



Circular No: 03-2023

From: LEADER Policy and Operations Unit

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

Date Issued: 08 August 2023

Subject: LEADER Food Initiative (LFI) call and extension to timeframes of LEADER funded projects.

This Circular is being issued to inform recipients of the:

- A. Additional call for applications to the LEADER Food Initiative (LFI); and
- B. Extension to timeframes for approval and completion of LEADER funded projects.

A. Additional call for applications to the LEADER Food Initiative (LFI)

The call for applications to the LEADER Food Initiative (LFI) is targeted at eligible small food businesses in line with a commitment in the Programme for Government, 'Our Shared Future', to "support the small food producer, providing support for on-farm diversification enterprises and investment in local processing facilities, allowing farmers to sell their products into the local and wider domestic markets". The call is specifically targeted towards the following groups to enable them to diversify, expand and develop:

- on-farm diversification enterprises; and
- artisan, micro and small food businesses.



The maximum amount of funding permitted per project under this call is €200,000 and funding proposals must not be for less than €5,000 per project.

The following are key dates related to the call for applications:

- LAGs must complete and submit a project proposal for approval in principle before 5.30 pm on 31 August 2023. It should be noted that LAG approval is not required at this stage of the process. LAGs will be notified in early September of the decision in principle of DRCD on project proposals submitted.
- Projects approved in principle by DRCD must then be approved for funding by the LAG and submitted for consideration by DRCD and DAFM by 31 December 2023.
- Projects must be fully completed by 31 March 2024.
- Final claims for payment must be submitted to the Department no later than 30 June 2024.

Further information regarding the process is included in **APPENDIX I - LEADER Food Initiative 2023 Call for proposals Guidelines**.

B. Extension to timeframes for approval and completion of LEADER funded projects

To enable Local Action Groups allocate any unallocated funding available to them in the current LEADER Programme, the timeframe for approval of funding projects is extending from 30 August 2023 to 31 December 2023. Additionally, the completion date deadline for all projects is extended from 31 December 2023 to 31 March 2024.

Any queries in relation to the application of this Circular should be submitted to OR1420@drcd.gov.ie

LEADER Policy & Operations Unit