

Co. Roscommon LEADER Programme 2014-2020

Frequently Asked Questions

September 2017

1	<p>Who can apply for LEADER Funding? Individuals, businesses, social enterprises and community groups are all eligible to apply for LEADER funding.</p> <p>A Social Enterprise is defined by Forfas as an enterprise;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>To be defined as community group and receive the 75% or higher rate of aid a group must be;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 being tourists into an area. <p>Community/Voluntary Groups are not required to register as a limited company or to have Charitable Status in order to apply for LEADER funding.</p>																								
2	<p>How do I apply for LEADER funding? The application process now involves two steps which is a change from the process used in previous LEADER programmes.</p> <p>Step 1 All applicants must complete an Expression of Interest Form (EOI) for each project. EOIs must be submitted to Roscommon LEADER Partnership.</p> <p>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.</p>																								
3	<p>How much funding can I/we apply for? The rates of aid for LEADER funding are as follows:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="288 1346 1390 1727"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="4">Maximum Funding Ceilings and Support Rates</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Type of Project</th> <th>Applicant</th> <th>Rate of Aid</th> <th>Maximum Funding</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Investment & other supports including Capital+</td> <td>Private</td> <td>Up to a maximum of 50%</td> <td rowspan="2">€200,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Community</td> <td>Up to a maximum of 75%</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Analysis and Development</td> <td>Private</td> <td>Up to a maximum of 75%</td> <td rowspan="2">€30,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Community</td> <td>Up to a maximum of 90%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Training</td> <td>Private and/or Community</td> <td>Up to a maximum of 100%</td> <td>€200,000</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Minimum and Maximum Funding (Grant) Threshold Roscommon LCDC will not approve funding of less than €5,000 for any project and the maximum amount of grant aid which can be approved for a single project is €200,000.</p>	Maximum Funding Ceilings and Support Rates				Type of Project	Applicant	Rate of Aid	Maximum Funding	Investment & other supports including Capital+	Private	Up to a maximum of 50%	€200,000	Community	Up to a maximum of 75%	Analysis and Development	Private	Up to a maximum of 75%	€30,000	Community	Up to a maximum of 90%	Training	Private and/or Community	Up to a maximum of 100%	€200,000
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4	<p>What is a Time Specific / Targeted Call? The new LEADER programme 2014 – 2020 requires us to approve a minimum of 1 Targeted Call per Annum. This means that a public call will be made for Expressions of Interest (EOIs) under specified themes and subthemes of the programme within a defined timeframe. For example, tourism projects may be invited to submit an EOI by a specific deadline date. If these EOIs are eligible in principle, they will be invited to submit a full application within a specified timeframe and all applications will be assessed together. This is a competitive process. The purpose of this process is to ensure that funding is targeted where it delivers the most value and to ensure that all projects have an equal opportunity to apply for funding.</p>																								

	<p>For certain sectors, it is intended to run only time specific/targeted calls in Co. Roscommon which means that there may not be funding available for your project until a call is announced under the theme/subtheme your project falls into. Time specific/targeted calls will be widely publicised in local press, at information meetings and on RLPs website.</p> <p>The targeted call is a two stage process; Stage 1 - Call for EOIs A public call will be made for EOIs stating; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LEADER theme or themes being called • The proposed overall budget for the call • The maximum level of funding available to any individual project • The closing date for receipt of EOIs Stage 2 – Application stage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EOIs deemed eligible will be invited to submit a full application • Applicants will be informed of the qualifying criteria and marking scheme to be used • Applicants will be informed of the closing date for receipt of applications and the timeframe for assessing and notifying applicants of the results. </p>
5	<p>What is a Rolling Call? A rolling call means that we can assess projects on a continuous basis until the budget for that project activity is fully allocated i.e. funding is allocated on a first come first served basis. However, if your project type has been listed under our Time Specific/Targeted Call programme, you will have to wait until that closed call is announced before you can submit your EOI.</p>
6	<p>Can I still submit an Expression of Interest Form (EOI) even if there isn't a time specific / targeted call open for my project? Yes. We also accept EOIs on a continuous basis. This helps us to plan effectively for the future and respond to local needs. If you submit an EOI outside a time specific / targeted call your enquiry will be placed on a database and you will be informed of any calls as they arise. Note that you will have to re-submit your EOI once the call opens.</p>
7	<p>What happens when I send in my Expression of Interest (EOI)? Once we receive your Expression of Interest form we will send you a letter of acknowledgement. Your project idea will then be assessed for eligibility and you will be informed of the outcome. If your EOI is eligible you will be invited to make a full application for funding.</p>
8	<p>My EOI has been deemed eligible in principle; what happens next? A Development Officer from RLP will inform you of the documentation required to complete your application and the decision making criteria and processes. Initially this may be in the form of a training seminar however there will also be an opportunity to meet with a Development Officer to discuss your proposal and get guidance on the application process.</p>
9	<p>Once my application is submitted what happens next? Your Development Officer will assess your project against the LDS, LEADER Programme Operating Rules and other relevant plans, etc. and will prepare a project report. All projects are then fully assessed and scored by an independent Evaluation Committee before going to Roscommon Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) for a final decision. Your Development Officer will guide and help you during this time.</p>
10	<p>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 application and a final decision is made. This is to allow project promoters sufficient time to prepare their application and collate the documentation required.</p>
11	<p>If my project is approved what happens? If your project is approved, you will be issued with a grant contract. Once this has been signed and returned to RLP, you may commence work on your project or incur any expenditure. Your Development Officer will continue to guide you through the process until your project is ready for payment.</p>
12	<p>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.</p>
13	<p>Who is involved in LEADER in County Roscommon? Roscommon Local Community Development Committee is the Local Action Group (LAG) for the delivery of the LEADER Programme 2014-2020 in Co. Roscommon. Roscommon LCDC makes the final decision on LEADER grant applications in the county. Roscommon LEADER Partnership is the Implementing Partner. This role involves the day-to-day running of the LEADER Programme, including assisting and advising project promoters Roscommon County Council is the Financial Partner. This role involves the monitoring and management of the financial aspects of the LEADER Programme, including payment of grant aid.</p>

14	<p>Who do I contact for more information or to submit an EOI? All queries, etc. relating to the LEADER Programme should be made to: Contact: Roscommon LEADER Partnership Address: Roscommon West Business Park Golf Links Road, Roscommon Town, Co. Roscommon, F42 TD98 Tel: 090 663 0252 Email: reception@ridc.ie Web: www.rosleaderpartnership.ie</p>
15	<p>Can a sporting organisation apply for funding under the LEADER Programme? Yes. Specific Terms & Conditions will apply.</p>
16	<p>Are websites eligible for funding? Yes, but only if the underlying business, service, etc. is eligible in principle for LEADER funding.</p>
17	<p>If I/we have been approved and/or received funding from another source, can I/we apply for LEADER funding? LEADER cannot provide “double funding” to a project or to the same work/activity as another public source of funds.</p> <p>It is possible for other public funding (from non-EU sources) to be used as matching funds for a LEADER project delivered by community bodies. This matching funds must be identified as part of the application when submitted to RLP. For projects where matching funds are being provided from other public funding, the LEADER Programme must be identified as a main funder. LEADER funding cannot be used to top-up other public funds.</p> <p>Public matching funding is allowed subject to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only applications submitted by community bodies are eligible; • The overall level of public funding does not exceed 95% of the total eligible project cost; • There must be a minimum cash contribution (i.e. private matching funding element) from the project promoter of at least 5% of total eligible project costs; • Evidence must be provided to confirm that the matching funding is not from another EU source; • The public bodies providing the matching funds must not be the project applicant or beneficiary. <p><u>The De Minimis Rule:</u> De Minimis Aid is small amounts of State Aid given to an enterprise which cannot exceed €200,000 over any three fiscal years to any company irrespective of size or location. Such amounts of De Minimis Aid are regarded as falling outside the category of State aid that is banned by the EC Treaty and can be awarded to an enterprise without notification to or clearance from the European Commission.</p> <p>De Minimis Aid can come from any State body, agency or department. If a Company is part of a group, then the €200,000 limit applies to the group. De Minimis Aid can be in the form of grant or equity.</p> <p>Funding from certain agricultural schemes managed by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine is considered de-minimis aid. Please ask your Rural Development Officer for a list of these schemes, and what implications this has for your project.</p> <p>If a project involves economic activity, then the promoter will have to declare whether he/she has or has not received State Aid. Where the Promoter has received State Aid, he / she will have to state the amount of that aid and the dates it was received and sign a declaration accordingly. Roscommon LEADER Partnership must carry out De Minimis checks on all projects involving or relating to economic activity.</p>
18	<p>If I/we miss out on responding to a targeted call for projects, when can I/we apply for funding? If the entire budget for the sub-theme under which your project could be funded has been allocated to targeted calls and only 1 call will be made over the lifetime of the Co. Roscommon LEADER Programme 2014-2020 (i.e. the call you missed), they you will not be able to apply for funding for your project.</p>
19	<p>If I/we have more than 1 project, can we apply for funding for both at the same time? Promoters are advised to submit one single EOI (and subsequent Application form if the EOI is deemed eligible in principle) for an overall project. The promoter can then apply for Phased Payments for their project, if necessary.</p> <p>Alternatively, if the nature of the project elements differ (e.g. promoter wish to apply for both Capital and Analysis & Development funding), then the promoter will be required to submit an EOI, etc. for each element. Promoters are advised to speak to a Development Officer in advance of submitting an EOI.</p>
20	<p>Can I get phased payments for my project? Yes, subject to certain conditions, a promoter can request a maximum of 5 phased payments for their project. The approval of phased payments is at the discretion of Roscommon LCDC.</p>

21	<p>When can I/we apply for funding? The Co. Roscommon LEADER Programme is currently open for Expressions of Interest. Promoters are advised to speak to a Development Officer in advance of submitting an EOI.</p>
22	<p>Is there support available to fill out EOI and Application forms? The LEADER staff of Roscommon LEADER Partnership are available to assist and advise promoters on the completion of the necessary paperwork. However, RLP staff will not be in a position to complete EOIs and application forms. If professional advice is necessary, then the promoter must source and pay for this themselves.</p>
23	<p>Can I/we use our own time/labour as a source of matching funds for our project? Yes, Voluntary Labour (Contribution in Kind) may be acceptable as a source of private matching funding. Voluntary Labour can be provided in the form of skilled voluntary labour (i.e. unpaid work) which must be based on the verified time spent and the rate of remuneration for equivalent work. The rate applied must be properly justified in the application. The maximum rate allowed is €14 per hour. Voluntary Labour is eligible for community-led projects and farm diversification (farmer's labour only) projects only. Voluntary labour may include inputs either by way of actual work carried out and/or supervision etc. by appropriately qualified persons. Project administration and management costs are not eligible as voluntary labour. Voluntary labour may not be used as source of private matching funding for projects other than those provided for above.</p> <p>Contributions-in-kind cannot constitute the full amount of matching funding. There must be a minimum cash contribution of 5% of the total eligible project costs. The value assigned to the contribution-in-kind must be included with the funding application.</p>
24	<p>What is meant by Social Inclusion and Basic Services for hard to reach communities LEADER is programmed under Priority 6 of the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) – promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas – and provides the basis for LEADER to address key challenges facing Irish society and deliver supports to address, for example, the increase in levels of poverty and social exclusion.</p> <p>This theme focuses on promoting the cohesion of the sub-regional area, from both an economic development and social inclusion perspective. People may be excluded and marginalised from participating in activities that are considered the norm for others in society because of inadequate income and resources. In rural areas, in particular, the low density of population, high levels of out- migration and distance from urban centres, can often result in fewer employment options and lower levels of service provision than in urban areas. In rural areas, people's experience of exclusion is often compounded by physical isolation.</p> <p>Provision of Basic Services Targeted at Hard to Reach Communities This sub-theme focuses on improving access to basic services for people living in rural and remote areas and groups who are at risk of social exclusion. In some cases, it might involve the introduction of a new service or the re-introduction of a previously withdrawn service under the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • community; • education/training; • social/cultural; and • recreation. <p>Examples of groups who may be at risk of social exclusion include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • those living in disadvantaged areas; • those living in remote and less accessible areas; • unemployed and underemployed people; • fishermen or farmers on small holdings; • women; • children; • lone parents; • people with a disability; • older people; • people living alone; • NEETs (Young People who are Not in Employment, Education or Training); • migrants/new communities (including refugees/asylum seekers); • Travellers; and • Roma.
25	<p>Can community groups apply for funding under the Rural Environment Theme? Yes.</p>

26	<p>When can I apply for funding under Rural Environment, Water Resources? You will be informed in advance of the opening date for this and all closed calls.</p>
27	<p>What Private Matching Funds do I have to have in place? This is dependent on both the promoter and project type.</p> <p>Generally, LEADER funding is a contribution to the cost of delivering a project and should be matched by non-Programme funds to meet the full costs of a project. <i>Matching funding</i> can be sourced privately or from other public funds. In this regard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Private matching funding</i> is all funding that is not obtained from public sources • <i>Public matching funding</i> is funding from all public sources other than EU funds <p>All promoters will be required to demonstrate, at application stage, that they have sufficient private matching funding and bridging finance in place to complete their project or relevant phase thereof. See also Q. 17 above.</p>
28	<p>I/we have been approved and/or received funding from another source for an element of my/our project. Can I/we apply for LEADER funding for other elements of the project? This will be addressed on a case by case basis. In general, if the project is eligible in principle, then you can apply for LEADER funding for other project elements. Please speak to a Development Officer for advice on this.</p>
29	<p>What are the Procurement Requirements for LEADER? Promoters/applicants must demonstrate compliance with EU public procurement law and national procurement guidelines where appropriate.</p> <p>Roscommon LEADER Partnership provides a separate, detailed guidance document on procurement for project promoters. Promoters should ensure that they receive a copy prior to completing an application for funding. Promoters are advised to seek professional advice in relation to procurement.</p> <p>Failure to follow correct procurement procedures will result in all or elements of the project being disallowed. A penalty will be applied using the methodology outlined in the European Commission Guidelines on applying corrections for public procurement irregularities. Such disallowances may result in the repayment of previous phased grant payments.</p>