



Circular No: 13 - 2021

From: LEADER Policy and Operations Unit

To: All LAGs, Implementing Partners and Article 48 Checking Bodies

Date Issued: 15 December 2021

Subject: Closing of the €15m LEADER Food Initiative (LFI)

This Circular is being issued to advise that the €15m LFI budget is exhausted.

New food projects

From the date of issue of this Circular, there is no longer a requirement for new food projects, which satisfy the conditions of the LFI to be channeled through the LFI Project Pathway. The LAG must channel such projects through either the Standard Project Pathway or EURI Project Pathway where EOIs are deemed eligible in principle for LEADER funding and the LAG is in a position to consider such applications within its remaining project budget. The LAG should request that the project promoter(s) complete a LEADER funding application form for either LEADER Transitional Programme Funding or EURI Funding.

LFI Projects at Stages 1 – 2 on the LEADER IT System

In the case of LFI projects currently at Stages 1 – 2 on the LEADER IT System, the LAG may decide to either:

- withdraw these projects on the LEADER IT System; or
- if the project EOI is deemed eligible in principle for LEADER funding and the LAG is in a position to consider the application within its remaining project budget, request the project promoter(s) to complete a LEADER funding application form for either LEADER Transitional Programme Funding or EURI Funding.
 - such projects must be directed through either the Standard Project Pathway for LEADER Transitional Programme Funding or the EURI Project Pathway for EURI Funding.



- The LAG can channel these projects either, down the Standard Project Pathway or the EURI Project Pathway on the LEADER IT System without having to contact the Pobal Administrator. The LAG can set the project sub-type to N/a or EURI for these projects.
- Currently there are 39 projects at Stage 1 and 48 projects at Stage 2 (Total 87 projects) on the LEADER IT System.

LFI projects that are at Stages 3-10 on the LEADER IT System

For LFI projects that are at Stages 3-10 on the LEADER IT System, LAGs must follow one of the following steps:

- Re-route these projects through the core-funding stream, by contacting the Pobal System Administrator requesting the re-routing of such projects through the core-funding channel, and to change the “Project Sub-type” from “LEADER Food Initiative” to “N/A”. Where these projects have gone through the Evaluation Committee and Post Evaluation Article 48 Checks, they will not be required to go through those processes again. These projects must go directly to the LAG for funding decision as core projects even if they have been previously approved for funding by the LAG under the LFI; or
- In order to satisfy the separate reporting requirements for EURI funding to the EU Commission, where such projects are to be re-routed through EURI these **must** go through the **full application process**, i.e. Project Promoters will be required to re-apply for funding under EURI and go through the application and evaluation process including Article 48 Administrative Checking and be presented to the LAG for decision; or



- The LAG **must** move these projects to Stage 16 Withdrawn, on the LEADER IT System as the LFI Call will be closed.

Note

As the €15m LFI budget is now allocated, each LAG **must** ensure that there are **no** LFI projects left at Stages 1- 10 on the LEADER IT System after **31 January 2022**.

As the current LFI Call is now closed, projects will **not** be permitted to hold the place they held in the current LFI Call should further funding become available. Should further funding become available where LFI projects are de-committed and/or come in under budget, it may be incorporated into a new LFI Call for projects in 2022.

New Call for LFI projects post 2021

The Department in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine will review the funding situation for LFI projects in 2022. If adequate funding becomes available to hold a new call for LFI projects, e.g. where LFI projects are de-committed and/or come in under budget, the Departments may decide to issue a **new call** for LFI proposals in 2022.

Any queries in relation to the application of this Circular should be forwarded to food1420@dracd.gov.ie

LEADER Policy & Operations Unit