

Monday, 21 October 2019



**An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail**
Department of Rural and
Community Development

Minister Ring allocates additional €5 million for top ten performing LEADER Local Action Groups

Minister delivers on promise to reward best performers

Mr Michael Ring TD, Minister for Rural and Community Development, today (Monday, 21 October) announced details of the distribution of €5 million in additional funding for ten areas that are most advanced in the delivery of the LEADER Programme.

LEADER is delivered by 29 Local Actions Groups (LAGs) across the country whose role is to develop local strategies and to identify, select and fund projects in their respective areas which support their local strategies.

The funding announced by Minister Ring is additional to the existing budget of €220 million already available to LAGs and is being allocated to the ten top performing LAGs under the LEADER programme. The selection of the LAGs was based on an assessment of the level of funding they had approved for projects and the level of funding actually drawn down in respect of those projects on 20th September 2019. All LAGs were notified of the selection criteria in advance.

The 10 LAGs who will be offered additional funding of €500,000 each are:

- Kerry
- Mayo
- Waterford
- Limerick
- Cork North
- Donegal
- Tipperary
- Offaly
- Leitrim
- Cavan

Announcing the allocation of the additional funding, Minister Ring said:

“I am delighted to be in a position to provide additional funding to the top 10 areas where there is a strong demand for LEADER funding. I know that the extra funding will be of direct benefit to these communities receiving additional funding and will facilitate the approval of a higher number of LEADER projects in those areas.

“In making this announcement today, I am delivering on my previous commitment to provide additional funding to those Local Action Groups which are performing well in the delivery of the LEADER programme. I am keen to reward the best performers and I know that this extra funding will greatly benefit communities in those areas.

“The ten best performing groups will now be rewarded with €500,000 in extra funding to invest in rural communities in their counties.

“The extra allocation will enable the successful LAGs to fund a wide range of projects with economic, social or environmental impacts which will be delivered by both community groups and private enterprises.”

Examples of rural projects recently allocated funding by LEADER include:

- Obair, a community group in Newmarket-on-Fergus, Co. Clare which operates a Community Crèche, Afterschool Programme, Meals on Wheels and Community Café
- A community playground in Rockchapel village, County Cork
- Finn Precision Engineering from Carrickmacross, County Monaghan which develops products for the aerospace and agri-food markets

The Minister continued:

“Over 2,400 projects have been approved under the LEADER programme since it opened for applications in the second half of 2016. This year alone, over 900 projects have been approved by the LAGs around the country. It is clear that the programme is now working very well - so much so that there is a demand for additional funding in some areas.

“I want to acknowledge the work of all of the Local Action Groups who have worked hard to encourage more projects to come forward under LEADER. By the end of this year, the LAGs, on average, will have allocated 80% of their project budget, with the remainder to be allocated in 2020.”

ENDS

Contact:

Daniel Rowan

Special Adviser to Michael Ring TD, Minister for Rural and Community Development

087 6177320

The Department of Rural and Community Development Press Office

076-1006843 / 087-1734633

Press.office@dracd.gov.ie

Notes to editors:

LEADER Programme

LEADER is a key component of Ireland's Rural Development Programme 2014-2020. The programme is administered by Local Action Groups (LAGs), made up of local representatives from both the public and private sector.

Funding is targeted at the priority areas identified in the Local Development Strategies developed by each LAG. These priorities come under the following themes:

1. Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation (e.g. business supports and investment in rural towns)
2. Social Inclusion (e.g. community amenities and facilities for rural youth).
3. Rural Environment (e.g. biodiversity and environmental improvement projects).

Businesses and communities interested in accessing assistance under the LEADER Programme should, in the first instance, contact their Local Action Group. Contact details for all LAGs are available at the following link: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/c45498-local-action-groups/>.

Additional funding

The additional €5 million in LEADER funding is being distributed amongst the 10 top performing Local Action Groups (LAGs) under LEADER, based on an assessment of the level of funding they have committed to projects and the level of funding actually drawn down by these projects as of 20th September 2019. Each of the 10 successful LAGs will receive €500,000. The extra funding will be available for projects that are approved after 1st October 2019.

The additional funding was provisionally earmarked under the LEADER programme for the delivery of a REDZ (Rural Economic Development Zones) scheme under LEADER. REDZ was piloted in 2015 and 2016 from Exchequer funding. The model was subsequently subsumed into the Town and Village Renewal Scheme which has allocated €53 million to over 650 projects since 2016, thereby freeing up €5 million in LEADER for other priorities.

Ranking of LAGs based on the percentage of their project budget allocation approved and paid as at 20 September 2019

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Local Action Group	Local Development Strategy Project Allocation	% of Allocation Approved	Allocation ranking (1=High, 29=Low)	% of Allocation Drawn Down	Drawn Down Ranking (1=High 29=Low)	Total Score (4)+(6)	Overall Rank
Kerry	€7,648,558	76.94%	2	31.31%	3	5	1
Mayo	€8,248,645	74.69%	4	29.73%	5	9	2
Waterford	€5,566,670	64.50%	9	39.43%	1	10	3
Limerick	€6,942,584	76.85%	3	27.95%	8	11	4
Cork North	€3,805,071	80.79%	1	24.13%	11	12	5
Donegal	€9,628,589	61.72%	10	35.26%	2	12	5
Tipperary	€7,564,073	71.43%	6	25.68%	9	15	7
Offaly	€6,001,669	59.43%	11	31.30%	4	15	7
Leitrim	€4,498,167	70.43%	7	21.16%	13	20	9
Cavan	€6,409,583	58.14%	14	28.56%	7	21	10
Clare	€6,609,050	68.06%	8	19.68%	14	22	11
Carlow	€4,797,811	52.49%	16	28.79%	6	22	11
Roscommon	€6,586,752	72.16%	5	15.57%	18	23	13
Sligo	€5,726,736	59.16%	12	22.56%	12	24	14
Wexford	€7,569,678	55.06%	15	24.50%	10	25	15
Louth	€4,551,902	49.35%	18	16.11%	17	35	16
Monaghan	€5,708,155	47.32%	20	19.08%	15	35	16
Wicklow	€4,743,790	46.88%	21	14.44%	21	42	18
Meath	€5,139,855	58.71%	13	7.23%	29	42	18
Cork South	€2,839,017	44.48%	22	14.79%	20	42	18
Kilkenny	€5,791,285	37.47%	25	15.06%	19	44	21
Cork West	€3,628,104	50.17%	17	7.52%	28	45	22
Laois	€5,314,767	28.96%	29	16.94%	16	45	22
Westmeath	€5,563,394	47.51%	19	7.59%	27	46	24

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
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Dublin Rural	€4,728,612	36.38%	26	12.19%	22	48	25
Galway West	€3,406,692	43.71%	23	9.75%	26	49	26
Kildare	€3,899,564	38.63%	24	9.91%	25	49	26
Galway East	€5,728,456	35.37%	27	11.61%	23	50	28
Longford	€5,703,537	32.37%	28	11.43%	24	52	29