



Circular No: 04 - 2019
From: LEADER Unit
To: All LAGs and Implementing Partners
Date Issued: 21 February 2019
Subject: Clarification regarding distinction between animation and specific support for individual projects

The Department has received a number of queries regarding the distinction between (i) support for animation activities undertaken by a LAG to deliver the local development strategy and (ii) support for specific tasks which are similar to animation but occur as part of the delivery of an individual project.

Article 35 (1)(e) of Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013 defines animation as “*animation of the community-led local development strategy in order to facilitate exchange between stakeholders to provide information and to promote the strategy and to support potential beneficiaries with a view to developing operations and preparing applications*”. The cost of hiring an individual or organisation to animate part of the Local Development Strategy or to animate a **collection of projects** under a particular sub-theme must be financed from the LAG’s own administration and animation budget as outlined in Section 16.1 of the LEADER Operating Rules. Project funding cannot be used to substitute for the role of the LAG in animating projects.

However, project funding can be used to fund an individual or organisation to deliver **elements of an individual project** which might involve actions that are similar to the general animation work undertaken by the LAG. The individual or organisation undertaking these actions must be procured in the same way as for all other services i.e. this must not constitute a direct staff cost.

Examples of such project funding (i.e. to deliver elements of an individual project) include:

- a community based initiative to develop a community hub which might, as part of the overall project, procure an individual or organisation to establish a community database, establish a web presence, set up communication networks, build awareness, develop a plan for the future, develop the membership base etc.
- a private based initiative to better organise distribution networks and collective marketing associated with a local food sector which might, as part of the overall project, procure an individual or organisation to develop a specific strategy to achieve their aims, to work with the various stakeholders to secure their



agreement and commitment to the actions that emerge from the strategy, and to oversee the launch and implementation of the strategy.

- a small business seeking a range of supports to grow their operation which might, as part of the overall project, procure an individual or organisation to mentor and provide guidance on certain strategic actions for that specific business. Please note that, as per Section 6.4 of the LEADER Operating Rules, general mentoring programmes must continue to be funded out of the LAG Administration and Animation budget. In addition, where a LAG identifies a general mentoring need within a community/area, it may fund a training course from its project budget which is open to all relevant individuals/groups in the area to attend.

The maximum applicable rate of aid for such projects is 50% for private applicants and 75% for community-based projects with no commercial basis. A higher rate of 90% may apply under the basic services sub-theme where the project is targeted at hard to reach communities. Such projects **must not** be categorised as “training” or “analysis and development” and **must not** be funded at higher rates of aid than stated above.

END