

LEADER

Forbairt á stiúradh ag pobail áitiúla
Development led by local communities

2023-2027 LEADER Programme

Annual Progress Report 2025 & Implementation Plan 2026

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)	How many meetings of the LAG have taken place during this reporting period (1 st January – 31 st December 2025)?	11
(3)	How many meetings of the evaluation committee(s) have taken place during this reporting period (1 st January – 31 st December 2025)?	2025 = 3 meetings

(4) Have all governance requirements been met, and has LAG decision making been appropriately documented?	Yes ☒ No ☐
(5) Have LAG decision making members completed: (a) the annual Conflict of Interest declaration, and (b) the annual Register of Interest declaration?	Yes ☒ No ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐
(6) Does the LAG maintain a comprehensive Procedures Manual for the management of LEADER Funding and activity?	Yes ☒ No ☐
(7) Can the LAG confirm that project beneficiaries have a LEADER funded Asset Register in place?	Yes ☒ No ☐

(Reporting Period: 1st January – 31st December 2025)

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(8) (a) Please select all animation that was completed in 2025	☒ 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) (b) Please list the 3 most successful methods of animation. 1. Targeted Call announcements/promotion 2. Public meetings/information events 3. Social media and websites
(9) What was the impact of this animation? Did this animation activity help 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) ☒ New project promoters ☒ Existing project promoters
(10) Highlight the key achievements / successes of the programme in 2025	☒ 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) What were the issues and challenges experienced during 2025?	☐ Working with a number of Implementing Partners ☒ 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 ☐ Administrative checks ☒ 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? What lessons have been learned?	The Culture & Heritage sub-theme was oversubscribed and all the funding was allocated under the first targeted call. In December 2025 the LAG supported a movement of funds between themes, which was approved by the Department. This opportunity was also used to strengthen the Green Economy theme. Theme 3 generated some interest in biodiversity in the 3rd targeted call but only one of the two projects were approved. There was still no uptake under renewable energy or electronic management systems for community facilities. Theme 3 was promoted under each targeted call and meetings were held with the Biodiversity and Climate Action officers in the Council to see if collaboration on projects was possible. The eTender process remains an obstacle for promoters investing in larger capital projects. The cost of procuring the specialist help is borne by them which adds to the overall cost of the project. 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. The targeted call information sessions and application workshop are also designed to provide as much detail as possible to promoters. The complexity of the

	LEADER application process impacts 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. We again want to thank the LEADER IT Team and the LEADER OR team for their continuous support in addressing our queries.
(12) Please outline any activity that took place in relation to co-operation projects during 2025	Not applicable.
(13) (a) How many targeted calls were carried out in 2025? (b) Please provide details of the targeted calls in 2025	1 The 2nd targeted call of the programme was advertised in November 2024 but only rolled out during the first half of 2025. This was counted as a 2024 call. The 3rd targeted call was advertised in July 2025 and concluded in December 2025. 27 Eligible EOIs 10 Ineligible EOIs 6 projects submitted 4 projects recommended for funding by the EC 4 projects approved by the LCDL/LAG 2 projects offered the option to appeal 0 appeals received Advertised budget for 3rd targeted call: €2,101,124.12 Value of projects received (LEADER portion): €647,502.11 Value of LEADER funding approved: €300,612.55

Section 3: Implementation Plan 2026

(14) From the review of the LDS please identify:

(a) What are the priorities for 2026?

(b) What animation is planned to support these?

- ☐ 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
- ☒ Support for projects under sub themes identified in the LDS that have not yet benefited from LEADER funding
- ☒ Support for new and innovative projects in the areas of climate change, environmental protection and the green economy
- ☐ Support for Smart Village projects as identified in the LDS
- ☒ Other (please list)
 - Targeted Call 4 (Jan 2026)
 - Targeted Call 5 (July 2026)
 - Conclude the Early-Stage Evaluation of the Waterford LDS

- ☐ 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

(15) (a) How many targeted calls will be carried out in 2026?	2
(b) Please provide details of the targeted calls for 2026	Targeted Call 4 was advertised in January 2026. The call deadline is 17 April 2026. The process will conclude on 9 July 2026. Targeted Call 5 will be advertised in July 2026 and conclude in December 2026.

Section 4: LEADER Evaluation

16 (a) Please provide a brief description of any evaluation undertaken in <u>2025</u> in respect of the implementation of your LDS (outlining, where relevant, how it is in line with the evaluation plan detailed in your LDS document). Please select your evaluation method: <i>NOTE: this should be in line with your Local Development Strategy (LDS)</i> (b) Please provide a brief description of planned evaluation activities for <u>2026</u> (outlining, where relevant, how they are in line with the evaluation plan detailed in your LDS document). Please select your evaluation method: <i>NOTE: this should be in line with your Local Development Strategy (LDS)</i>	The request for quotes was advertised in November 2025. The successful service provider was appointed in December 2025. ☐ Internal / Self-Evaluation ☒ External body ☐ Combination of internal and external evaluation Work Stage 1: Baseline research: Policy review, monitoring data review, review of sample project files, review of evaluation committee minutes and LAG minutes. Work stage 2: Facilitated consultations with LAG Chairperson, LAG Chief Officer, FP Admin Check Manager, IP Chief Executive, Project Officers, EC Chair, sample project promoters, LCDC Focus Group. Work stage 3: Evaluation development: Information synthesis, development of draft final report, presentation of draft final report, development of final report, presentation of final report. ☐ Internal / Self-Evaluation
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- ☒ External body
☐ Combination of internal and external evaluation

Section 5: LEADER Project Case Studies

Please provide **one case study** of a LEADER project. Ideally this project should be fully completed (i.e. all payments have been made). However, the LAG may submit a case study where all funding has not been drawn down if the project showcases significant impact of LEADER funding. This case study must not have been submitted as part of a previous Annual Progress Report. This is a useful opportunity to review performance of the programme/funding and to showcase the impact of the programme in communities. Case studies should be short and concise and, where possible, include visuals to enhance the case study and increase its impact (for example, any promotional videos, photographs or images).

Please note that case studies or extracts from case studies may be used for reporting/publication at national and EU level. For example, case studies could be used for evaluation purposes or for showcasing the programme at events such as the Ploughing Championships, or other public events and publications.

LEADER Project Case Study	
(1) General Project Information	
Project Name:	Knockanore, Glendine, Kilwatermoy (KGK) Community Development Park
Project Reference:	31WAT100040
LDS Local Objective:	Investment in three outdoor activity facilities
Theme	2. Rural Infrastructure and Social Inclusion
Sub-theme	2d. Rural Youth
Co-operation Project	Yes ☐ No ☒
Contact person for case study	Project Officer: Claire Connors Promoter Representative: Monica Murphy kgkcommunitydevelopmentgroup@gmail.com 086 6012479
(2) Project Promoter	

Promoter Name	Knockanore, Glendine, Kilwatermoy (KGK) Community Development Group CLG
Promoter Type	Community
Description of Promoter	The KGK Community Development Company was officially formed on the 3rd of March 2022 by several groups in the KGK community. These are all operating in the community and are: 1. Knockanore National School 2. The KGK Community Hall 3. The Shamrocks GAA Club 4. The Community Council 5. The Ladies Gaelic Football Club 6. The Heritage Society 7. The Ladies Social Club The main purpose for which Knockanore, Glendine and Kilwatermoy (KGK) Community Development CLG was established is the advancement of community development including rural regeneration in the KGK area of West Co. Waterford, for local residents and members of the public through the provision of amenities. In November 2023, they won first place in the category of 'Community and Social Inclusion' from the Waterford PPN (Public Participation Network) for their work in securing land and planning permission.
(3) Project Description (Maximum 1000 words) Please provide a brief description of the project or enterprise under the following headings:	
3.1 Project Background/Context Please describe why the project was needed	The community is a rural one, made up of approximately 320 families. It is approximately an 36km round trip to the nearest towns such as Lismore, Cappoquin and Tallow. The community is not served with a regular public transport option at present. The community central point in at Knockanore, where there is a National School with just over 100 pupils attending, a Community Hall and a Church. The pub closed in July 2019 and its loss has exposed the importance of community life and having a place to meet people of all ages. KGK Development Group CLG researched and sought LEADER funding under Theme 2: Rural Infrastructure and Social Inclusion and under the sub-theme 2D: Rural Youth 2.3. Investment in outdoor activity facilities. One of the planned amenities was an Astro-Turf pitch to be built on land just beside the national school which we purchased as a community company. KGK Community Development Group secured planning permission for this along with a playground, picnic & biodiversity areas and carpark.

3.2 Aims and Objectives Brief description of the aims and objectives of the project – what did the project set out to achieve? Who were the target beneficiaries of the project?	The astroturf pitch meets the needs of the youths of the three parishes Knockanore, Glendine and Kilwatemoy and encourage more people to use the facility and potentially the activities in the local community hall.
3.3 Key Activities Please describe the products, facilities or services delivered/to be delivered as part of the project	The main activities involved to develop the 60m x 40m Astro-Turf pitch and car park were: 1. Secure land 2. Secure planning permission 3. Secure funding (ongoing, mix of grants, bridging finance and community fundraising) 4. Visit other Astro-turf pitches to compare specifications 5. Draft a bill of quantities 6. Issue request for quotes on e-tender 7. Appoint a contractor 8. Start and supervise works 9. Complete works and open facility to public and school students.
3.4 Results Please outline what the project achieved (where projects are not fully completed please state what the project intends to achieve under the headings) and how the needs identified have been met under the following headings: (a) Benefit to the Community Please describe the impact of the activities described above on the target community or rural environment. Where possible, please indicate the number of	a) This project resulted in an astro pitch available to the community all year round. The pitch is adjacent to the national school and is used by the teachers and children. It is also adjacent to the community hall facilitating ease of access. Children can now use this local facility rather than travelling to the nearest town. 150-300 people including youths and adults are directly benefitting from this development.

people who have benefitted from the project. (b) Employment (current and potential) Please outline how many people were employed as a result of this project and, if applicable, estimate how many might be employed in the future due to the project? (c) Other Achievements For example, please outline any other benefits to the local community, economy or environment (e.g. increase in sales, revenue, exports etc.) or other results that the project has achieved.	b) This project did not directly generate employment, but a Tús Scheme participant has been allocated to the astro turf pitch. c) The astroturf pitch will be rented out to local groups for 5-a-side soccer during the year that will generate funding that will go back into the maintenance of the facility. The project continues to be improved and the KGK Community Development Group has secured other grant funding for the playground and the carpark. A biodiversity area is also planned as well as turning the former nursing station into another local amenity. This project also improves the attractiveness of the area for current and future residents.
3.5 LEADER Cross Cutting Objectives Please describe how the project contributed to the cross-cutting objectives of: • Innovation • Climate Change and/or • The Environment	Innovation: This project will stimulate the local area by attracting people to the community to use the facility which will have a positive impact on the local school and create a greater demand for local services. The facility will enhance social interaction and promote a more healthy and active community.
(4) Financial Information	

Project Budget (LEADER funding)	€200,000
Other sources of funding Please detail funding source and amount	Clan Credo loan Tomar Trust grant Sir James and Lady Dyson Trust grant Own funds through community fundraising
(5) Lessons Learned	
Please outline any learning that should be taken into account for similar projects, for example, anything unexpected or surprising about implementing the project. Any barriers/challenges experienced and how they were overcome? What could be done better?	The community group previously went through LEADER funded capacity building and training. The group was extremely well organised, focused and committed. All the members of the group actively supported the implementation of the LEADER project, and each had a role to play. They delivered the project as planned. This again illustrated the importance of a strong community group for the successful implementation of a large project.
(6) Further Information	
Please provide any further information of interest for example: • Photographs • Quotes from beneficiaries • Website or additional information sources <i>Please note that you must have permission from photographers and participants in photographs before these can be submitted for use.</i>	Before: 

After:



Testimonial from Liam Roche, Treasurer;

"I also just wanted to say thanks again to you Claire and Christine and everyone at WLP for all the amazing support you've given us over the last couple of years. It meant so much to us to know that you were only a phone call away for advice or support and it just made the whole process so much easier. We've really enjoyed working with all of you and hopefully we'll be able to work with you again in the future. As you know we're very passionate about what we're trying to achieve for our community but it's very difficult to do these projects without the support of organisations such as yourselves so thanks again. If you need anything else from us, then please let us know and if you have any other groups who might benefit from our experience then please feel free to contact us and we'd be delighted to meet them. Until the next time".



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Arna chomhchistiú ag An Roinn Forbartha Tuaithe agus Pobail agus Gaeltachta
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