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CAP Strategic Plan

2023 - 2027 LEADER Programme

Annual Progress Report 2024 & Implementation Plan 2025

Please note: All questions are mandatory for completion

Local Action Group Name:
Waterford LCDC

Section 1: Management and Decision-Making Structures

(1) Has the 2327 LEADER IT System been updated to reflect the LAG membership?	Yes ☒ No ☐
(2) (a) How many meetings of the LAG have taken place during this reporting period (1 st January – 31 st December 2024)? (b) On what date was the first meeting of the LAG for the 2023-2027 LEADER Programme?	11 First LAG meeting of the year held on 11.01.2024. First update to the LCDC/LAG on the rollout of LEADER 2023-2027 held on 15.02.2024.
(3) (a) How many meetings of the evaluation committee(s) have taken place during this reporting period (1 st January – 31 st December 2024)? (b) On what date was the first meeting of the Evaluation Committee for the 2023-2027 LEADER Programme?	7 27.03.2024

(4) (a) Is the LAG decision making process working well? (b) What would improve this process?	Yes ☒ No ☐ Room for Improvement ☐
(5) Were the public/private quorum requirements met for all LAG meetings and decisions in 2024?	Yes ☒ No ☐
(6) Have LAG decision making members completed the Conflict of Interest declaration and Register of Interest declaration?	Yes ☒ No ☐
(7) Does the LAG maintain a comprehensive Procedures Manual for the management of LEADER Funding and activity?	Yes ☒ No ☐

(Reporting Period: 1st January – 31st December 2024)

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(8) (a) Please select all animation that was completed in 2024 (b) Please list the 3 most successful methods of animation.	☒ Contact with previous project promoters ☐ Formal Press launch ☐ Newsletters ☒ Project application workshops ☒ Emailing or mail shot to groups of interest ☒ Engagement with Local Communities ☒ One to one engagement with individuals ☒ Public meetings/Information events ☒ Promotion of LEADER at various events ☒ Advertising in local media and radio ☒ Inter-agency Collaboration/Networking ☒ Social media and websites ☒ Direct telephone contact ☐ Other (please list) Targeted Calls Public meetings/Information events Social media and websites
(9) What was the impact of this animation in attracting new or existing project promoters? Please select all applicable	☒ Increase in the volume of EOIs ☒ Increase in the number of projects that succeeded in securing funding ☐ Other (please list) Attracted ☒ New project promoters ☒ Existing project promoters
(10) Highlight the key achievements / successes of the programme in 2024	☒ Rate of approval by Evaluation Committees ☒ General awareness, knowledge and uptake of LEADER Programme ☒ Volume & quality of EOIs & applications approved ☒ Positive engagement with community & business stakeholders ☐ Developing co-operation projects ☒ Training initiatives ☒ Good communications/collaborative approaches ☒ Meeting targets set out in LDS ☒ Strong demand from communities under specific sub themes ☐ Other (please list)

(11) (a) Please select all of the issues and challenges experienced during the reporting period.

- ☐ Administrative checks
- ☐ Adapting to new process under LEADER and IT System
- ☐ Working with a number of Implementing Partners
- ☐ Revisions to operating rules and issuing Circulars
- ☒ Oversubscription of certain sub themes and little demand for others
- ☐ Challenges with targeted calls
- ☐ Managing cash flow/part payments
- ☒ Difficulty with complying with requirements for smaller projects
- ☐ Approval process
- ☒ Availability of alternative funding sources
- ☒ Public procurement
- ☒ Time spent by development staff on administration
- ☒ Complexity of grant application process
- ☐ Match funding for projects
- ☐ Other (please list)

(b) How were issues/challenges overcome?

The Culture & Heritage sub-theme was oversubscribed and all the funding was allocated under the first targeted call. If there is an opportunity to review the allocations, this may be one of the areas to consider. Certain sub-themes under the rural environment have not attracted applications under the first two targeted calls. Engagements have been held with the council biodiversity officer to collaborate in identifying possible community projects.

(c) Lessons Learned

The eTender process is a significant obstacle for promoters. Some projects have been "lost" because of the complexity of eTenders. The challenges with eTenders are highlighted at all the LEADER information sessions and application workshops. A list of possible eTender specialists have been made available to promoters.

The application process is complex and promoters require support, which the development staff provide to the best of their ability. This complexity does impact on the number of projects received as there are numerous other grants that are easier to apply for especially for promoters looking for smaller amounts of funding.

The administrative burden on staff is significant and it is especially challenging for new staff. The LEADER IT and policy staff have been extremely helpful and have continuously provided guidance, clarifications, Q&As, etc.

(12) Please outline any activity that took place in relation to co-operation projects during 2024	Not applicable.
(13) (a) How many targeted calls were carried out in 2024? (b) Please provide details of the targeted calls in 2024	Two (February 2024 and November 2024) Targeted Call 1: 51 EOIs received 12 Ineligible EOIs 22 Projects Submitted 15 Projects Approved 7 Projects not approved 2 Approved projects, funding declined by the promoter 2 Unsuccessful appeals 13 Projects implemented Advertised budget: €2,266,323.75 Funds for approved projects: €1,097,177.98 Targeted Call 2: 45 EOIs received 2 Ineligible EOIs 10 Projects submitted, one declined incorrect procurement 9 projects currently being reviewed and will go to Evaluation Committee on 11 March 2025 Advertised budget: €2,032,254.00 Value of projects received (LEADER portion): €691,338.40

Section 3: Implementation Plan 2025

(14) From the review of the LDS please identify: (a) What are the priorities for 2025?	☐ Increase the level of project approval ☐ Development of co-operation projects ☐ Increase level of payments/drawdowns ☒ Programme promotion/animation ☐ Delivery of LDS Actions/Committing all funding ☒ Engagement with communities that have not previously benefited from LEADER funding
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(b) What animation is planned to support these?

- ☒ Support for new and innovative projects in the areas of climate change, environmental protection and the green economy
- ☒ Other (please list)
 - Targeted Call 3

(15) Targeted calls for 2025
Please outline the LAGs plans for targeted calls in 2025?

- ☒ Procurement process advice and guidance
- ☒ Public Meetings/Information Events
- ☐ Training Programmes
- ☒ Specific animation workshops
- ☐ Collaboration with strategic partners
- ☒ Advertising using social media/local media and websites
- ☒ Supports and engagement with local communities
- ☒ Supporting and engaging with local communities who have not previously received LEADER funding
- ☒ Other (please list)
 - Maintaining a project pipeline
 - Re-engaging promoters who fell out of the process due to planning, eTenders or not being ready
 - One-on-one meetings with potential promoters

Targeted Call 3 will be advertised on 1st of July 2025
Each targeted call covers all themes and sub themes of the LDS, subject to available/remaining budget.



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Development led by local communities

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