



Circular No: 05-2025

From: LEADER Policy and Operations Unit

To: All LAGs, Implementing Partners and Administrative Check Bodies

Date Issued: 25 June 2025

Subject: v4 updates to the 2023-2027 LEADER Operating Rules and associated guidelines

This circular is being issued to inform recipients of a revised version of the 2023-2027 LEADER Operating Rules and associated guidelines, with specific reference to updated sections. These updates will come into effect from the date of this circular unless otherwise stated.

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1. New Department Name

As of 2 June 2025, the Department is called:

English: The Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht (DRCDG)

Irish: An Roinn Forbartha Tuaithe agus Pobail agus Gaeltachta (RFTPG)

All references to the Department (i.e. full title and acronym) are updated throughout:

- 2023-2027 LEADER Operating Rules
- Guidelines for 2023-2027 LEADER Co-operation Projects
- Guidelines for 2023-2027 LEADER Projects Affecting Heritage
- Rialacha Oibriúcháin Chlár LEADER 2023-2027
- Treoirínte Maidir le Tionscadail Comhair LEADER 2023-2027
- Treoirínte Maidir le Tionscadail Oidhreachta faoi LEADER 2023-2027

2. Logos (Section 24 - Information and Publicity)

This section has been revised to include updated logos, and an updated co-funding statement reflecting the above-mentioned name change:

Start of revised section

The following text must be used in explaining the role of the Department in the LEADER activity:

Arna chomhchistiú ag an Roinn Forbartha Tuaithe agus Pobail agus Gaeltachta

Co-funded by the Department of Rural & Community Development and the Gaeltacht

End of revised section



The following are updated logos to reflect the above text change:



3. Section 13.4 (NEW) - Decommittals process

A new section has been added detailing the decommittal process

Start of new section

In instances where the approved grant aid is not fully claimed by the project promoter, the balance remaining must be decommitted before the amount can be allocated by the LAG towards funding another project application.

Generally, for a decommittal to be processed the project must be completed and the final claim paid. Examples of how decommittals arise include, but are not limited to, the following examples:

- the project cost is completed at a cost which is less than the LEADER amount granted, as per the letter of offer/contract.
- the promoter does not proceed with an element of the project but the project is still completed with the project objectives met.
- the project promoter withdraws their project application after a claim is initiated on the LEADER IT System.
- the LAG revokes a funding offer after a claim is initiated on the LEADER IT System.

All decommittal requests should be submitted to LEADER2327@drcdg.gov.ie stating the following information:



- Project name
- LEADER IT System Project Number
- Amount to be decommitted
- Detailed rationale for decommittal
- Confirmation that site visit took place

Note that confirmation from the project promoter stating that they agree to relinquish the balance of the grant is only required in the following scenario:

- project claims were processed on a phased basis, and
- the project is still within contract, and
- the 'final claim' checkbox on the LEADER IT System is marked 'no'

When a decommittal request is approved and processed, all relevant documentation must be uploaded to the LEADER IT System.

End of new section

4. Section 14.4 - Prompt Payment Requirements

This section has been revised to include updated text to align with section 13.2.1 *Insertion of the date of receipt on a document instead of using a date stamp.*

Start of revised section

LAGs should be aware of the *The Prompt Payment of Accounts Act 1997* and the *Late Payment in Commercial Transaction Regulations (S.I. No. 580 of 2012)* and must inform itself fully of the relevant legislation, but in any event and regardless of its status:

- make payments to suppliers of goods or services or contractors within 30 working days of receipt of a valid invoice, or receipt of the delivery of goods or services, whichever is the later, thus avoiding the payment of interest notwithstanding other obligations of the Prompt Payments Act on the Financial Partner; and
- stamp all invoices or write the date of receipt with an accompanying signature, upon receipt. Where an invoice is received electronically, the accompanying e-mail will act as the proof of date of receipt and must also be uploaded to the LEADER IT system document repository. ~~(including electronic invoices, which should be filed with the e-mail that accompanied it).~~



Where the LAG does not note the date stamp on the invoice ~~on receipt when it is received~~, the invoice date will be the relevant date for calculating interest payable by the LAG. Interest is not an eligible cost.

End of revised section

5. Section 17.6 - Expenses

Section 17.6 has been revised by editing the following text and moving it from section 17.6.2 up to 17.6 as it relates to all T&S claims.

Start of revised section

Therefore, any claims for T&S must provide the above all required information as relevant to the claim. Please note that these requirements can be incorporated into the LAG / Implementing Partner / Animating Partner T&S claim form. ~~A sample T&S claim form (Appendix 16) which LAG / Implementing Partners / Animating Partner may wish to use for this purpose.~~

End of revised section

6. Section 17.7 - Cost Allocation and Apportionment

Recognising that changes to other schemes implemented by Local Development Companies impact on their apportionment policies, this section is updated to also allow, where appropriate, financial or Implementing Partners/Animating Partners to update and approve apportionment policies. Updates should be infrequent and compliant with the LAGs overall budget.

Start of revised section

The LAG, its financial and Implementing Partners and Animating Partners, must detail the apportionment across the schemes in their procedures manuals, as appropriate, with a clear rationale for the apportionment used. The apportionment basis and changes to it during the programme period must be approved by the LAG, or its financial or Implementing Partners/Animating Partners as appropriate, ~~decision making members~~ and noted in the relevant LAG/IP/AP meeting minutes. Amendments



should be infrequent and should only occur when new schemes are introduced, or existing schemes discontinued.

The apportionment policy approved by the LAG/IP/AP must be uploaded to the LEADER IT System document repository along with the extract of the LAG/IP/AP meeting minutes where the apportionment policy was approved.

End of revised section

7. Section 19.4 - Recovery of undue payments

This section has been revised by inserting text to clarify that monies returned to the Department must be returned by the LAG, i.e. the project promoter is not to return monies directly to the Department. LAGs are reminded that the department should be notified of all reimbursements and a mail sent to LEADER2327@drcdg.gov.ie.

Start of revised section

The LAG must return to the Department any monies incorrectly paid and/or any penalties applied to the LAG. Project promoters are to repay money to the LAG who subsequently reimburse the Department.

End of revised section

8. Section 19.6 - Debtor's Ledger

This section has been revised by inserting an additional line to request LAGs to keep the Department informed of debts arising:

Start of revised section

The LAG must record debts as soon as they are identified. When LAGs record debts and update their ledger, the Department should be notified by emailing LEADER2327@drcdg.gov.ie so that the data reconciles with The Department will also capture this data on the LEADER IT system.

End of revised section



9. Section 24.1 - Information on the role of the LAG

This section has been revised with bilingual requirements for plaques, leaflets, etc. moved up from section 24.1.3 to 24.1

Start of revised section

The LAG must ensure that all information, publicity and visibility requirements for the programme, including installation of an explanatory plaque in the premises of the LAG, is installed in a prominent position in its premises that are financed by the LEADER programme. Additionally, the LAG must also ensure that informative content, e.g. poster, plaque, electronic signage or webpage, complies with the provisions of the Official Languages Act, see section 15.12.

The costs associated with these may be included as eligible project costs. The requirement for information, publicity and visibility requirements relating to European Union support and the CAP Strategic Plan is set out in Annex III of EU Regulation 2022/129. The LAG must ensure that all information leaflets, explanatory plaques and advertisements are bilingual, i.e. in Irish and English, and ~~the~~ the following national and EU logos must also be displayed.

End of revised section

24.1.3 – line deleted after being moved:

~~The LAG must also ensure that all information leaflets, explanatory plaques and advertisements are bilingual, i.e. in Irish and English.~~

Any queries in relation to the application of this Circular should be submitted to OR2327@drcdg.gov.ie

LEADER Policy & Operations Unit