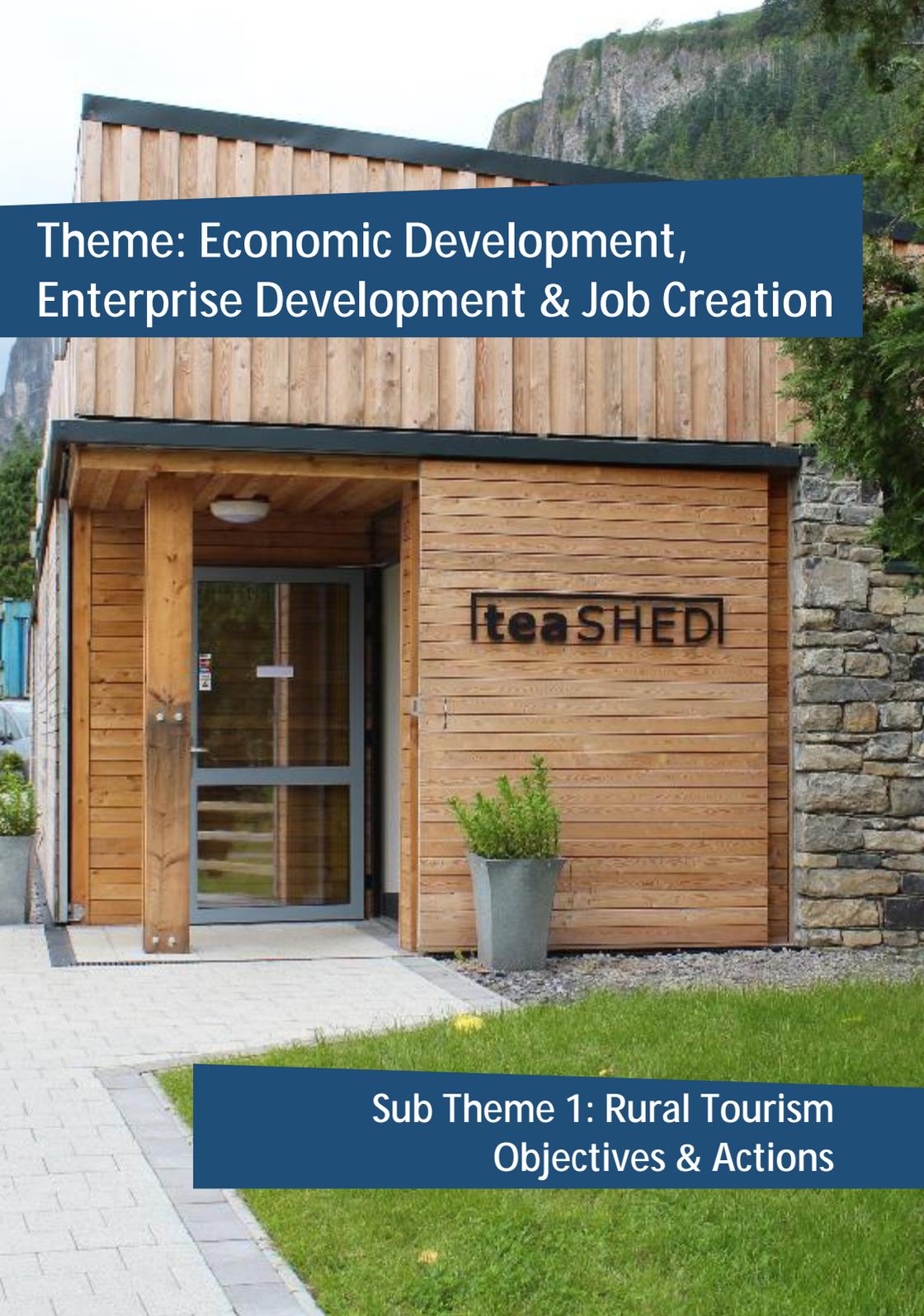
1. Rural Tourism
2. Economic Development
3. Rural Towns
4. Broadband
5. Basic Services Targeted at Hard to Reach Communities
6. Protection & Conservation of Local Biodiversity & Water Resources
7. Development of Renewable Energy

Funding is available for the following items under each sub-theme;

- Capital costs for investment in new equipment, buildings, facilities, services and assets;
- Development of innovative products & activities;
- Support for networks, collective marketing and training;
- Analysis & Development and Feasibility Support.



All projects which are fundable must fit within the actions, objectives, sub-themes and themes of the programme. It is important that you familiarise yourself with the objectives and actions which your potential project falls under.



**Theme: Economic Development,
Enterprise Development & Job Creation**

**Sub Theme 1: Rural Tourism
Objectives & Actions**



1A Tourism Assets & Infrastructure

- **Rural tourism facilities, products and services**
e.g. Equipment & infrastructure for recreation, greenways, blueways, heritage tourism, eco-tourism, etc.



1B Tourism Accommodation

- **Tourism accommodation in the county in areas of need**
- **Niche or specialist accommodation**
e.g. Accommodation not available in the region which can add value



1C Tourism Promotion

- **Marketing experiences & County Leitrim as a destination**
- **Collective & innovative business marketing projects & activities** (Three or more tourism businesses must be involved)



1D Collective Festivals & Events

- **Collective support for festivals & events** Equipment & Infrastructure (Three or more festivals or events must be involved)



1E Tourism Training

- **Networking, development supports and training for tourism groups**
e.g. Specialist Tourism Training, Supports & Networking Events for collective groups of tourism providers

Sub Theme 1: Enterprise Development Objectives & Actions



2A Development of Enterprises

- **Capital and asset investment for businesses**
- **Farm diversification businesses**
e.g. Equipment, Buildings, Patents, etc. Please note that farm diversification relates to non agricultural activities.



2B Social Enterprises

- **Social/Community Enterprises**
e.g. Equipment, Buildings, etc. for development, expansion and creation of social enterprises.



2C Collaborative Marketing

- **Collective marketing and collaboration for businesses**
(Three or more businesses must be involved)



2D Enterprise Supports

- **Enterprise Training and Development**
e.g. Specialist Training and Supports for collaborative & collective enterprises resulting in added value for individual enterprises.

Please note that funding of mainstream enterprises are not eligible under the programme.

Sub Theme 3: Rural Towns Objectives & Actions



3A Town & Village Enhancement

- Town and village enhancement projects
- Access to public spaces & community facilities



3B Town & Village Supports

- Training & capacity building supports
e.g. Town renewal initiatives and schemes, etc.

Sub Theme 4: Broadband Objectives & Actions



4A ICT & Broadband

- Training, development & awareness raising on the benefits of ICT

Theme: Social Inclusion

Sub Theme 5: Basic Services Targeted at Hard to Reach Communities Objectives & Actions



5A Social Inclusion Capital Supports

- Community services, facilities and infrastructure for hard to reach communities and groups



5B Social Inclusion Capacity Building

- Social inclusion training support programmes

Theme: Rural Environment



Sub Theme 6: Protection & Conservation of Local Biodiversity & Water Resources Objectives & Actions



6A Water Resources

- Developmental supports for the sustainable use of water resources
- Training initiatives on the preservation of water resources
- Capital supports towards water conservation



6B Natural Environment /Biodiversity

- Biodiversity Action Plan
- Awareness raising through training initiatives on the natural environment
- Capital supports for preservation of the environment

Sub Theme 7: Harnessing Our Natural Resources Objectives & Actions



7A Renewable Energy Sector

- Scoping studies of Leitrim's potential renewable energy sector
- Exemplar community energy projects
- Development of the wood energy supply chain in the county
- Practical training in small scale renewable energy

Ineligible Activities

It is not possible to give a definitive list of activities that are, or may be, eligible for LEADER Funding because the scope of the fund is very broad and designed to respond to local need. Some activity/items that cannot be supported under the programme are listed below.

Funding is not available for the following items;

Agriculture production & fisheries	Horticulture including bee keeping
Conventional Retail Operation	Once off festivals or events
Training courses that form part of normal education programmes	Conventional motor vehicles, including cars, industrial / farm / construction vehicles, vans and buses
Working capital (including stock)	Reclaimable VAT
Loans	General maintenance works for public bodies
Insurance for projects	Improvements / refurbishment of private residential property
Payments for gifts, donations or personal entertainment	Costs associated with meeting a legislative or statutory requirement
Childcare	Housing
Healthcare	Nursing homes
Planning application fees / Development Charges	Projects that already have other EU funding either directly or through a national programme
Race and sport horse industries	Greyhound industries

Rates of Funding Available



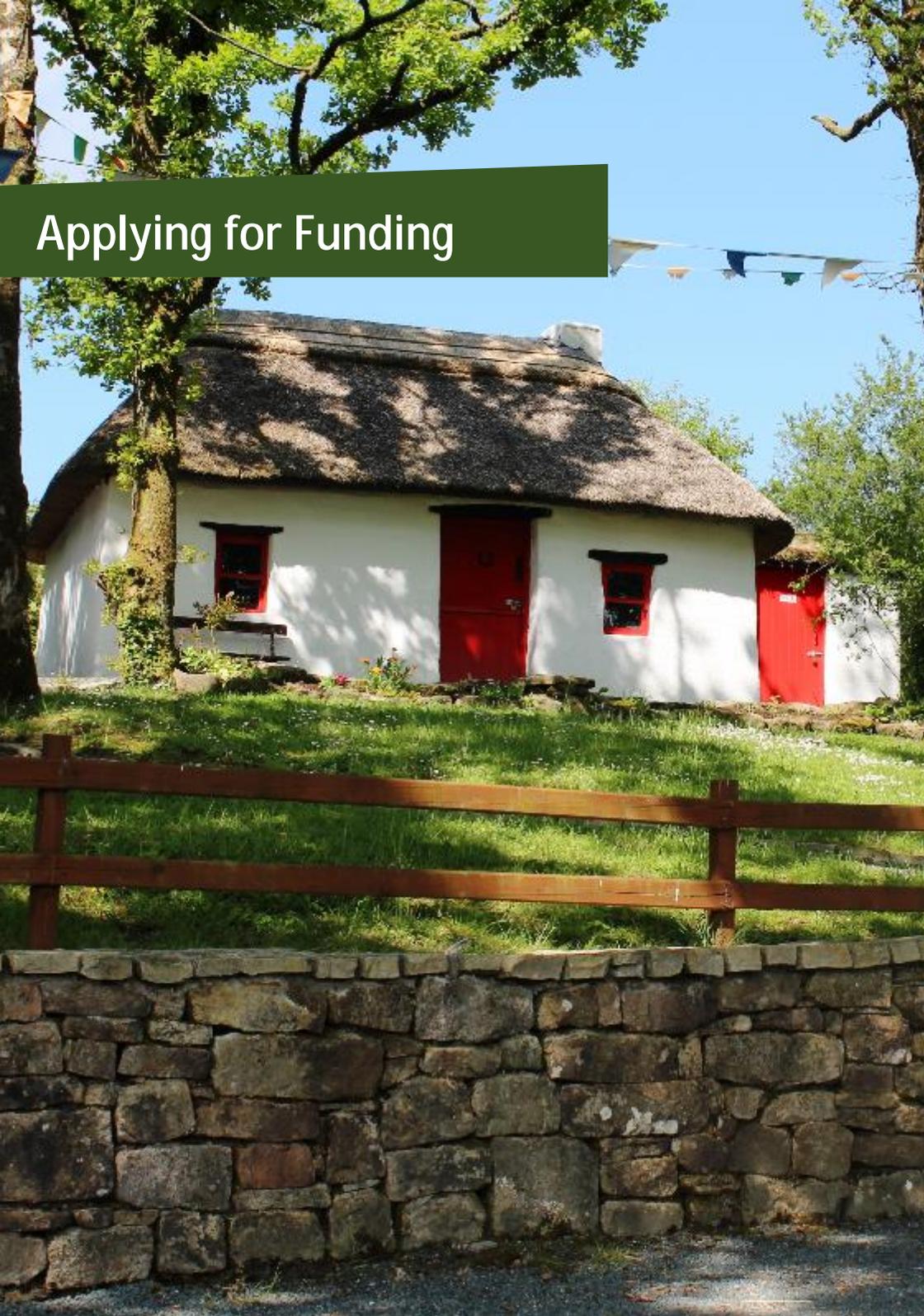
Type of Project	Applicant	Maximum Rate of Aid	Maximum Funding
Investment & other supports (including animation undertaken as part of the implementation of a project)	Private/Business	Up to maximum of 50%	€200,000
	Community	Up to maximum of 75%	
	Community under basic services targeted at hard to reach communities	Up to maximum of 90%	
Analysis and Development	Private/Business	Up to maximum of 75%	€30,000
	Community	Up to maximum of 90%	
Training	Private/Business or Community	Up to maximum of 100%	€200,000

Please note that the grant amount will depend on:

- the type of project
- the benefits of the project in terms of jobs, target groups, etc.
- the size of the project/business and
- the costs involved (NB: not all the costs of a project may qualify for funding).

The minimum allowable grant available is €1,250. This threshold may be increased by the LCDC for project specific calls.

Applying for Funding



There are two stages in the application process for LEADER;

Stage 1 Expression of Interest (EOI)

Stage 2 Full Application

Please note that those wishing to make an application for funding must complete and submit an Expression of Interest Form.

Expression of Interest Forms can be found on www.ldco.ie or alternatively contact Leitrim Development Company directly for a hard copy.

Expression of Interest Forms can be submitted at any stage throughout the programme subject to funding availability, however, please note that time limited calls for EOIs will take place for a number of different categories of funding.

Information on targeted / time limited calls together with details on deadlines will be published. The purpose of this type of call is to ensure that LEADER funding is targeted where it delivers the most value and is awarded based on a comparative assessment, secures

equal opportunities for all potential applicants and ensures that funding is available for the duration of the programme.

Targeted/time limited calls will be widely publicised on www.ldco.ie, in the local media/information meetings. All those wishing to apply for funding should familiarise themselves with the different closing dates. The EOI form facilitates an initial engagement with the programme.

The form can be submitted electronically or in hard copy. All hard copy forms must be addressed to Rural Development Section, Leitrim Development Company, Church Street, Drumshanbo, County Leitrim or email to leader@ldco.ie

After the EOI form is submitted, the Form is checked to ensure that it is fully complete. If information is missing, the EOI form will be returned to you to supply the missing information.

How your information is reviewed



EOI Forms will be reviewed to ensure that the proposed project is eligible under the programme, that it is in line with the Local Development Strategy Themes and Objectives and that there is sufficient funding to consider your project.



After you submit your EOI, you will receive an acknowledgement letter stating whether your proposed project is eligible in principle. If your proposed project is considered eligible in principle you will be invited to progress to application stage. At this stage you/your group, organisation or business will be issued with Guidance Notes/Project Specific Guidance Notes and an Application Form. Please note that being invited to submit a Full Application

is no guarantee of receiving grant funding.

If it is determined that your proposal is not eligible in principle the reason(s) will be outlined to you/your group, organisation or business.

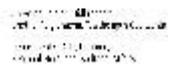
The LEADER team within Leitrim Development Company will support you throughout the Application process and therefore if you have any questions regarding the EOI Form or the Application process, please contact a member of the LEADER team. We hope you will find this handbook useful in understanding LEADER and the application process.

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All information is correct at time of printing/publishing, but may be subject to change based on EU RDP Regulations & the Programme Operating Rules. Leitrim Local Community Development Committee & its partners accept no responsibility for any errors or omissions.



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