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Uachtaránacht na hÉireann ar Chomhairle an Aontais Eorpaigh 2026
Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2026

Europe's Rural Future

Responding to Rural Priorities Through Integrated National and Regional Strategies and LEADER

3 - 4 November 2026

LEADER Showcase



Acknowledgements

This LEADER showcase formed part of a High-level Rural Policy Forum organised by the Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the European Commission, with the support of the Rural Pact Support Office.

This booklet was produced by the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht with support from all the Local Action Groups (LAGs) and Implementing Partners (IPs) involved in the delivery of LEADER in Ireland.

The Rural Pact Support Office not only provided support to organise the Forum but also organised a selection of exhibitors from LAGs in other Member States.

Thank you to all the project promoters for their role in providing information, pictures and materials for the exhibition.

To all the delegates attending the Forum and the LEADER showcase, thank you for attending and contributing.

European Commission

RURAL PACT

Minister's Introduction



I am delighted to take the opportunity presented by this Rural Policy Forum to showcase the invaluable work supported by the LEADER programme in Ireland.

This EU co-funded programme has been at the heart of rural development in Ireland since the European Commission launched the initiative 35 years ago.

During this time, LEADER Local Action Groups across rural Ireland have worked hand in hand with their communities, providing vital support to a diverse range of rural businesses and community groups.

This booklet showcases a sample of the excellent projects delivered by Local Action Groups all across the country, and from a selection of Member States, demonstrating the innovation and impact that the LEADER programme is renowned for.

Dara Calleary.

Dara Calleary, T.D.
Minister for Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht

An Roinn Forbartha Tuaithe
agus Pobail agus Gaeltachta
Department of Rural and Community
Development and the Gaeltacht

LEADER Showcase

The LEADER showcase is taking place on 4 November 2026 as part of '**Europe's Rural Future** – *Responding to rural priorities through integrated national and regional strategies and LEADER*', allowing attendees to the Forum to view examples of LEADER funded projects.

This booklet provides a summary of the projects exhibited, grouped by the themes of Ireland's 2023-2027 LEADER programme. In addition, there are project exhibits from five EU Member States.

The grouped projects are categorised by the following colour scheme throughout the booklet and the showcase exhibition hall.

Theme 1 - Economic Development and Job Creation

- The Green Economy
- Agricultural Diversification
- Rural Tourism & Recreation
- Enterprise Development
- Rural Food Production
- Social, Community & Cooperative Enterprises

Theme 2 - Rural Infrastructure & Social Inclusion

- Rural Infrastructure
- Accessible Services
- Optimising Digital Connectivity
- Rural Youth

Theme 3 - Sustainable Development of the Rural Environment and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

- Sustainable Development of the Rural Environment
- Climate Change Capacity Building
- Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

Member States selection

Projects were identified from LAGs in Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Finland and Romania to showcase projects under the following categories:

- Job creation and entrepreneurship
- Climate action and nature
- Rural services and social inclusion
- Preparedness and resilience
- Smart villages



Design Bank

LEADER
€100,000
Grant aid

LAG: Clare Local Development Company
Sub-theme: The Green Economy

Design Bank in Miltown Malbay, Co. Clare, is an innovative rural regeneration project resulting in the former bank building being transformed into a vibrant co-working and retail hub for makers and creatives.

Officially opened in June 2025, Design Bank now supports over 60 local makers and has created three jobs. Operating as a social enterprise, it promotes collaboration, creativity and shared ownership among participants while also enhancing the visitor experience in the town.

Beyond its direct economic impact, the project has become a community hub that encourages social interaction, live demonstrations, workshops and cultural activity. Design Bank is widely recognised as a strong example of how vacant rural buildings can be repurposed into sustainable cultural and economic assets through community vision and LEADER support.



Aran Currach Experience

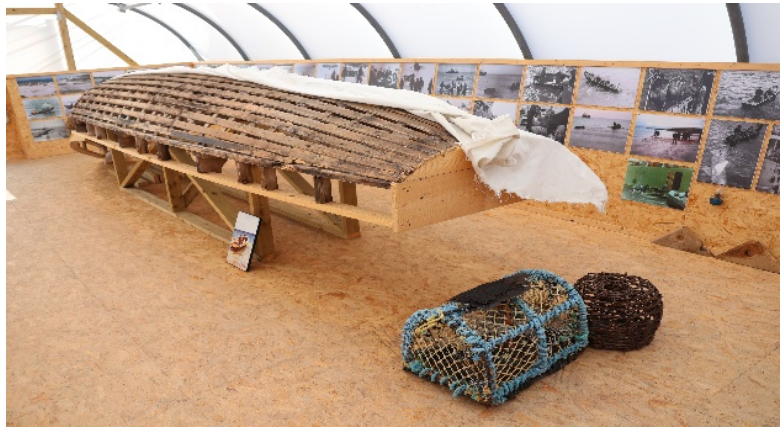
LEADER
€30,525
Grant aid

LAG: Galway Islands (Comhar na nOileán)
Sub-theme: The Green Economy

This cultural tourism initiative gives visitors the opportunity to enjoy an immersive experience of the heritage of traditional Irish currachs. It combines education, heritage preservation, and outdoor adventure, attracting tourists who are interested in authentic cultural experiences and local traditions.

The project encourages the preservation of sustainable craftsmanship that values repair, reuse, and long product lifespans, reducing waste and resource consumption. The rowing experience allows visitors to engage with the marine environment in a quiet, non-invasive way, fostering respect for coastal ecosystems and local biodiversity.

Overall, the project combines environmental responsibility with cultural preservation, promoting a model of tourism that is both educational and environmentally low impact.



Bainne Blasta

LEADER
€101,663
Grant aid

LAG: Kerry LCDC (NEWKD)
Sub-theme: Agricultural Diversification

Aodan Behan has been steeped in agriculture all his life having grown up on the family Farm and recently set up Bainne Blasta to bottle and sell the family farm milk and flavoured milk through vending machines in glass bottles.

Bainne Blasta was approved LEADER funding for the set-up of the business in one location in North Kerry. The business has been a great success so far and recently set up two more locations to sell their milk products.

Consumers are becoming more environmentally aware and health conscious, plus traceability has become so important. The product is locally sourced and will travel a shorter distance from farm to customer. They use glass bottles which are environmentally friendly and sustainable.



Wild Atlantic Pods

LEADER
€109,183
Grant aid

LAG: Kerry LCDC (SKDP)
Sub-theme: Agricultural Diversification



John Noel McCarthy has farmed all his life on his family farm in Portmagee, Co. Kerry, continuing a tradition passed down through generations. Recognising growing demand for high-quality, nature-based accommodation and a gap in the local market, he developed a five-unit glamping pod park on the family farm overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, within walking distance of Portmagee village and close to the departure point for Skellig Michael. The location benefits from increasing visitor numbers linked to the Skellig experience and Star Wars tourism.

The development includes five fully serviced, self-contained pods with private bathrooms, kitchen facilities and sea-view decks. Three pods cater for couples and two accommodate families. LEADER funding supported essential groundworks, roadway construction and resurfacing, electrical works and decking materials, while the applicant contributed significant labour including decking, stone walls, fencing and landscaping.



Anne Valley Walk

LEADER
€124,554
Grant aid

LAG: Waterford LCDC
Sub-theme: Rural Tourism

LEADER provided support for phase II of the project which extended the Anne Valley Walk from Dunhill Castle to Annestown. This followed on from the success of the original LEADER funded 2.5km walk from Dunhill village to Dunhill castle. Additional enhancements have been provided by the group, i.e. a car park at the village entrance to the walk, signage, seating and a walkway to the castle at the castle end of the walk.

The walkway passes through farmland in the Anne Valley that has been kindly donated to the project and its value included as part of the voluntary matching contribution. It's a natural bog land that stretches down to Annestown, a haven for wildlife and native birds providing a tranquil space for the young and old and less mobile members of the public to enjoy.



Killeshandra Glamping

LEADER
€100,581
Grant aid

LAG: Cavan LCDC
Sub-theme: Rural Tourism & Recreation

Killeshandra Glamping received LEADER funding to expand their self-catering business by developing their site and purchasing and installing 3 glamping aeropods and a 4-person hot tub at each pod.

The aeropods are made from high grade recycled commercial aeroplanes and are a truly sustainable, eco-friendly design. Built to an industrial standard, they are highly insulated for year-round use, are low maintenance and cheap to run on heating compared to traditional wooden pods.

Killeshandra had no glamping or hot tubs sites and considering it's a popular fishing and tourist town, there was a need for extra accommodation in the area. This project will bring extra visitors to the area which will help the restaurants, pubs, and shops in the local community.



Voices of Heritage Training Programme

LEADER
€32,455
Grant aid

LAG: Kilkenny LEADER Partnership
Sub-theme: Rural Tourism & Recreation

This project enhances the potential for sustainable heritage led tourism that benefits both residents and visitors. It is a transnational co-operation with LAG LEADER Ravakka and LAG Satasilta, both from Finland. The Finnish programme concentrated on volunteer rural tour guide training and the Kilkenny element focused on developing community skills in:



- oral history collection techniques
- digital audio and video recording
- archive best practice
- heritage mapping
- local tour guiding

A study exchange visit to Finland enabled participants to learn from international best practice in heritage interpretation, community tourism, and digital innovation, while a symposium in Kilkenny brought together Irish and Finnish stakeholders to share experiences and explore the future of heritage-led tourism.

The shared outcome between the two groups is a shared digital story map exploring common themes identified during the course of the programme.

Dunmore Country School

LEADER
€103,414
Grant aid

LAG: Connect Laois
Sub-theme: Rural Tourism & Recreation

Dunmore country school was established by Tanguy and Isabelle de Toulgoet in 2009. It is now recognised as one of the leading providers of training in sustainable growing techniques in the country.

The aim of Dunmore School is to inform, inspire and motivate Irish people including farmers, food establishments and growers to cultivate, store and preserve home grown produce. Tanguy de Toulgoet has a strong profile as an environmentalist, educator and gardener. He is a tireless campaigner and advocate for sustainable gardening and has given lectures and talks all over Ireland.

LEADER funding supported the development of accommodation facilities by completing renovations of a traditional coach house which is located on the property.



This project is in close alignment with the objectives of the tourism development strategy for Laois, the County development plan and the local development strategy for Laois.

Uasgradú Flít Rothar

LEADER
€24,125
Grant aid

LAG: Donegal LCDC (Údarás na Gaeltachta)
Sub-theme: Rural Tourism & Recreation

Amuigh Faoin Aer Teo have been providing bike rental and cycling touring services for several years to visitors to the Gaeltacht area in Donegal. They recognised an opportunity to expand its services by targeting more overseas visitors by providing for a range of eBikes while also acquiring a tandem eBike.

LEADER funding supported the purchase of the extra equipment that made their offerings more inclusive with cycling opportunities now available for clients with visual impairments and other disabilities.

The addition of the eBikes also allowed for better touring on Donegal's more challenging terrains.



Achill Experience

LEADER
€89,469
Grant aid

LAG: Mayo LCDC (SWMDC)
Sub-theme: Rural Tourism

The Achill Experience is a flagship rural tourism and heritage initiative located on Achill Island, Ireland's largest offshore island. Developed by Comhlacht Forbartha Áitiúil Acla (CFÁA), the project established Achill's first all-weather visitor centre and Mayo's first aquarium, creating a unique attraction that celebrates the island's rich maritime environment, cultural heritage, language, history and artistic legacy.



The centre offers visitors an immersive experience through interactive exhibits, marine life displays, historical artefacts, touch-and-feel installations, digital technologies and cultural storytelling. Highlights include aquarium exhibits featuring species native to Achill's coastal waters, exhibitions showcasing Achill's distinctive history, and a collection of first edition prints by renowned artist Robert Henri. LEADER funding supported an extension of the facility.

The project demonstrates how LEADER can support integrated rural development by transforming local cultural, environmental and heritage assets into sustainable economic opportunities that enhances tourism offerings.

Lough Ree Access for All VR Project

LEADER
€111,655
Grant aid

LAG: Roscommon LCDC
Sub-theme: Rural Tourism & Recreation

Lough Ree Access for All received funding for an immersive virtual reality (VR) tour of Inchcleraun Island, allowing everyone, particularly those with physical and intellectual disabilities, to explore Inchcleraun Island's rich history, captivating folklore, and stunning natural beauty from the comfort of their interpretive centre and tour boats.





The project helps boost tourism in the Ballyleague and surrounding areas by highlighting the unique historical and cultural assets of Co Roscommon by attracting a diverse audience.

Ward Wood Design

LEADER
€47,625
Grant aid

LAG: Cork West LCDC (Comhar na nOileán)
Sub-theme: Enterprise Development

The project involved the purchase and installation of a CNC (Computer Numerical Control) machining centre at the Ward Wood Design workshop in Durrus. This investment represents a significant technological advancement for the business, enabling an expansion of production capabilities, improved precision, and the ability take on more complex and higher-value projects.

The equipment will significantly enhance the business's production process, reduce waste, and support sustainable growth. The ability to replicate design-led products in the cabinet making sector, with precision, will enhance the business's competitiveness and open new market opportunities. This will potentially attracting additional revenue streams from outside the region.



inCharge App

LEADER
€80,798
Grant aid

LAG: Donegal LCDC (IDP)
Sub-theme: Enterprise Development

InCharge HQ are pioneering personalised care technology through an App to empower individuals with intellectual disabilities, autism and complex needs. Their mission is to enhance the quality of life by putting people, their families, and their support teams at the centre of care decisions through an App that shows these choices and services in one location.

Established in 2021 in Inishowen, inCharge is a tech for good startup dedicated to creating digital tools that ensure everyone involved in the care process is connected, informed, and supported, ensuring that the individuals with care needs remain central to the design and daily use of technology.

The inCharge App is innovative as its focus is on providing person-centred care technology, primarily aimed at the family-level. Unlike existing software designed for large care providers, inCharge uniquely includes three key users: the individual with support needs, their family (as care organisers), and their support team.



The Galway Wool Co-op

LEADER
€20,336
Grant aid

LAG: Galway East (GRD)
Sub-theme: Enterprise Development

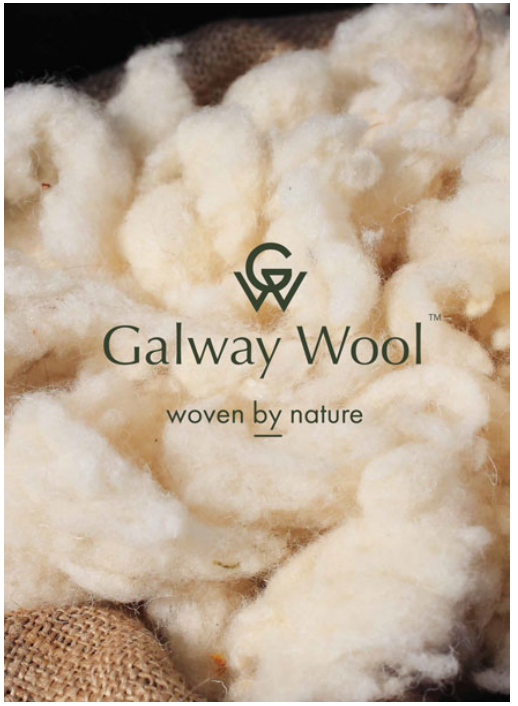
The Galway Wool Co-op are a farmer-owned and run co-operative supplying Galway Wool, which is a rare heritage wool grown with care and pride from a native Irish breed of sheep.

All the wool products come from pure bred Galway sheep that have a registered pedigree and are sustainably sourced, with the Co-op promoting the brand to a niche market that maximises revenue for producers through promotion, education and the development of the brand.

LEADER funding supported the following activities:

- Establishment of an eCommerce platform for marketing and communications.
- Brand development.
- Promotional video to start the marketing campaign.
- Supply of promotional material.

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Leahy's Open Farm

LEADER
€327,493
Grant aid

LAG: Cork South LCDC (SECAD)
Sub-theme: Enterprise Development



Leahy's Open Farm was established 30 years ago with support from LEADER. The business has diversified from traditional farming and grown to be a significant employer and a major agri-tourism visitor attraction in East Cork.

They also produce their own delicious handmade ice cream in a variety of flavours and make family-friendly, handmade chocolate items such as custom moulds, bars, and lollipops.

During the period 2014 to 2022, LEADER funded four separate projects that not only align with 'enterprise development' but also 'agricultural diversification', 'rural food production' and 'rural tourism & recreation':

- Development of a car park.
- Purchase of ice cream and chocolate factory equipment.
- Marketing and branding.
- Playground and passenger trailer.



Friendly Farm

LEADER
€53,269
Grant aid

LAG: Leitrim LCDC
Sub-theme: Enterprise Development

Friendly Farm is a small hillside organic farm in North Leitrim. LEADER funding supported farm infrastructure improvements to provide safer, more inclusive facilities for the participants of the existing social farming enterprise:

- Building a multifunctional arts / social farming space
- Accessibility improvements on the farm for participants
- Development of a sheltered area to undertake activities



The social farming enterprise provides agricultural activities and community inclusion support for participants, as the working and therapeutic environment connects individuals with agriculture and nature.

The improvements to the farm enabled the establishment of a new art tourism business, the Creative Glass Hub, which is a unique 'glass making' studio for those that love to create, from the novice to the professional artist. LEADER funding also supported the development of a new website glassfarm.ie.

Made in Wicklow Expansion Project

LEADER
€76,609
Grant aid

LAG: Wicklow LCDC
Sub-theme: Enterprise Development

Made in Wicklow has rapidly grown into a flagship initiative for County Wicklow's creative sector, providing a digital trail, marketing platform, and showcase & retail opportunities for over 50 vetted craft practitioners.





The expansion phase will assist the ongoing development of County Wicklow's craft sector, building on the successes of earlier phases, which also received LEADER support. It will address key needs by providing high-profile showcase opportunities, and enhancing retail and sales platforms.

By combining professional exposure, income generation, and education, this phase ensures the long-term sustainability, visibility, and economic impact of Wicklow's craft community. For further details on the craft trail including video footage of individual craft practitioners and events go to madeinwicklow.com.

Made in Wicklow

Duhallow Community Food Services

LEADER
€51,590
Grant aid

LAG: Cork North (IRD Duhallow)
Sub-theme: Enterprise Development

Duhallow Community Food Services was established as a social enterprise in 1996 with support provided under the LEADER II programme. Its primary function was to provide jobs for women who were underrepresented in the workforce. With support under the next LEADER programme, the service expanded to providing meals on wheels to the broader rural community of Northwest Cork and East Kerry, thus addressing an urgent, unmet need, providing 5,000 meals annually, but rapidly expanding to almost 20,000 meals.

A new building was purpose built with funding awarded under the 2007-2013 LEADER programme and the number of meals grew to over 35,000 per annum. During a prolonged electricity outage arising from extreme weather conditions, a generator was funded under the 2014-2020 LEADER programme to ensure a continuity of hot meals in time of crisis.

Currently, Duhallow Community Food Services supplies hot school lunches, bringing its output to over 4,000 meals a day, and employs 72 people.



Ballyhaunis Hall Renovations

LEADER
€271,714
Grant aid

LAG: Mayo LCDC (MNELP)
Sub-theme: Rural Infrastructure

Ballyhaunis is one of the most ethnically diverse small towns in Ireland. Recent census data shows 40.5% of the population list a nationality other than Irish, and 49% list a country of birth other than Ireland. This diversity presents both opportunities and challenges for the local community, one of which is achieving meaningful integration and assimilation of both newly arrived residents and second-generation migrant families.

LEADER funding supported the complete refurbishment of the Community Hall, including a small extension and the replacement of a new all-purpose timber floor, providing an improved safe and comfortable space, both for existing community activities and new uses for the hall. The range of uses bring diverse members of the community together for a variety of cultural and sports activities and events, as well as providing a place where the community can meet to discuss issues relating to the town.



Hello GoodLife Health and Wellbeing Hub

LEADER
€200,000
Grant aid

LAG: Sligo LCDC
Sub-theme: Rural Infrastructure

The Hello GoodLife Health & Wellbeing Hub at Ballinalack Community Park is the first community project of its type in Ireland. LEADER supported the purchase of 12 exercise machines that are designed and customised for use by everybody aged 50 and over.

The machines make up a circuit with users exercising for up to 3 minutes on each machine, so in less than 40 minutes a complete body work out is achieved and every muscle in the body is exercised.

Furthermore, the “Hello Goodlife” hub places a strong emphasis on the social aspect of well-being. The hub promotes group activities, support networks, and communities that foster social interactions and build lasting relationships. The gym is a huge success with people coming from all corners of the county to attend.



Blackwater SAR Boat Storage Development

LEADER
€73,571
Grant aid

LAG: Cork North LCDC (Avondhu Blackwater Partnership)
Sub-theme: Rural Infrastructure

Blackwater Sub Aqua Search & Rescue Unit is a volunteer-led organisation with over 40 years of service to the community. Its dedicated volunteers undertake specialist training in water safety, rescue techniques and first aid, enabling them to provide vital assistance during emergencies and support search and rescue operations when they are needed most.

With the support of €73,571 in LEADER funding, the Unit developed and constructed a purpose-built boathouse adjacent to its rescue centre. The new facility provides safe, secure and centralised storage for its rescue boats, helping protect essential equipment and support the Unit's ongoing search and rescue operations.



Doneraile Walkway & Enhancement Works

LEADER
€36,731
Grant aid

LAG: Cork North (Ballyhoura Development)
Sub-theme: Accessible Services



This project delivers a safe, accessible and fully offroad community walkway at Doneraile GAA Grounds, enhancing inclusivity, health and wellbeing for users of all ages and abilities. The works include upgrading the existing perimeter walkway around the original pitch, constructing additional sections around the dugouts to create a continuous, level route, and installing a support rail around the newer pitch. A new connecting footpath links both pitches, forming an uninterrupted loop suitable for universal use.

Doneraile GAA Grounds and clubhouse act as the central community facility in the absence of a dedicated community hall, hosting a wide range of nonsporting and sporting activities. This project significantly expands accessibility for older people, individuals with mobility challenges and families with young children. It supports Cork County Council's Age Friendly Strategy and enables participation in initiatives such as the Cork Sports Partnership's Active Community Walking Programme.



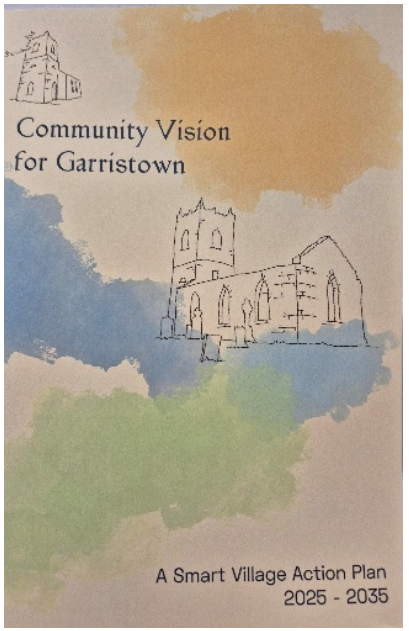
Garristown Smart Village Plan

LEADER
€26,125
Grant aid

LAG: Dublin Rural
Sub-theme: Accessible Services

The Garristown Smart Village Plan project has successfully delivered a comprehensive, community-led roadmap for the future development of Garristown village. Developed through extensive consultation, community engagement, and data collection, the project brought together local residents, community groups, and stakeholders to identify the key priorities, challenges, and opportunities facing the village in the years ahead.

The initiative was based on the Smart Village concept, which supports rural communities in becoming more resilient, sustainable, and connected by building on local strengths and using innovative approaches to improve quality of life.



A significant outcome of the project was the creation of a strong evidence-based framework to guide future development and investment within Garristown. The Smart Village Plan now serves as a strategic roadmap for the community and will support future funding applications aimed at improving local services, infrastructure, public realm, and community amenities.

Smart Village Training

LEADER
€139,425
Grant aid

LAG: Kildare LCDC
Sub-theme: Accessible Services

The aim of this SMART Village training programme is to empower people living in rural communities to find practical solutions to the challenges associated with their localities and surrounding areas.

The objectives are to:



- Build capacity of rural community members to identify gaps and create innovative, inclusive, and sustainable initiatives to bridge the gaps.
- Learn how to utilise the SMART Village concept in a local context.
- Empower communities to build an integrated team with the goal of defining an inclusive future for the local community.
- Develop individual co-designed SMART Community Strategies.
- Increase the knowledge of communities regarding the supports available to them, and expand the skills required to access the necessary supports.
- Generate enthusiasm among those who have previously abstained from community development initiatives.

Portroe Community Walkway

LEADER
€128,347
Grant aid

LAG: Tipperary LCDC (NTDC)
Sub-theme: Accessible Services

Portroe is a rural village with the GAA club at the heart of the community. LEADER funding supported the development of a new 2m wide, 650m long community walkway on the grounds of the GAA club.

The secure floodlit walkway is a huge addition to the local community and has become a focal point for members of the wider community to meet up, walk, socialise in a safe environment and healthy manner.

More than 150 people are using the facility as part of Thursday night parish fitness initiative on a weekly basis, improving wellbeing and physical health and reducing rural isolation. The walkway is also used by parents who exercise on the walkway as their children train on the pitch. There is also an elderly group who meet to walk and talk using the facility. The community walkway has been a game changer in the area.



Thatching Course

LEADER
€76,923
Grant aid

LAG: Donegal LCDC (DLDC)
Sub-theme: Rural Youth

Thatching in Ireland is a traditional roofing craft that uses local vegetation like water reed and straw, though the number of active craftspeople has declined significantly in recent decades.

To sustain this craft, this project involves the delivery of an Intensive Thatching Course to train a new generation of thatchers and provide young people with the opportunity to seek employment or become self-employed in the sector.

In tandem with the course, LEADER funding supported a second project for the purchase of tools and equipment to enable the delivery of the training:



- Thatching pins & set pins
- Thatching mallet
- Twister & wire cutters
- Thatching rake and brush

The bespoke Thatching School, located at the Dolmen Centre, Portnoo also received €175,000 under the 2014-2022 LEADER programme towards the construction of a purpose-built workshop.



Agri Kids Virtual Reality and Farm Safe Centre

LEADER
€8,900
Grant aid

LAG: Meath LCDC
Sub-theme: Rural Youth



AgriKids was founded with the ethos to positively engage, educate and empower children to become farm safety ambassadors. This engaging approach to farm safety education recognises the influence that children can have on multi-generation members of their families and it serves to continually empower children to be safer farmers in the future.



Rather than being a single permanent building, the experience is delivered as a mobile roadshow and a series of flexible hubs designed to travel across Ireland visiting schools, homes, agri-sector and community-based events.

LEADER funding supported the fit-out of the bespoke branded mobile unit, including IT equipment and the development of digital and virtual reality games to enhance the farm safety learning experience.

Connemara Therapeutic Riding

LEADER
€5,127
Grant aid

LAG: Galway West (Forum Connemara)
Sub-theme: Basic Services for hard-to-reach communities

LEADER funding supported the purchasing of equipment and enhanced marketing of the facilities and services available. A key outcome of this project is that it supports generational renewal in several practical and meaningful ways.

Firstly, it created two full-time rural jobs within Connemara Therapeutic Riding CLG, providing stable, locally based employment that enables younger or working-age people to remain in the region. This helps counter rural depopulation by offering skilled, meaningful work that supports a long-term career in equine-assisted therapy, social care, and equestrian services.

Secondly, the project helps transfer specialist knowledge and skills to a new generation. Therapeutic riding, disability support, and equine management are highly specialised areas, and by expanding capacity and staffing, the organisation can train and develop staff over time. This ensures that both equine therapy expertise and traditional horsemanship skills associated with the Connemara Pony are preserved and passed on.



Water Resources Training Programme

LEADER
€24,588
Grant aid

LAG: Westmeath LCDC
Sub-theme: Water Resources

LEADER supported a Water Resources Training Programme, which built capacity amongst community groups and stakeholders to understand, protect and actively manage their local water resources. Combining online learning with field-based training, a clear objective was to enable participants to develop practical, locally led water quality solutions covering:



- How river catchments work and its relevance to local rivers
- What the main sources of river pollution are and how they can be addressed
- How to build climate resilience into waterbodies
- How to become a citizen scientist and investigate the water quality in streams
- Plans and projects to benefit rivers
- How to apply for funding to implement plans

A key outcome of the training was the development of community-led catchment management plans which directly informed tangible projects in the Dysart Stream Catchment area and the Lough Ennell Catchment area.

Rosslare Harbour Wetland Upgrade

LEADER
€15,650
Grant aid

LAG: Wexford Local Development
Sub-theme: Water Resources

Rosslare Harbour/Kilrane Environment Group formed in 2018 to promote environmental awareness and enhance the local landscape in this coastal community. The group developed a natural wetland habitat at the southern end of the Landfill Garden to increase biodiversity. This area dried out during summer months, leaving grassland with limited vegetation and minimal wildlife value. By creating an all-year-round water feature with appropriate wetland planting, the group have significantly enhanced the ecological richness of the site. Now a permanent pond with associated habitats, it attracts a wider range of species, increases biodiversity throughout the seasons and provides an additional educational and recreational amenity for visitors and locals.



The LEADER funded development of the village park, community gardens and natural wetland habitat in Rosslare Harbour enhances the attractiveness of the area for the whole community, providing inclusive spaces for recreation and engagement, and creating opportunities for community participation, skills development, and environmental awareness, thereby supporting long-term community sustainability.

Nature Research Lab

LEADER
€80,569
Grant aid

LAG: Monaghan Integrated Development
Sub-theme: Sustainable Development of Rural Environment



The Knocknagrave Environmental Centre is an innovative community hub operated by the Tydavnet Group Water Scheme. The hub functions as both the operations base for the water scheme and an interactive interpretive centre dedicated to climate action, water conservation, and biodiversity.

LEADER supported the establishment of a Nature Research Laboratory as an additional educational facility at the Centre and a 'wet area' where water related experiments can be conducted.



The additional space at the new lab accommodates visitors' hands on experience with water related experiments that are designed to protect and enhance the natural environment. The experience also encourages and supports seed saving and propagation of local flora and native trees.

Clonmel Repair Café Training

LEADER
€13,530
Grant aid

LAG: Tipperary LCDC (STDC)
Sub-theme: Climate Change Capacity Building



Since 2018, the Repair Café has supported the public to fix everyday items such as small appliances, bicycles, clothing, toys, and furniture, reducing waste while fostering practical skills and community engagement. The initiative has grown steadily, expanding to include a Toy Library in 2023 and clothes swap events in 2024. In 2025, activities moved to a dedicated hub, "Circular squaRE", creating new opportunities for service expansion.

Volunteer feedback highlighted a strong demand for structured training to enhance their capabilities. This LEADER funded project delivered practical, hands-on training in areas including garment repair, upcycling, bike maintenance, electrical and electronic repairs, Portable Appliance Testing (PAT), and sewing machine repair.



A skilled programme coordinator oversaw delivery, sourced specialist trainers, and supported team building, ensuring long-term sustainability.

O'Toole Composting

LEADER
€200,000
Grant aid

LAG: Carlow LCDC
Sub-theme: Climate Change Mitigation and Adaption

LEADER supported the purchase and installation of a slow-speed single shaft shredder to process recyclable materials more efficiently. This shredder allows for higher processing volumes, reduced waste to landfill, and the creation of valuable secondary raw materials. O'Toole Composting collaborate with local enterprises and communities to provide a circular economy solution that will be cost effective, involve localised waste management solutions, and reduce waste volume at source.

The shredder's ability to process various waste streams into reusable outputs makes it a unique solution for the region. The project promotes local waste processing supporting community participation and reducing reliance on external processers.

The environmental and social impact will be evident through waste diversion, emission saving, job creation and community engagement.



Temperance Hall Works

LEADER
€187,007
Grant aid

LAG: Longford LCDC
Sub-theme: Climate Change Mitigation and Adaption

This project was a major refurbishment of a heritage listed community centre at the very heart of Longford Town.

Following years of maintenance and fixes, it was proposed that the more efficient and cost-effective step was to repair/replace the roof entirely, sealing the building from the harmful effects of weather and futureproofing the building's integrity for the next generation of service users.

LEADER funding supported the replacement of the roof on the building which is over 100 years old. To help future-proof the building, the roof replacement was used as an opportunity to install solar panels to introduce energy efficiencies, meeting climate change and budget management targets.



Electric Tricycles

LEADER
€11,962
Grant aid

LAG: Louth LCDC
Sub-theme: Climate Change Mitigation and Adaption

The Electric Tricycles project, led by Blackrock Tidy Towns Ltd, is an innovative community led initiative that demonstrates how small-scale rural investment can deliver meaningful environmental, social, and operational change. LEADER funding supported the purchase of two electric cargo tricycles to replace an ageing diesel van and they support daily village maintenance, litter patrols, park management, and equipment transport. Their design allows access to areas not previously reachable by van, improving efficiency and safety in a busy village setting.

This initiative positions Blackrock as a leader in practical climate action at community level and represents one of the first documented uses of electric cargo tricycles by a Tidy Towns group nationally. The Electric Tricycles project offers a replicable model for rural communities seeking low carbon, high impact solutions through local leadership and volunteer engagement.



Dooley's Wool

LEADER
€72,910
Grant aid

LAG: Offaly Local Development Company
Sub-theme: Climate Change Mitigation and Adaption

Dooley's Wool has invested in a modern, high-capacity wool baling machine. The new baler enables the company to process and compress significantly greater volumes of 100% Irish wool into dense, consistent bales, making the wool more efficient and economical to handle, store and transport.

By increasing baling capacity, Dooley's Wool can reduce the number of bales required for export, helping to minimise transport requirements and associated environmental impacts while improving overall operational efficiency. This reduces the volume of material requiring transportation and, consequently, helping to lower the carbon emissions associated with the movement and export of Irish wool.

The investment also supports the company's growing focus on sustainable Irish wool products, including pillows, mattress toppers and duvets, while improving workplace safety by reducing manual handling and unnecessary clutter. The new baler strengthens Dooley's Wool ability to maximise the value of Irish wool and continue developing the business in a sustainable and commercially viable way.



Adare Recreation & Community Complex

LEADER
€566,523
Grant aid

LAG: Limerick LCDC
Sub-theme: Climate Change Mitigation and Adaption

The Manor Fields, Adare is a community owned 25-acre amenity for recreational and community purposes for people of all ages and all abilities. A master plan was created in 2010 with the support of €28,683 LEADER funding under the 2007-2013 programme and a phased approach to its development has since been pursued.

Phase 1 included developing access to the site and the installation of an all-abilities playground. phase 2 saw other facilities installed including multi-sport grass pitches, a multi-sport floodlit astro pitch and walking paths.



Support of €500,000 LEADER funding under the 2014-2020 programme for phase 3 included the construction of a pavilion building incorporating changing rooms, toilet shower block, coffee dock meeting rooms referee room and first aid room.



Most recently, €37,840 LEADER funding supported the installation of a battery storage system for the onsite solar panels.

Establishment of 10 Nature Campsites on Funen

LEADER
€32,100
Grant aid

Country: Denmark
LAG: MANK and SØM
Category: Job creation and entrepreneurship

Landjord ApS, a Danish rural land-hosting platform, established ten nature campsites across the island of Funen (Fyn) in partnership with local farmers. The project created a network of low-impact overnight stays on private farmland, connecting urban visitors with the authentic rural landscape of Denmark's third-largest island. Each campsite features a composting toilet in a locally crafted timber shelter, and a fire pit.

The project was co-funded by two LEADER Local Action Groups which enabled a cohesive, island-wide network developed through a single coordinated project.



The model creates new income for participating farmers without significant upfront investment. Landowners share booking revenues through Landjord's digital platform, which handles promotion and booking management. This activates underused farmland and supports sustainable rural employment.

Pilistvere Off-grid Solar Park - a Community Energy and Resilience Centre

LEADER
€24,568
Grant aid

Country: Estonia
LAG: Võrtsjärve Association
Category: Climate action and nature

Pilistvere is turning renewable energy into greater security, resilience and opportunity for the whole community by the installation of a 22.75 kW solar power system with off-grid capability, a 20-kW hybrid inverter and a 25-kWh battery bank.



The innovative system combines clean energy, smart price-based management and emergency preparedness, reducing dependence on the electricity grid. In a power outage, the complex can operate as an independent local energy hub.

The energy system also supports Pilistvere's young people, who help run the Ingel summer café and provide a valued service and meeting place for the whole village.

The project is the first step towards a comprehensive community resilience centre, combining energy security with shelter, clean water, first aid and emergency preparedness.

Housing Network (WohnRAUMnetzwerk): Building Bridges for Refugees

LEADER
€106,332
Grant aid

Country: Germany
LAG: Leipziger Muldenland
Category: Rural services and social inclusion

The "WohnRAUMnetzwerk" project established a dedicated coordination structure to help refugees in the LEADER region of Leipziger Muldenland access adequate housing and support their integration. It acts as an intermediary between housing seekers and housing providers, combining digital advice services, networking and self-help workshops with direct engagement of local real estate stakeholders. Together these activities improve quality of life for newcomers and strengthen social inclusion across the Leipziger Muldenland region.

- Digital advice and consultation services established
- Target groups informed about the digital services available
- Networking between housing seekers and housing providers
- Self-help workshops delivered
- Dialogue opened with local real estate stakeholders



https://www.kontaktstelle-wohnen.de/projekte.html

Transforming the Ylä-Muuratjärvi Village Hall into a Preparedness Hub

LEADER
€15,856
Grant aid

Country: Finland
LAG: JyväsRiihi
Category: Preparedness and resilience

Through equipment, training and organisation, this project strengthened preparedness for local villages by transforming the Ylä-Muuratjärvi Village Hall into a local hub capable of operating during crises and emergency conditions, involving:



- assessing the villagers' preparedness needs
- enhancing the villagers' safety skills, including understanding safety plans, initial firefighting, CPR, mass catering and VHF radio use, as well as the organisation and skills of the village's Voluntary Rescue Service group.
- improving communication by acquiring VHF radios and agreeing to procure a village radio through investment funding
- testing safety skills and arranging practice tests
- planning the operations of the preparedness centre
- drafting the village safety plan: organisation and operations during exceptional situations and crises
- disseminating information about the project and village preparedness efforts via various channels at local, regional and national levels

Smart Villages in rural Romania: building local capacity for community-led strategies

LEADER
€70,580
Grant aid

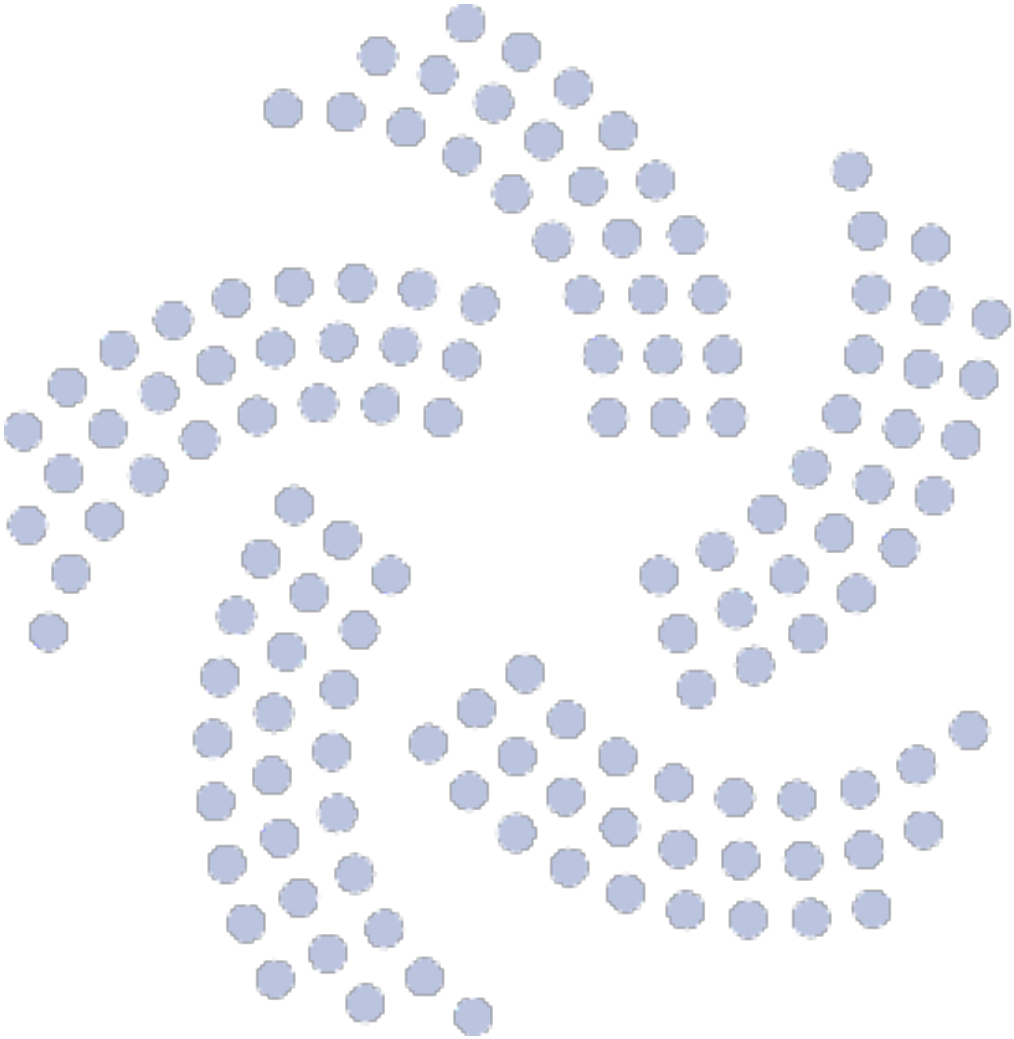
Country: Romania
LAG: Someș Transilvan
Category: Innovation / Smart villages

Building on a pilot, LAG Someș Transilvan established a structured strategy-development pathway as a practical methodology to help rural communes turn the Smart Village concept into a community-led planning process. Selected communities then set up local strategy committees and receive local workshops, personalised counselling and small grants for planning activities.

Particular emphasis is placed on inclusive participation, with requirements for youth involvement and incentives for balanced representation of young people and women within local committees.

Municipalities formally approve the final strategies, while the LAG coordinates the methodology. Funding is released in stages, linking support to the approval of Smart Village strategies so that planning leads to concrete action and investment.





Ní neart go cur le chéile

Strength with unity