



Circular No: 11 - 2020
From: LEADER Policy and Operations Unit
To: All LAGs and Implementing Partners
Date Issued: 06 July 2020
Subject: Further Revised Arrangement – Funding Allocations & LDS Amendments.

In response to challenges being experienced in rural Ireland as a direct impact of the COVID -19 crisis, the Department has decided to provide LAG's with greater flexibility to target funding at the sectors they determine to be of greatest need in their sub-regional area.

This Circular supersedes the provisions of Circular 01/2018 and Circular 14/2018 in respect of (i) budgetary flexibility and (ii) LDS amendments.

As and from the date of this Circular, Section 5.6 of the LEADER 2014 – 2020 Operating Rules is being amended to permit LAGs greater flexibility in moving LDS Budgetary funding between Themes and Sub Themes.

5.6 Amendment to Local Development Strategy (LDS) (Clean Version)

Budget Movement between Sub Themes within a Theme Only

It is not necessary for the LAG to notify the Department in instances where money has been moved between Sub Themes, within a Theme only. It should be noted that the LAG will still be required to report on budgetary changes as part of the normal monitoring of the delivery of its LDS, including through the Annual Progress Report to be submitted each year to the Department.



Where the LAG approves such a movement of funds, the signed and dated LAG Minutes recording the approval of the movement of funds **must** detail the following:

- the budgetary changes including the amount of funding being moved; and
- the Sub Themes involved in the movement of funds; and
- the rationale for the movement of these funds (this must be formally approved and recorded by the LAG in the relevant LAG minutes).

Budget Movement between Themes only

It is permitted, where the LAG considers it appropriate for the effective delivery of their LDS to move funding between Themes subject to:

- the LAG Decision Making Members formally approving such funding movements, and such approval(s) being recorded in the appropriate LAG minutes and a copy of these signed LAG minutes being provided to the Department; and
- a rationale being provided by the LAG to the Department for the funding movements between Themes that demonstrates that these changes were warranted (e.g. evidence of animation activities completed, etc.); and
- every effort being made by the LAG to bring at least one project forward under each Theme in keeping with the overall objective of their LDS.

This reallocation of funds may be undertaken without the need for a formal amendment to the LDS. This movement of funds between Themes and Sub Themes (subject to the above requirements), including the timing of such moves, is a matter for the LAG to manage and record.

Department approval is not required for these changes, but as programme administrators, the reallocation of LDS Theme budgets approved by the LAG,



must be submitted to the Department at rdp1420@dracd.gov.ie, together with the following documents:

- the completed and signed template (Appendix A) which **must** detail the total amount of funding being moved between Themes, broken down by Sub Theme and the rationale for said movement.
- the signed and dated LAG Minutes detailing the budgetary changes (including the amount of funding being moved, the Themes and Sub Themes involved and the rationale for the change(s)).

Please use the subject line 'LDS Budget Changes' to enable your email to be directed to the relevant Section of the LEADER Policy & Operations Unit for processing.

NOTE: As per the requirements of article 33.1 (f) of EU regulation 1303/2013, each LAG has outlined in Section 7 of its LDS how it intends to evaluate the delivery of the strategy; as per article 34.3 (g) of EU regulation 1303/2013, each LAG is required to ensure the specific evaluation activities (as per their strategy document) are completed before LEADER 2014 – 2020 programme end.

Textual Changes

Given that we are at the latter stages of the current LEADER programme, the Department is of the view that such changes will no longer be required; however, if a LAG is of the view that such a change is required, please contact the Department at rdp1420@dracd.gov.ie for further advice.

Any queries in respect of this Circular should be submitted to rdp1420@dracd.gov.ie using the subject line 'LDS Amendments' in order for your



query to be directed to the relevant Section of the LEADER Policy & Operations Unit.

Appendix B

For your convenience Appendix B highlights the changes made to Section 5.6 of the LEADER 2014 – 2020 Operating Rules. The changes are highlighted using strike through for text being removed and red text for new text inserted.

LEADER Policy & Operations Unit