



Donegal Local
Development CLG

Forbairt Áitiúil
Dhún na nGall



THE LEADER PROGRAMME

2023-2027

www.dldc.org



Rialtas
na hÉireann
Government
of Ireland

Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040

Arna chomhchistiú ag an Roinn Forbairt Tuaithe agus Pobail
Co-funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development

Ár dTodhchaí
Tuaithe
Our Rural
Future



Arna chomhchistiú ag
an Aontas Eorpach
Co-funded by
the European Union



Ceannas um Fhorbairt Pobail Áitiúil
Dhún na nGall
Donegal Local Community Development
Committee



Comhairle Contae
Dhún na nGall
Donegal County Council

Welcome to The LEADER Programme

Welcome to the LEADER (Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Economie Rurale) programme, which has been at the heart of rural development in Ireland and EU Member States for over three decades.

The LEADER programme has been a steadfast force, originating as an experimental initiative in 1991 and blossoming into a pivotal programme in EU rural development policy.

Having traversed five successive programming periods, LEADER stands as a testament to its commitment to fostering innovation and sustainability.

This programme has been a catalyst for a myriad of projects, each contributing to the growth and vitality of rural communities across the EU. LEADER has played a crucial role in shaping a landscape marked by increased employment opportunities and a newfound vibrancy in rural life.

LEADER Themes and Sub-Themes

The LEADER element of the CAP Strategic Plan 2023-2027 outlines a series of themes identified as part of research and consultations undertaken in developing the plan. These themes are reflective of the key challenges and opportunities facing rural Ireland.

Each theme is given further definition through a number of sub-themes, which reflect the key areas that require the most support and have the greatest potential to promote the sustainable development of rural communities.

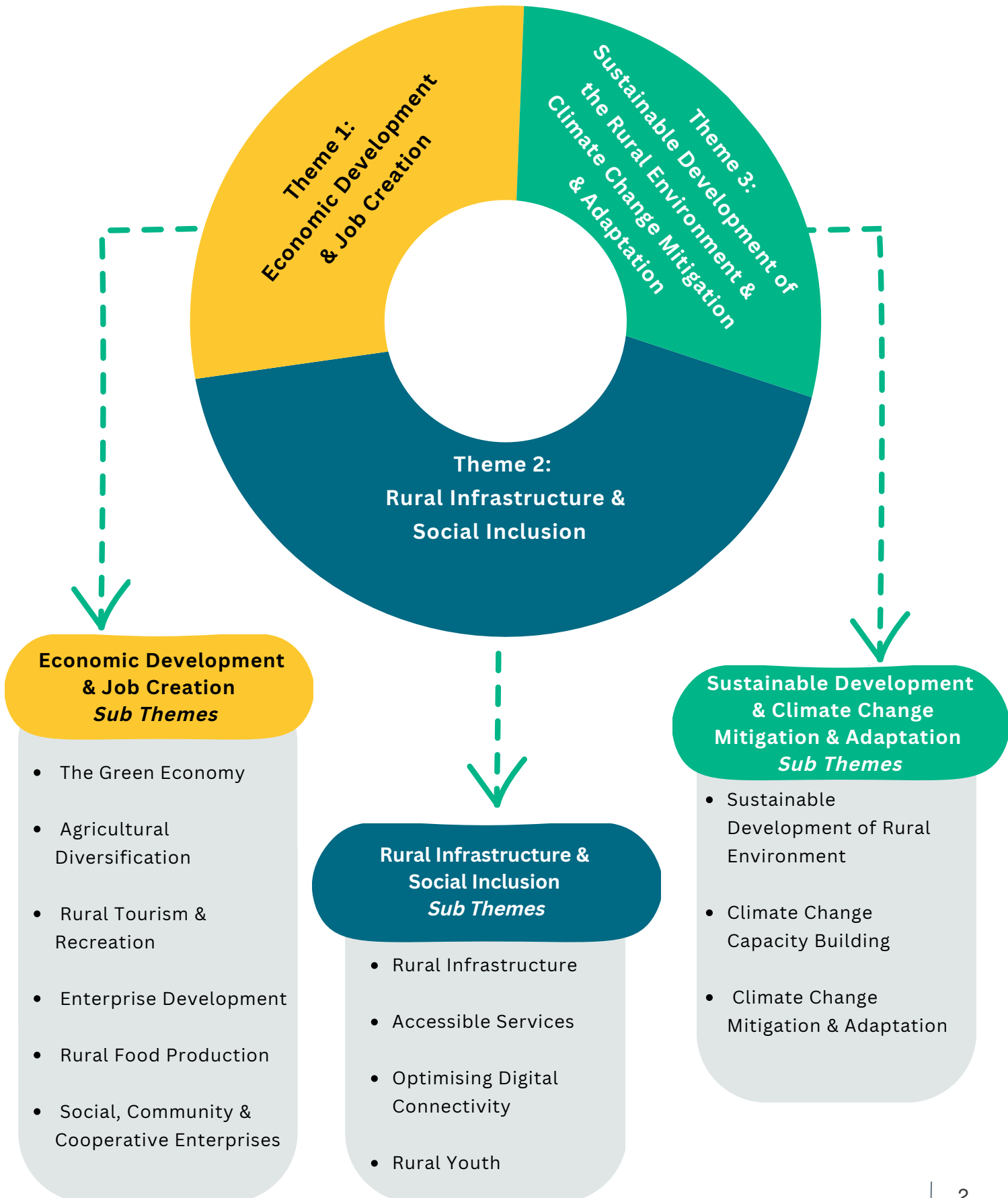
The sub-themes are considered sufficiently broad and flexible to encompass the diversity of local needs in rural areas. For a project to be eligible for LEADER funding, it must be linked to at least one of the LEADER sub-themes.



Atlantic Northwest North, a sea kayaking company funded by LEADER

LEADER

Themes & Sub Themes



LEADER

AT A GLANCE



Key things to consider when applying to LEADER whether you are a community group, social enterprise or private promoter.

Local Development Strategy (LDS)

All projects funded under LEADER must be in line with the programme Operating Rules, Themes and Sub-Themes, and the LDS. The LDS was devised in consultation with local communities throughout Donegal and sets out a number of priority objectives and strategic actions for the delivery of the LEADER Programme in Donegal. Further information on the LDS objectives and strategic actions are available on request.

State Aid & De Minimis

Has your group/organisation/enterprise received public funding in the past 3 years? This may deem you ineligible for LEADER funding. Under State Aid Rules, you cannot receive grant aid of more than €300,000 in a three year period if your project involves economic activity.

Displacement

Take a look at your local community. Are there other similar projects in existence? Would your project take away from these projects/services or result in the closure or loss of business for another enterprise? Remember your product/service does not need to be identical to activities already in existence to result in displacement.

Deadweight

Do you really need the funding? If you have the finance to fund the project yourself then you will not be eligible to apply for LEADER funding.

Innovation

Projects should demonstrate new innovative ideas which show a degree of new thinking and originality to the community.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

LEADER

AT A GLANCE (CONTINUED)

Funding Ceilings and Grant Rates

Grants of up to €200,000 are available for capital projects with the exception of projects funded under the 'Rural Tourism' and 'Enterprise Development' objectives where the eligible grant amount is capped at €50,000. The grant rate for community applicants is 75%, while the grant rate for private applicants is 50%.

Grants of up to €30,000 are available for feasibility studies at a grant rate of 90% for both community and private applicants.

Matching Funding

Can you source funding from a private or public source which is not an EU funding source e.g. County Council funding? Please note only community bodies can use match funding from a public source. 5% Rule – You must contribute at least 5% cash to the overall cost of the project.

Bridging Finance

As grant aid is paid retrospectively, you will need to organise bridging finance for the project. This could be from a financial institution such as a Credit Union or Bank. Community bodies may apply to Clann Credo, Community Finance Ireland or Western Development Commission for bridging loans.

Public Procurement

As LEADER is public funding, applicants to the LEADER programme will need to obtain quotes for the project costs in line with Public Procurement rules. Depending on the scale of your project, you may need to advertise the contract on the e-tenders website. A summary of the public procurement thresholds is available upon request.

Planning Permission

Generally, planning permission is required for any development of land or property. Documentary evidence confirming that planning permission has been granted by Donegal County Council must be provided at Application Stage. If the development is exempt from planning permission, evidence of same must also be provided from Donegal County Council.

Title Leasehold

If you are applying for funding for the development of land or property, you must provide proof of ownership. In the case of owned land/buildings – a recently certified copy (by solicitor) of the Folio/Stamped Deed of Conveyance and map, showing you as owner or a letter and map from your solicitor certifying ownership. In the case of Leasehold, certified signed documentation outlining lease details (at least 6 years) and appropriately witnessed must be provided.

Catchment Areas

There are four Implementing Partners (IP) that administer the LEADER Programme in Donegal. Each IP operates within a specific geographic area as outlined below. You can apply to DLDC for funding if your project/business is located in our catchment area.

Implementing Partner

Donegal Local Development Company CLG (DLDC)

Inishowen Development Partnership (IDP)

Údarás na Gaeltachta

Comhair na nOileán Teo

Catchment Area

Donegal (ex. Inishowen, Gaeltacht & Islands)

Inishowen

Gaeltacht

Islands

What type of project is eligible for funding?

All funding decisions are underpinned by the Local Development Strategy (LDS) objectives and priorities. For a project to be eligible for LEADER funding, it must be in line with at least one of the LDS objectives.

Eligible Costs

- Construction or improvement of immovable property
- Purchase of machinery and equipment
- Feasibility Studies (consultancy fees)

Ineligible Sectors & Activities

- Primary Agriculture
- Primary Horticulture (inc. bee-keeping)
- Fisheries
- Childcare
- Health Care & Health Care Equipment
- Nursing Homes
- Housing
- Conventional Retail Operations
- Operational/Running Costs
- Statutory & Legal Costs
- Work that falls with the remit of the Local Authority
- Residential Property including B&Bs that are part of a private residence
- All motor vehicles including trailers to transport vehicles
- Schools, Colleges, Montessori Schools, Creches
- Reclaimable VAT



The Application Process

Engaging with the LEADER programmes involves a clear and straightforward process. See below for a step-by-step guide. Throughout the process, a Project Officer will be available to provide valuable support and guidance. Contact details for the LEADER Project Officer in your area can be found on our website - www.dldc.org.

Expression of Interest Stage

To apply for LEADER funding, start with the Expression of Interest (EOI) form. The purpose of this is to determine if your project is deemed 'eligible in principle' for LEADER funding. If eligible, you will receive an invitation to submit a funding application. Get the EOI form by contacting a Project Officer (details on www.dldc.org).

Application Stage

At this stage, you (the 'Promoter'), must fill out a detailed application form and submit along with all relevant supporting documentation.

Evaluation Stage

All applications for funding must be presented by the Project Officer to an Evaluation Committee and recommendations brought to, and approved by, the Donegal Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) before a Letter of Offer is issued. Project activity e.g. works/professional services prior to date of contract will not be eligible for grant assistance.

Grant Drawdown Stage

Once you receive your Letter of Offer, sign and return to DLDC you may then commence your project. All paid invoices and supporting documents must be submitted to DLDC before grant payment is received.