



Comhpháirtíocht Leader Waterford Leader
Phort Láirge Partnership

Decision of Evaluation Committee

Project ID	31LDRWAT107967
Project Type:	LO 1 Rural Tourism
Project Name:	Visitor Centre
Promoters Name:	Cistercian Monastic Community of Nuns
Address:	St. Mary's Abbey, Glencairn, Lismore, Co. Waterford
Description:	The Project involves the redevelopment of part of an old farm yard into a Visitor Centre with 6 Ensuite Bedrooms, 3 Meeting Rooms, Dining Room, Function Room, Shop and Offices. All the necessary archaeological works and permissions have been completed and obtained. Since the Community exited Dairying, they have decided to diversify into cultural tourism, and the Visitor Centre will be an addition to the Blackwater Valley. The Centre will be open to all comers.
Theme:	LO 1 Rural Tourism
Sub-theme:	Objective 1 Rural Tourism, Strategic Action 1.2
Link to LDS	Objective 1 Rural Tourism, Strategic Action 1.2

Total Project Costs	€2,136,579
Eligible Project Costs	€2,136,579
Funding sought by promoter:	€200,000
Funding recommended by Evaluation Committee:	A maximum of €200,000 or 9.36075% of eligible expenditure, whichever is the lesser.
Details of private funding:	€4,223,574 – Cash/Money in bank. Please note the Bank and Cash Reconciliation. They will have a paper deficit of €181,963 after cash flow provision for the Community. The accounts show that there is a €400k loan to be repaid. Also restricted funds in excess of €600k to cover other works to other parts of the monastery. The restricted and renovated fund amount to €6.1m.
Voluntary Labour: YES / NO (If yes provide detail)	No
Synopsis of project:	The Project involves the redevelopment of part of an old farm yard into a Visitor Centre with 6 Ensuite Bedrooms, 3 Meeting Rooms, Dining Room, Function Room, Shop and Offices. All the necessary archaeological works

	and permissions have been completed and obtained.		
Detail exactly what WLP will be funding (List items from Project Assessment Report)	Detail	Total Cost (Expenditure)	Grant Aid recommend by the Evaluation Committee @ %
	Construction of the Visitor Centre	€2,136,579	A maximum of €200,000 or 9.36075% of eligible expenditure, whichever is the lesser.
Total Funding			
Was an assessment completed?: Date: <u>12/07/2018</u>	Yes The Evaluation Committee agreed that the project assessment was completed on the 12th July 2018 and following a review noted the following The project fits the Co Waterford Local Community Development Plan Local Objective 1 Rural Tourism SA 1.2 Culture & Heritage Product Development. The Evaluation Committee agreed that funding this project is a good use of Rural Development funds as funding this project will provide a high standard visitors centre and accommodation to the area.		
Are detailed costings provided for the project? Were the costs for the project considered reasonable and how was this measured?	Yes		
Where the procurement process resulted in less than 3 quotes, the EC must show the additional steps taken to ensure the reasonableness of costs:	5 Quotations		
Innovative Element of the project:	It was agreed that the project is innovative in that the Blackwater Valley has massive tourism potential, particularly in terms of cultural tourism and tourism related to the great Houses. This project provides a very solid product for the Valley.		
Consideration of Deadweight:	The Evaluation Committee agreed that without funding this project would proceed at a lesser extent. The Community have put in a very strong fund raising effort, both here and abroad, and while their accounts look healthy, the reality is that the visitor centre is going to be one of their main income sources going forward, with the balance of the remaining cash on hand(€800K)having to be held in reserve under the Charities Act.		
Consideration of Displacement:	Displacement is not an issue as the only other venture similar to this in the area is Mt. Melleray Abbey, and in reality they will complement one another.		
Economic justification for project:	The project fits in with the Co Waterford LCDC Plan for Rural Tourism Culture & Heritage Product Development.		
Average Score for Project:	After achieving an overall score of 80 out of 100, the Evaluation Committee agreed that they are happy to recommend this project for approval to the Board of Waterford LCDC.		
% level of aid & ceiling:	A maximum of €200,000 or 9.36075% of eligible expenditure, whichever is the lesser.		
E. C. Executive Summary/Rationale for Funding	The Evaluation Committee agreed to recommend funding this project for the following reasons:- 1. The project fits the Co Waterford Local Community Development Plan Local Objective 1 Rural Tourism SA 1.2 Culture & Heritage Product Development. 2. The Evaluation Committee agreed that funding this project is a good use of Rural Development funds as funding this project will provide a high standard visitors centre and accommodation to the area.		

	The Evaluation Committee agreed to recommend funding this project as presented. A maximum of €200,000 or 9.36075% of eligible expenditure, whichever is the lesser.
--	---

Jobs Created	Jobs Sustained	Match Funding	Previous Grant Aid Received
	1.5 Jobs	Yes	No

Confirmation that agencies / communities are supportive of the proposed project.	Date of Confirmation	Signed on behalf By
Failte Ireland	24/08/2018	H Creedon
L.E.O.	24/08/2018	B Kirby

Detail of Discussion: The following were the main points raised in the discussion of the project:-

- Mr Jimmy Taaffe briefly outlined the project to the Evaluation Committee advising that the order lost all its monies in 2007 when bank shares collapsed but since then received donations from two main benefactors. While there appears to be an issue with deadweight the money in the bank account is for this project and to ensure the long term care of the older population of the order. The order has about 28 nuns ranging in age from 24 to 80 years old.
- The promoters currently run a small 4 bed guesthouse but it is no longer suitable for its purposes. It is being proposed to build a purpose built facility; a visitor's centre that will include 6 ensuite rooms, dining rooms, meeting rooms and will cater for the many visitors that come for retreat days. It will be fully accessible including a lift and wheelchair ramp which the current building is not.
- Mr Jimmy Taaffe said that there is a growing interest in Europe for quality cultural tourism attractions of very high standard particularly in Austria, Belgium and France. The clientele are usually high income earners looking for all-inclusive mindfulness centres/ retreats in remote locations. This is what the promoters are hoping to achieve.

A discussion ensued with it being noted that this type of offering will have to be done to the highest standards and that possibly the services of an interior designer and outside expertise/training on the food side sought be sought.

- It was advised that the promoters no longer operate the dairy farm and now lease the land.
- It was confirmed that the Visitor Centre will welcome all denominations and people of no faith. This has been written into their constitution and business plan.
- A discussion ensued on the accounts with it being noted that the mainstay income generator are the bread making and card printing. Presently the DEASP payments make up a lot of their income but this goes with the individual under the fair deal scheme. It was agreed that the reserve in funding to take care of the aging

population is necessary therefore deadweight is not an issue.

- A Committee Member queried what was the difference funding this as opposed to a 6 bedroomed guest house anywhere else in County Waterford. Mr Taaffe confirmed that the guesthouse is part of a bigger development the Visitor Centre that will be providing a cultural tourism experience. We will in fact be funding less than 10% with the funders providing the rest of the funding themselves. The promoters are eligible under the rural diversification measure of the LEADER programme and have a herd number. It is a commercial project therefore they will be paying rates. B&B's do not fit this criteria and therefore are not eligible under the programme.
- The Committee agree that this is a good project and will be a good addition to the area noting that currently there are no accommodation options in Lismore.

The Evaluation Committee agreed to recommend funding this project as presented.

A maximum of €200,000 or 9.36075% of eligible expenditure, whichever is the lesser.

Amount Recommended: A maximum of €200,000

% of Eligible Project Funding: 9.36075% of eligible expenditure

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Chairperson of Evaluation Committee

Committee Member

Date: _____

Date: _____

Issues / Queries raised by Evaluation Committee	Project Officers Response

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

WLP Project Officer

Please insert photos below of reference purposes:

(for example a photo of the building to be renovated/machinery being purchased, etc)





Overall Evaluation Committee Scoring Record

Date: 13th August 2018

Time: 11am to 3pm

Project Title: Visitor Centre

Project Reference Number: 31LDRWAT107967

Assessment Criteria	Objective	Issues raised by Evaluation Committee	Weighting	Score
Compatibility with Local Development Strategy	Do the project proposals meet the criteria set out in the LAG business plan for the relevant measure?		Yes/No	
Innovation	Is the product innovative in its nature and does it displace existing enterprises? - Product / Service 9/19 <u>9</u> - Displacement 5/19 <u>5</u> - Job Creation 5/19 <u>2</u>		19	16
Promoters experience	Does the promoter have the training/skills, track record or experience to deliver? - Standards of Operation 6/25 <u>5</u> - Track Record 6/25 <u>5</u> - Structure of Business 6/25 <u>4</u> - Necessary skills base 7/25 <u>5</u>		25	19
Financial Viability	Are the project costs justifiable (reasonableness of costs) and / is funding available to co-fund the project? - Overall Costs 7/25 <u>5</u> - Co Funding 6/25 <u>5</u> - Financial Plan 6/25 <u>5</u>		25	18

	- Deadweight	6/25	3			
Sustainability	Is the project viable and will the service continue to be delivered?			13		11
Requirement	Does the proposal target a specific need or address a specific gap in the market?			18		16
Total				100		20

N.B. Project must receive a minimum score of 65% prior to being recommended for approval.

- Has the potential level of deadweight been assessed for this project? YES / NO
- i.e. would the project proceed without LEADER funding? YES / NO *Letter extend*

Recommendations of the Evaluation Committee: Approved

Signature: 

Signature of Evaluation Committee Chair

Date: 13.08.2018

Denise Walsh

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday 23 August 2018 11:34
To: Denise Walsh
Subject: Re: August Minutes

Denise,

I am in agreement with draft minutes.

Regards

Paul Clerkin.

On 2018-08-22 15:49, Denise Walsh wrote:

Hi Paul,

Attached please find the amended minutes for you to review.

Thanks & Regards,

Denise Walsh

Administrator / Riarthóir

Waterford Leader Partnership CLG

Lismore Business Park,

Mayfield,

Lismore,

Co. Waterford.

Charities Regulatory Authority No.20070748

