



Circular No: 07 - 2019
From: LEADER Policy and Operations Unit
To: All Article 48 Checking Bodies
Date Issued: 20 May 2019
Subject: Site Visit requirements for Projects at claim stage

It has been noted that a number of Article 48 Checking Bodies are not complying with the requirements in relation to site visits as outlined in Circulars 05/2018 and 05/2019: now Section 17.3 of the LEADER 2014 – 2020 Operating Rules Version 03 issued on 25 April last.

Verification of this requirement is set out in Article 48(5) of [Implementing Regulation 809/2014](#).

In most cases it is envisaged that it will not be necessary for the Article 48 Checking Body to carry out a Site Visit on the project itself after having reviewed the Site Visit Report and backup photographs. These documents will be uploaded to the LEADER IT Document Repository by the project officer in support of the project claim and should normally suffice. Nonetheless the Article 48 Checking Body still must confirm this to be the case and provide their rationale for not carrying out a project Site Visit.

Please refer to Section 17.3 of the LEADER 2014 – 2020 Operating Rules Version 03 issued on 25 April last for more details on the Site Visit requirements.

A. Process for confirming if a Site Visit is required to be carried out by the Article 48 Checking Body

As per Section 17.3 of the LEADER 2014 – 2020 Operating Rules Version 03 and Circulars 05/2018 and 05/2019 ***“the rationale for not undertaking a site visit must be recorded for every claim in the Notes Section on the LEADER IT System...”***. From the date of issue of this Circular, these details **must** be included in the **“Article 48 Capital Site Visit”** Textbox on the LEADER IT System as follows:

“Article 48 Capital Sites Visit” Textbox

The “Article 48 Capital Sites Visit” textbox in the Claim record must be used for all claims and the relevant comment inserted. The insertion of the comment will demonstrate:

1. that the requirements for a project Site Visit has been considered by the Article 48 User and the Article 48 Manager; and
2. Must include their rationale for them not completing the On-site Inspection where they deem it not necessary.



Please see screen shot and red arrow below for the location of the “Article 48 Capital Sites Visit” textbox on the LEADER IT System.

The screenshot shows the 'Deductions | Penalties' section of the LEADER IT System. The 'Article 48' section contains several fields: 'Article 48 Ineligible Amount', 'Article 48 False Declaration', 'Article 48 Obvious Error', and 'Article 48 Ineligible Amount Reason'. A red arrow points to the 'Article 48 Capital Site Visits' field, which is currently empty. Below this, the 'Inspection' section includes 'Inspection Deduction', 'Inspection Date', 'Selection Basis', 'Inspector Obvious Error', 'Control Error', and 'False Declaration'. The 'Inspectors Control ID' field is also visible. The status at the bottom is 'Active'.

Rationale for not completing the On-site Inspection

The Article 48 User will determine if an on-site inspection is required for the purposes of Article 48(5) of Implementing Regulation 809/2014. The Article 48 User may decide not to conduct an on-site inspection where:

- Less than 75% of the LEADER amount has been claimed;
- The LEADER grant amount is less than €5,000 as the operation in question is a small investment.
- The Article 48 Checking Body is satisfied that the report and photos submitted, together with the other Article 48 checks undertaken, indicate that the “risk that the conditions for receiving support are not met is low, or that the risk that the investment has not been realised is low” .

This screenshot is similar to the one above, but the 'Article 48 Capital Site Visits' field now contains the text: 'The LFP and Article 48 checking body is satisfied that the report and photos submitted, together with other Article 48 checks under taken indicate that the risk'. The rest of the form and the status 'Active' remain the same.



- The project does not involve construction, acquisition or improvement of immovable property or the purchase of new machinery and equipment.

The rationale for not undertaking a site visit **must** be recorded for **every** claim in the “Article 48 Capital Sites Visit” textbox on the LEADER IT System, based on the above criteria. If the Article 48 User decides to undertake a site visit this must also be recorded in the “Article 48 Capital Sites Visit” textbox. An example of a completed textbox is set out below.

NOTE

It should be noted that in moving the project claim from Stage 6 to Stage 7, the Article 48 Manager is approving the text in the “Article 48 Capital Site Visits Box” and the rationale provided.

Department Approval of project claim for payment

When a project claim comes for payment approval to the Department, the Department User will be inter alia checking that the “Article 48 Capital Site Visit” Comment Box has been completed – if it is found not to be completed the project will be returned to the Article 48 Manager for completion which will result in a delay in processing the payment claim.

Claims must **not** be progressed to Stage 7 by the Article 48 Manager until the “Article 48 Capital Site Visits” Comment Box has been completed.

B. For Project claims that have already undergone and Article 48 Check before 20/05/2019

A number of project claims have already been completed where the required confirmation in respect of Site Visits has not been provided on the LEADER IT System. In those instances it will be necessary for the Article 48 User and Article 48 Manager to complete the attached Template in **Appendix 1** and upload it to the LEADER IT System Document Repository for each project claim as a matter of urgency. Each Article 48 Checking Body **must** confirm that they have completed this template for each existing project claim on the LEADER IT System. This confirmation must be returned to Fiona Meehan at Fiona.meehan@drcd.gov.ie by no later than **28 June 2019**.

LEADER Policy & Operations Unit

