



Social Inclusion &
Community Activation
Programme

Annual Plan Report: 2026

Buíon Phort Láirge
Waterford City & County (24-1)
Waterford



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Arna chomhchistiú ag
an Aontas Eorpach
Co-funded by the
European Union



Annual Plan Report

Total Annual Budget	€1,744,074.00
Subcontractor costs do not exceed 30% of annual budget	Yes
Total Grant costs do not exceed 7.5% of total action costs	Yes

Annual KPI Targets	
KPI 1: Total number of Local Community Groups, Social Enterprises and Networks supported	72
KPI 2: Total number of Individuals (aged 15 years and up) supported on a one-to-one basis	949

Disadvantage Target	
Percentage of individuals supported that fall into one or more local priority target group(s)	88.00%

Local Priority Target Groups	2026 LP target (%)	2028 LP target (%)
People living in disadvantaged communities	29.00%	32.00%
People living in households that are jobless or are in low-paid and/or precarious employment	42.00%	46.00%
Disabled People/People with Disabilities	8.00%	10.00%

Total Costs: New Arrivals	€246,807.00
Total Administration Costs	€61,701.75
Total Action Costs	€185,105.25

Administration Costs: New Arrivals	€61,701.75
Administration costs as a percentage of annual budget	25.00%
Total Financial/Professional Fees/Staff Training/Other	€0.00
Total Indirect Salary	€61,221.75
Total Office/Administration/Establishment	€480.00
Total Travel and Subsistence	€0.00

Goal 1 Action Costs: New Arrivals	€74,042.65
Goal 1 action costs as a percentage of total action costs	40.00%
Goal 1 non-salary costs	€27,768.00
Goal 1 direct salary costs	€46,274.65

Goal 2 Action Costs: New Arrivals	€111,062.60
Goal 2 action costs as a percentage of total action costs	60.00%
Goal 2 non-salary costs	€20,290.00
Goal 2 direct salary costs	€90,772.60

Total Costs: SICAP	€1,497,267.00
Total Administration Costs	€371,433.83
Total Action Costs	€1,125,833.17

Administration Costs: SICAP	€371,433.83
Administration costs as a percentage of annual budget	24.81%
Total Financial/Professional Fees/Staff Training/Other	€0.00
Total Indirect Salary	€311,692.89
Total Office/Administration/Establishment	€59,740.94
Total Travel and Subsistence	€0.00

Goal 1 Action Costs: SICAP	€460,280.80
Goal 1 action costs as a percentage of total action costs	40.88%
Goal 1 non-salary costs	€124,824.00
Goal 1 direct salary costs	€335,456.80

Goal 2 Action Costs: SICAP	€665,552.37
Goal 2 action costs as a percentage of total action costs	59.12%
Goal 2 non-salary costs	€265,402.23
Goal 2 direct salary costs	€400,150.14

(2026) 1.1 2026 Inclusive Communities

Action Details

Targeted location within CAB/Lot

Local Priority Target Group 1 - People Living in Disadvantaged Communities (Pobal deprivation index small areas Waterford City, Dungarvan, Mid & West Waterford). 80 small areas are designated Disadvantaged, 17 as Very Disadvantaged and 4 as Extremely

Rationale

Key aim of this action: To build inclusive and sustainable communities with Local Community Groups and Networks to strengthen engagement, civic pride and community spirit through collective action and community animation.

Across Waterford, both urban and rural communities continue to face significant challenges driven by the rising cost of living, increased poverty, and ongoing housing pressures. These needs vary depending on levels of deprivation, demographic change, and the diversity of each local area. Transport, childcare, digital access, language barriers, lack of confidence, and cost of living pressures limit community participation.

This context strengthens the need for inclusive, safe, and connected communities that actively support participation and collective action, particularly for those who are most marginalised. Community organisations play a vital role in responding to emerging needs and supporting individuals who experience barriers to participation. SICAP has a central role in enabling and strengthening this work.

Through local led community planning, SICAP supports communities to identify priority needs, respond proactively, and engage meaningfully with those who are most at risk of social exclusion. This engagement is essential for understanding issues and needs on the ground, in addressing disadvantage, reducing inequalities, and for promoting social inclusion. Utilising a place-based and co-design approach also ensures that supports are tailored to the needs of each community.

By working collaboratively with local community groups in the development of their annual support plans, SICAP provides support on practical, targeted, and innovative responses that are grounded in the principles of community development of empowerment, collective action, social justice, human rights, and equality. This approach supports all SICAP Target Groups and Thematic Focus Areas to participate fully in social, economic, cultural and community life. Ongoing engagement with community groups is therefore central to building inclusive and sustainable communities and connections across Waterford.

This action aligns with Waterford LECP High-Level Goal 5: Liveability & Quality of Life Inclusive, sustainable development will help to ensure that Waterford continues to develop as a great place to live with high quality physical, social, cultural, educational and employment opportunities for all; High-Level Goal 6: Health & Wellbeing The health, wellbeing and the quality of life of individuals and communities will be improved through equitable access to resources and facilities that promote positive life choices, healthy habits and active lifestyles. High-Level Goal 7 Inclusion & Accessibility: Waterford's publicly funded agencies will strive to ensure access to a full range of supports and resources for all demographics, ages and abilities. SICAP actively contributes to the outcomes, indicators and KPIs as a partner with other local agencies

The rationale for this action is based on:

- Community Organisations (COs) continue to demonstrate their deep local knowledge and trusted relationships are fundamental to community collective action and resilience. The leadership of groups such as Men's Sheds, Women's Sheds, Tidy Towns, Resident Associations and Community Councils, paired with their ability to bring people together helps to identify emerging needs and to respond to these quickly, particularly in rural areas. They are a critical partner for delivering SICAP Programme actions and supporting key SICAP target groups. Their ability in bringing numerous people in the community together through their activities and actions, help to address social inclusion, promotes health & well-being and encourages connectivity within their communities.
- Across both urban and rural Waterford, increasing levels of isolation, loneliness, and poor

mental health are being reported with many communities, families and friends impacted by an increase in deaths by suicide. These issues particularly affect older people, lone parents, migrants, carers, and those living in remote rural areas. COs provide valuable social connections, peer support, and inclusive activities that reduce loneliness, isolation and promote increased health & wellbeing.

- The role, engagement and leadership of COs in responding so proactively to both Covid-19 and the Ukrainian war crises were pivotal in supporting SICAP and other partners in developing and delivering practical responses with the outcomes evident to this day. While they harnessed their community spirit of inclusion, neighbourliness and welcome which is still very evident in their ongoing actions which SICAP continues to support. COs are a critical collaborative partner for SICAP in co-designing responses to community needs and we build sustainable relationships with positive outcomes for SICAP target groups e.g. 1.1 Local areas/communities have built their collective capacity to identify and address their needs.

- SICAP Programme provides resources to urban and rural communities with COs leading on collective activities to support participation of those most hard to reach through economic, social and cultural activities. Our communities have special characteristics and synergies unique to their locality based on urban and rural settings and this lends itself to creative and diverse approaches aligned with community animation and community development principles of participation and collective action. Many of our rural communities have accommodation centres for IPAs and/or Ukrainians which has impacted both positively and negatively on their communities.

- Some COs and communities are experiencing increased tension and fear caused by misinformation and far-right rhetoric. In these situations, strong community links are essential and through the new DRCDG Community Connection Project actions supports will be provided to local communities in addressing such matters in 2026. Lismore for All is an example of a group using collective action to create inclusive integration events that foster culture and belonging. Local community groups play a key role in maintaining trust, promoting accurate information, and providing social and cultural integration activities and safe spaces where people can come together, especially in challenging times. SICAP continues to work closely with community groups, valuing their local knowledge and connectivity, which opens doors to individuals that are harder to reach and who may not engage with other services.

- Strengthening connection, belonging and participation acts as an early intervention to reduce isolation, poor mental health and disengagement from services.

- In recognising the root causes of social and economic exclusion COs develop community animation approaches to promote and ensure their community is welcoming and inclusive and strengthens their capacity to address the barriers that exist due to isolation, racism, homophobia and discrimination.

- Additional barriers to inclusion and integration are experienced by specific SICAP target groups and in particular those with a disability and members of the Traveller and Roma communities. Local strategies e.g. Traveller Interagency Strategy and Migrant Integration Strategy all speak to the positive impact people experience in having a sense of belonging within their community. SICAP collaborates with lead partners e.g. Mincéirí Portlairge (Traveller CDP) and Waterford Integration Services on events such as Traveller Pride Week and migrants' celebration events e.g. Ukrainian Independence Day to highlight their cultures and the positive contribution they make to their community.

- SICAP works collaboratively with COs to support inclusion of all SICAP Target Groups and Thematic Focus Areas on local activities to create and sustain inclusive communities. Informal thematic networks are emerging as a result of SICAP events organised over the last number of years. Such network event strengthen peer learning, sharing of skills and forging natural links between communities of interest. These include a) Community Growers Network: Growing projects are accessible to people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. They provide welcoming spaces that support participation from SICAP target groups and provide opportunities for communities to share their growing skills and knowledge and to make new connections and b) A Men's Shed Network will strengthen the reach of these groups and create pathways to wider supports for SICAP Target Groups and Thematic Focus Areas.

- Tallow Community Council and Lismore For All. Tallow Community Council is a collective of 9 rural based COs who organise the 3-day Tallow Coastal Festival, Christmas activities

with local schools and youth groups, older people's group etc. Many nationalities reside in the community including Polish, Brazilian, Nigerian and Ukrainian who all participate in the community activities, promoting their culture through food, dance, music and crafts.

- Lismore For All emerged in 2023 following their local hotel being designated as an IPA accommodation centre with eighty-seven residents. The group is a powerful model of community resilience in developing a community response to an initial negative reaction from local businesses and residents who had 'lost' their local hotel and tourism income. Their leadership and immediate response to ensure a welcome to their new residents is continuing through a calendar of events delivered through collective activities such as summer camps, Christmas events and cultural sharing activities.

Priority action: Waterford LCDC has prioritised the communities of Larchville and Lisduggan on their monthly agenda due to their designation of Very Disadvantaged electoral areas, with residents experiencing consistent and generational socio-economic deprivation. SICAP has agreed with Waterford City & County Council to focus resources, staff and fin

Description

Key SICAP actions are based on outreach & targeted strategies to reach those who are most marginalised within our communities through:

a) Outreach offices across Waterford city and Dungarvan create direct access between staff and community groups/leaders through drop-in clinics. Staff meet with COs by attending community meetings within their urban/rural communities. This localised and on the ground, approach helps to strengthen our ongoing relationships with COs, service providers and state agencies ensuring that we can work collaboratively to deliver timely, innovation and effective local responses to community needs.

b) SICAP promotes our supports and programmes through information leaflets, community notices both physical & online, local shops & community noticeboards, existing community and sporting groups, stands at community & stakeholder events, community leaders, word of mouth and social media posts, adhering to Universal Design principles using translation where possible. Staff signpost and share relevant information on community events to other relevant groups and agencies. Increased sharing of information with local radio station, WLR is highlighting local activities and the critical work being undertaken by the communities.

c) SICAP staff attend community events to promote our services and support. In working collaboratively with Healthy Waterford, Waterford PPN and other partners we attended and co-funded Community Roadshows & Playful Street events across Waterford city and county communities. This brings the services directly to local communities and enhances access to and awareness of relevant supports and gives opportunities to engage face-to-face.

d) SICAP registration and Annual Support Plan process support COs to self-identify their social inclusion focus aligned with SICAP framework and to identify and deliver key actions aimed at those most hard to reach and alleviate barriers to participation. In co-designing responses to local needs COs identify collective actions, funding required for operating costs including insurance, resources e.g. venues and volunteers and collaborative partners. Plans are reviewed at the end of the year to assess progress, identify emerging needs, and ensure priorities remain relevant and responsive for the year ahead. This helps to build on the work already completed with SICAP resources implemented in response to Annual Support Plans.

e) Continuation of practical resources, skills and toolkits provided to communities to address misinformation and far-right messaging through the delivery of the DRCD Community Connect Project (funded to November 2026). The project is aimed at building the skills of local communities to promote their activities and work in a positive way without the fear of attracting negative comments within the community and on social media. This is a collaborative action with 1.5 New Arrivals

f) SICAP led integration activities are delivered through strategic partnerships with COs and other partners to meet outcomes of local strategies including Waterford LECP, Traveller, Roma and Migrant strategic plans etc.

g) SICAP continues to work collaboratively with other COs and service providers in co-designing innovative and inclusive community activities and non-caseload events. SICAP will support communities to shape events that reflect their own priorities and needs. E.g. International Women's Day, Traveller Pride Events, Family Fun Days. SICAPs role includes planning support, administration, capacity building, event promotion etc.

h) Our activities and events enhance participation of non-caseload beneficiaries leading individuals to engage with their community and other supports and services including Goal 2. In each action we include all SICAP Target Groups and Thematic Focus Groups to support inclusion.

i) SICAP provides resources to emerging Networks such as Men's Shed and Community Growers in developing their structures and delivering actions to enhance integration & inclusive communities through community animation activities. In building local networking and collaborative approaches within communities of interest, integration and wellbeing is enhanced for those experiencing exclusion and barriers to participation.

j) SICAP actively supports a number of inclusive community initiatives across Waterford City & County. This includes ongoing collaborations and supports for initiatives such as Autism Friendly Dungarvan, Autism Friendly Waterford and Dementia Inclusive Dungarvan Initiative, all of which work to remove barriers, increase awareness in the community. Supports include awareness raising, capacity building and developmental supports. In late 2025, SICAP supported the development of an Autism Town Plan for Dungarvan. These initiatives contribute to more connected, informed and compassionate communities and align with SICAP's focus on supporting those who experience barriers to full participation.

k) Following on from a SICAP and HSE Mental Health & Suicide Awareness Day in Ballybeg in 2025, a similar initiative in Dungarvan will be organised in collaboration with relevant COs. This event will raise awareness event, bringing the relevant services to the community to enhance access to services, to help combat social isolation and receive support around mental health awareness.

Priority action: under this action SICAP will strengthen inclusion and community engagement within Larchville & Lisduggan communities, building on existing work by COs and service providers. Community engagement and animation activities will be aimed at families, lone parents, migrants, older people etc.

Other activities will strengthen inclusion and integration through community-based activities where migrants and other marginalised groups can participate, volunteer and take meaningful steps towards becoming active citizens within their communities.

Through the SICAP registration process, COs predominately identify People Living in Disadvantaged Communities as their primary target group which includes families experiencing economic deprivation due to cost of living, lone parents, unemployed/jobless households, young people, those with a disability, criminal history, low education attainment and migrants. This ensures an inclusive approach and guides SICAP engagement and delivery of community activities.

The vision set out in Sustainable, Inclusive & Empowered Communities 2019-2024 (Government of Ireland) is 'to create vibrant, sustainable, inclusive, empowered and self-determining communities that support the social, cultural and economic well-being of all members'. SICAP actions align strongly with social inclusion needs within grassroot communities and reflects the positive social change communities strive to achieve for their locality.

SICAP 2025 carryover budget allocated of €12,986 (Total G1 €31,986)

Target Group/Area	
Target Group	People living in disadvantaged communities
Target Group	Refugees

KPI Targets	
KPI 1: Total number of Local Community Groups, Social Enterprises and Networks supported	12
KPI 2: Total number of Individuals (aged 15 years and up) supported on a one-to-one basis	

Action Outcomes
1.1 Local areas/communities have built their collective capacity to identify and address their needs

Action Costs	Total	Goal 1	Goal 2
Total	€20,500.00	€20,500.00	
SICAP	€20,500.00	€20,500.00	

Collaborative Partners
LDC Collaboration

LECP Objectives
5.1
5.2
7.1
7.2
7.3
8.1

(2026) 1.2 2026 Empowered & Sustainable Communities

Action Details

Targeted location within CAB/Lot

Local Priority Target Group 1 - People Living in Disadvantaged Communities (Pobal deprivation index small areas Waterford City, Dungarvan, Mid & West Waterford). 80 small areas are designated Disadvantaged, 17 as Very Disadvantaged and 4 as Extremely

Rationale

The key aim of this action: Local Community Groups and Networks are supported and empowered to co-design and implement actions strengthening social inclusion, community planning and good governance.

SICAP works in partnership with COs to ensure that all SICAP Target Groups and Thematic Focus Areas are represented and included within community structures, local planning processes and community-led activities. Many COs operate with minimal or no funding and rely heavily on volunteers. As a result, they often require tailored supports to build their capacity, strengthen their governance and progress their own plans and priorities.

A streamlined engagement process is utilised by staff to ensure that the registration form and annual support plan process is clear and relevant to COs. The completion of Annual Support Plans identifies key actions to support the empowerment and sustainability of COs and informs the interventions required to meet COS needs and outcomes through consultation, active listening and community planning. Our work adapts to meet the priority needs of the community in line with SICAP Programme Requirements embedded by community development practices of collective action, empowerment, participation, equality, climate justice and sustainability within local communities, either area or issues based. Progress is monitored through regular check ins and/or meetings with a review at year end. This ensures that groups annual support plans remain responsive. SICAPs role is to facilitate the process rather than to lead as it is important for COs to retain ownership of their decisions and actions.

The rationale for this action is based on:

- The learning from initial registrations since the new programme commenced in 2024 has informed a more streamlined and supportive approach in 2026. Many COs require consistent support and re-register each year which strengthens our support through the annual support plan process as a more meaningful tool for reflection, annual planning and tracking progress. COs are given an opportunity to focus on reviewing last year's outcomes, identifying emerging needs and developing responsive actions with SICAP support. Through the registration process staff reaffirmed SICAPs key objectives in addressing social inclusion within local communities which laid a strong foundation of COS engagement for the new programme 2024 to 2028.
- Majority of COs identify 'People living in Disadvantaged Areas' as their Primary Target Group, based on their community being designated as disadvantaged/very disadvantaged. However, groups feel that this classification is limiting as they engage with many SICAP Target Groups and Thematic Focus Areas through their activities. We capture this data with groups who avail of SICAP grants and include in our annual plan report to highlight the extensive and invaluable work COs do on a daily basis to reach the most marginalised and hard to reach in the community.
- Of the 80 Community Organisations who fully registered with us in 2025 approx. 66 are fully voluntary with the remaining 14 led by voluntary Board of Directors with staffing resources. A recurring issue for the Community and Voluntary sector is the difficulty in attracting and retaining volunteers for committee and trustee positions, for both unincorporated groups, incorporated groups and charities. This is a consistent topic of discussion and concern by COs and we actively link them with Waterford Volunteer Centre to support recruitment. However, WVC are experiencing the same challenges as community organisations are advertising for Board/Trustee positions with limited volunteers open to these opportunities and tend to prioritise activity-based volunteering opportunities. This results in a reliance on SICAP staff and resources to provide support with administration, governance, grant applications etc.

- New emerging groups require significant pre-development supports and staff time to become more sustainable including, development of their structure, securing insurance, opening a bank/Credit Union account, accessing funding, finance management, overview of committee skills and collective decision-making. Insurance costs continue to be a key issue for new groups/networks, particularly for those representing SICAP target groups, who do not have the financial resources to pay this cost and have to wait until grants are announced by WCCC to cover this. This can slow the groups progression and it takes them longer to emerge and develop. SICAP Programme Requirements do not allow us to fund insurance although we have long advocated with Pobal and nationally for SICAP to support insurance costs for their first year to cover the gap until they can apply for WC&CC annual Supporting Communities Fund. Staff identify additional resources required to progress community plans with collaborative partners and /or funding applications including capital, community activity, running costs etc.
- Local communities and groups continue to address social inclusion and equality issues and develop their capacity to build stronger more sustainable communities. Developmental supports to new and existing COs include capacity building approaches through practical learning in event management, risk assessment, governance structures etc. with SICAP staff attending meetings to enhance collective skills. Governance is becoming a challenge for many COs in maintaining their administration responsibilities, insurance, funding compliance etc. The skills of SICAP staff in guiding COs in governance provide critical resources through sample templates, reviewing Constitution and strategic planning with financial management support. This support is increasingly important for groups as governance and funding requirements expand, especially for groups with Charitable status.
- Many COs face volunteer fatigue and burnout. SICAP's ongoing developmental and administrative supports help sustain local initiatives and prevent burnout within voluntary groups and support them through these times.
- Without SICAP supports, many COs would lack the capacity, governance skills and resources to deliver on community-led actions, secure grant funding, maintain compliance or effectively engage those most at risk of social exclusion.
- Digital poverty and exclusion continue to exclude many people from accessing information on community supports and grants as well as many grant applications going online. SICAP's supportive face-to-face approach reduces this barrier.
- COs ability to recognise the role they play in delivering national and local strategies within their communities can be limited due to their focus on 'doing' for their community. In building empowered and sustainable communities SICAP brings additionality to increase their knowledge, skills, confidence and resources as active participants/groups/communities who are resilient, organised and influential. This is evident in the collaborative TASC project in Larchville & Lisduggan community, outlined below. As self-governing and autonomous groups they are a critical voice whilst delivering collective outcomes in pursuit of a just and equal society.
- The All-Ireland Standards for Community Work (Pg. 8) identifies 'core values of Collectivity, Community Empowerment, Social Justice and Sustainable Development, Human Rights, Equality and Anti-discrimination with Participation as being interdependent, with considerable cross-over between the knowledge, skills and qualities required and inherent in all of them'. These values align with those outlined in Sustainable, Inclusive & Empowered Communities 2019-2024 (Government of Ireland). Building knowledge and awareness of such policies and standards requires additional time for volunteers and SICAP is creatively addressing this through our discussions with COs and under Action 1.4 Community Leadership and Peer Mentoring.
- SICAP has allocated staff resources to strengthen our Climate Justice Horizontal Theme with additional funding from South-East Energy Agency to deliver on the SEAI Sustainable Energy Communities programme 2024 to 2027. Local residents and communities are supported to develop of Energy Master Plans as a collaboration between SICAP and Waterford Council Climate Action Team with the delivery of Energy saving Workshops.
- SICAPs consistent engagement and support with COs and analysis of annual support plans indicates ongoing capacity building needs are a priority with many remaining at a very foundational level. COs are seeking support in essential areas such as basic First Aid, introductory IT skills and understanding the roles and responsibilities of Committees. It is important that SICAPs ongoing supports are designed to match this baseline capacity, ensuring that training and development opportunities are accessible, practical, and not

overwhelming for volunteer led groups. Our experience shows that phased, step-by-step approaches continue to help organisations build confidence and skills without creating unnecessary complexity.

- There is a noticeable overlap of some services in the community, with several organisations delivering similar activities or supports. This duplication can lead to fragmented provision, inefficient use of resources, and confusion among service users about where to access the most appropriate support. A more coordinated approach is needed to ensure that services are complementary, targeted, and responsive to actual local needs.

Priority action: Waterford LCDC has prioritised the communities of Larchville and Lisduggan on their monthly agenda due to their designation of Very Disadvantaged electoral areas, with residents experiencing consistent and generational socio-economic deprivation. SICAP has agreed with Waterford City & County Council to focus resources, staff and financial to coordinate and engage with relevant stakeholders in delivering collaborative actions in 2026. SICAP's ongoing work in the co

Description

SICAP activities are informed by ongoing consultation with COs and previous learning from SICAP work over the last number of years. Key SICAP actions in 2026 are based on outreach & targeted strategies to build empowerment and sustainability of local communities through:

a) SICAP Community Development Workers continue to provide direct, accessible support and advice to new and existing COs, Networks, Community Leaders and individuals. This support includes outreach work in responding to day-to-day queries in relation to progressing their actions through their annual support plans, governance, funding applications, administration and reporting. For some COs they do not have access to laptops or knowledge of online systems due to personal barriers of low literacy and/or limited access to broadband. Many grant application forms have now gone online, leaving those with low literacy or IT skills at a disadvantage. The work and support provided by our SICAP staff is recognised as a key resource by many of our COs as we respond with prompt responses and practical administrative supports as needed. Learning from each year's annual support plan will be captured through end of year reviews, reflective practice with COs to strengthen future planning and responsiveness.

b) Pre-development assistance is provided to emerging COs who are led by and/or actively engage SICAP Target Groups, Local Priority Target Groups and Thematic Focus Areas and who have a Social Inclusion remit. In building their capacity through mentoring of community leaders, formation of relevant structure, informal training in governance and community development, accessing funding for insurance and planning actions to achieve their objectives etc. will lead to sustainable and progressive social inclusion groups.

c) SICAP staff provide guidance and mentoring to existing COs in building their skills and capacity in governance relevant to their structure. In embedding policies and procedures, reviewing their Constitution to include realistic and meaningful objectives and terms of office, succession planning, ensuring funding and resources are available to meet annual goals, merging of potential COs are all essential steps to they being sustainable entities. These supports require specific time with individual COs to meet their governance needs with COs registered as charities having additional administrative and legal responsibilities through Annual Reporting and compliance with the Charities Governance Code. Supports are tailored to each groups structure.

d) For legal entities SICAP assist Trustees/Directors in addressing their social inclusion objectives by exploring additional resources e.g. capital and staff resources, strategic and business planning, collaborative approaches and financial management all of which are key components of organisational sustainability.

e) SICAP grants for COs, SEs and Networks creates actions in response to their Annual Support Plan and complement existing grants available through Waterford City & County Council and other funding streams. SICAP grants support practical, community led actions which strengthens the social inclusion remit of the groups. SICAP Admin worker to support the administrative aspect of grants and support COs with reminders in relation to external grants.

f) SICAP facilitates the formation and development of emerging Networks with common

goals and interests to agree collective objectives and actions (refer to Action 1.3. Collaborations & Networks) to build their capacity and sustainability through peer learning and collaboration. A Men's Shed Network and a Community Growers Network have been identified as emerging networks for 2026. A Goal 1 staff member will be assigned responsibility to support these networks. This will provide a consistent approach with a single point of contact for co-ordination. This will help to build trust, support peer learning and strengthen the networks' ability to plan and collaborate.

g) SICAP organises networking events to strengthen links with collaborative partners and relevant decision-making structures to influence local planning and policy development including participation with PPN. Participation on decision-making structures is informed by the principles and tools within A Guide for Inclusive Community Engagement in Local Planning and Decision Making

h) Connecting Communities programme will build capacity of COs and grassroots communities through skills-based training and toolkits in response to misinformation and to promote their positive community activities. This will strengthen community confidence and aid social inclusion.

i) Through the Sustainable Energy Communities programme, SICAP will provide local communities with resources to meaningfully engage in Climate action. Supports include practical workshops, dissemination of information on grants and reducing energy Costs, development of Energy Master Plans, helping people to make informed decisions on energy transition. This will help to progress the recommendations emerging from the SICAP/TASC report with Larchville and Lisduggan and will contribute to Climate action and Just Transition goals. Additional funding streams and programme linkages such as the above offer additionality and offers an example of how other programmes can add value to SICAP supports and activities.

j) SICAP continue to work collaboratively with local communities and Waterford City & County Council in the progression of local strategies and LECP. This includes co-designing actions, identifying service gaps and supporting collective responses. This approach will be guided by the values, principles and tools within A Guide for Inclusive Community Engagement in Local Planning and Decision Making adopted by Waterford LCDC.

k) Staff will participate in a governance workshop to build skills and competence in providing guidance to groups with governance, compliance and good practice.

Priority action: under this action SICAP will work with existing COs in Larchville & Lisduggan communities in a) strengthening intergenerational community leadership, connecting with local residents to engage with new developments and promote new programmes within the communities. As active partners in the development of a local strategy the COs will build their capacity and decision-making skills as we develop practical responses informed by the lived experience of local residents. One of the key 2026 actions is the development of Larchville & Lisduggan communities as Learning Neighbourhoods under Waterford UNESCO Learning City. Through collaborative approaches and learning from other cities e.g. Cork we will provide inclusive and diverse learning opportunities with development of sustainable initiatives based on lifelong learning, community education and formal education. These projects and approaches embeds Waterford's LECP actions and outcomes at a practical, grassroots community basis.

Other key outcomes from Empowered and Sustainable Communities will strengthen local social inclusion responses. By actively listening and facilitating COs to plan their annual actions, it SICAP creates a space to explore local community needs with a focus on strengthening participation of those who are most hard to reach and experience social and economic challenges in their day-to-day lives. Through ongoing pre-development and developmental supports, COs and Networks build their capacity to respond and to build the skills, confidence and structures needed to become empowered and sustainable communities, enabling them to deliver short and long-term actions and plans grounded in community animation and community development practices. This will result in improved participation, stronger networks and more sustainable community structures.

SICAP 2025 carryover of allocated budget €12,000 (Total G1 €31,986)

Target Group/Area	
Target Group	People living in disadvantaged communities
Focus Area	Climate action and the just transition

KPI Targets	
KPI 1: Total number of Local Community Groups, Social Enterprises and Networks supported	44
KPI 2: Total number of Individuals (aged 15 years and up) supported on a one-to-one basis	

Action Outcomes
2.1 Local Community Groups, Social Enterprises and Networks have increased capacity to support SICAP target groups and thematic focus areas

Action Costs	Total	Goal 1	Goal 2
Total	€52,000.00	€52,000.00	
SICAP	€52,000.00	€52,000.00	

Collaborative Partners
LDC Collaboration

LECP Objectives
5.2
5.3
6.3
7.1
7.2
8.1

(2026) 1.3 2026 Collaborations & Networks

Action Details

Targeted location within CAB/Lot

Local Priority Target Group 1 - People Living in Disadvantaged Communities (deprived small areas Waterford City, Dungarvan, Mid & West Waterford). 80 small areas are designated Disadvantaged, 17 as Very Disadvantaged and 4 as Extremely Disadvantaged.

Rationale

This action aims to strengthen participation on collaborative structures and support strategic coordination that enables communities and local service agencies to co-design solutions which improve social inclusion interventions and outcomes.

Collaborative working is central to SICAP's Horizontal Principle 3: Collaborative Approaches in sustaining our strategic partnerships with community and statutory organisations and supporting Networks as programme beneficiaries. Both approaches inform issue or area-based responses to local needs in sharing experiences, developing support mechanisms, identifying best practice, develop policy positions and/or collective actions.

The rationale for this action is based on:

- Across Waterford City and County, existing and emerging networks are evolving as communities identify common needs and shared priorities. Community Networks reflect the synergy and effectiveness of communities in bringing their skills, expertise, resources and unique knowledge together while creating opportunities for peer support and addressing gaps in services within their community. Networks are organically emerging through the establishment of community councils in rural areas and common interest groups such as Men's Sheds and Community Growers. Both demonstrate how collaborative models lead to better use of local knowledge, proactive community planning and collective actions, more efficient use of volunteer time, reduced administration and strengthens planning. By fostering strong partnerships and creating a unified vision, the networks can leverage their collective strengths and resources to co-design and implement actions to meet community needs. Collective actions will strengthen engagement of target group members in peer and shared learning, awareness of community development, identify best practice, develop support mechanisms in achieving outcomes, building community sustainability through ongoing community animation approaches.
- SICAP Network events such as Making the Link model provide opportunities for community groups, service providers and state agencies working with and supporting social inclusion to meet informally, share information, 'put' a face to the organisation and connect in person. These gatherings improve communication, sharing of information and linkages between organisations who are actively contributing to creating inclusive, empowered and sustainable communities, while also enabling groups to identify where their work overlaps or compliments one another's. Our extensive experience in collaborative practices with strategic cross-sectoral partnerships is actively addressing social inclusion and key community needs. They have proven especially valuable for groups working with SICAP Target groups, as they help to create a clearer pathway into services and strengthen collaboration across the different sectors and services.
- SICAP aligns actions based on A Guide for Inclusive Community Engagement in Local Planning and Decision-Making to strengthen collaborations and participation of target group members on relevant structures. Adopted by Waterford LCDC, the guide supports 'effective and meaningful participatory planning with those who experience a severe impact from decisions that fail to consider their experiences and concerns. Therefore, it is critical that policy and planning processes are systematically inclusive and participative with a strong and equal voice'. In using this guide, we can strengthen COs engagement in existing and new collaborations, representation on structures including Waterford Area Partnership and co-design of initiatives to address gaps in services through collaborative structures.
- SICAP undertook a Feasibility Study on a proposed Dungarvan Community Centre and facilitate a Steering Group consisting of 18 community groups, service providers and state

agencies. The findings firmly demonstrate a significant need for a multi-purpose facility in Dungarvan. Through detailed needs analysis, engagement with over 120 stakeholders, consultations and surveys, the study confirms a clear and urgent need for an accessible, inclusive and affordable multi-purpose community centre in Dungarvan. The Report highlighted consistent challenges faced by community groups and services, including fragmented provision, high venue costs, limited availability, lack of storage and the absence of a hub for coordination and collaboration. In 2026, the Steering Group with the support of SICAP will build on the findings and recommendations of the study to develop a strategic plan to include a Business Plan, Financial Projections and identify a site. Waterford City & Council have included a new community facility in their draft local area plan and actively engaged in all stages of this development.

- SICAP is an active partner and/or lead on key collaborative structures to develop local, regional and national actions advocating for those most impacted by socio-economic policies such as Waterford LCDC Migrant Working Sub-group to progress actions and recommendations from Waterford's Migrant Strategy; Waterford Traveller Interagency Group progresses Waterford's Traveller Strategy aligned with National Traveller & Roma Inclusion Strategy (NTRIS)
- Collaborative actions include Waterford Anti-Racism Month (March) led by Waterford Integration Services and our national network LDCN. Key actions with HSE on Roma Accommodation Needs Analysis and intercultural health projects
- West Waterford Family & Community Hub Steering Group, led by Barnardos, Tusla and CYPSC with the aim to access funding for a Family Resource Centre in rural communities
- Connecting For Life is HSE's suicide prevention programme which delivers county-based actions in response to suicide and mental wellbeing
- South-East Energy Agency Regional Network for Sustainable Energy Community projects
- Members of our national network ILDN and working sub-groups, Ukrainian Civic Forum and Community Work Ireland to inform national policy and share work practices and experiences.
- Waterford LCDC Working Groups focussed on Larchville & Lisduggan will be coordinated by SICAP Goal 1 (Action 1.2) to strengthen community participation and leadership with interagency strategic planning

Priority action: Waterford LCDC has prioritised the communities of Larchville and Lisduggan on their monthly agenda due to their designation of Very Disadvantaged electoral areas, with residents experiencing consistent and generational socio-economic deprivation. SICAP has agreed with Waterford City & County Council to focus resources, staff and financial to coordinate and engage with relevant stakeholders in delivering collaborative actions in 2026. SICAP's ongoing work in the communities provide resources to strengthen actions and outcomes in continuing to build engagement, civic pride, community spirit and animation.

Strategic coordination across collaborative structures reduces duplication, creates innovative responses to identified gaps and consolidates social inclusion outcomes. In creating collaborative, inclusive, and effective frameworks for addressing service gaps and fostering holistic community development. By leveraging collective strengths, expertise, and resources, networks and collaborative structures have the potential to create meaningful and lasting positive change within their communities.

Description

Key SICAP actions include:

- a) Support to emerging Community Networks, identified through Annual Support Plans based on shared/common interests or local identified needs. Pre-Development supports will be provided to help the network to build their capacity in developing their structures, agree collective objectives and actions and leverage funding and resources. This will strengthen their confidence and capability to respond to emerging community needs. SICAPs Registration process will allow networks to self-identify their social inclusion and ensure that it aligns with SICAP Programme framework. Ongoing administrative support, information on policy, available funding and venue support will strengthen their capacity to collaborate, co-design actions, and respond to local community needs.
- b) Build on existing models e.g. Community Councils with COs forming a single community structure to support shared resources, decision-making, collective actions, insurance and

governance.

c) 'Making the Link' network events organised in key geographical areas to facilitate meetings with community groups, service providers, state agencies and other interested stakeholders engaged in social inclusion activities. These events create space for all to meet informally, share information on their work, highlight key gaps in services within the community and explore opportunities for collaboration. This approach is proven to strengthen communication, build strategic links and connections and supports the development of more sustainable and inclusive communities.

d) Promote and embed the tools within 'A Guide for Inclusive Community Engagement in Local Planning and Decision-Making' to strengthen participation on local structures including Waterford Area Partnerships governance structures. Barriers to participation on structures identified including time of meetings, transport access, out of pocket expenses, digital access to attend online meetings and/or access to documentation.

e) A strategic plan to support business and financial planning, carried out to help progress the Dungarvan Community Centre Project. This will include agreeing a management and governance structure with the Steering group, who will oversee implementation.

f) SICAP will support the Traveller Interagency Group (TIG) and Mincéirí Port Láirge-Dungarvan Traveller Health Project to implement the findings of the Needs Analysis of the Traveller Community in Dungarvan. Local actions will be aligned with actions of the National Traveller & Roma Inclusion Strategy.

g) SICAP to work with collaborative partners in strengthening the Roma Interagency Group actions aligned with NTRIS. Buíon Phort Láirge through internal projects of SICAP, Atelier Roma Training & Employment Men & Women's Projects and Intercultural Health Project for Roma Community continue to build wrap around supports to the community to support inclusion and local responses.

h) SICAP are leading on four projects with HSE South-east Social Inclusion Unit. Intercultural Health Projects for those residing in 8 local IPAs centres and for the Roma Community will be strengthened through the Genio funding in developing regional peer networks and toolkit to support self-advocacy skills in accessing health services. The fourth project is to undertake a needs analysis with the Roma Community on accommodation with HSE and Waterford City & County Council Housing Section as collaborative partners to review the findings and recommendations.

i) SICAP to strengthen actions in response to Climate Justice through the implementation and promotion of the SEAI Sustainable Energy Communities programme with Local Communities. Participation on a regional network will support the sharing of learning, lived experience and good practice which will help support communities to co-design local responses that support just energy transition.

j) SICAP to lead/participate in collaborative actions with strategic partners in developing local responses for all migrants. Emerging resources and projects including the establishment of LAIT Teams are focussed on specific migrant communities which has the potential to create overlap and/or gaps in services and supports to all migrants. Actions in 2025 include mapping of current services and supporting networking of all service providers and agencies plus collaboration with Waterford Integration Services and other partners in developing activities during Anti-Racism Month

k) As an active partner on the West Waterford Family & Community Hub Steering Committee based in Cappoquin, SICAP is contributing to the strategic planning in progressing a Family Resource Centre project identified by Tusla, CYPSC and Barnardos.

Priority action: in working with Waterford LCDC members and other stakeholders, SICAP will coordinate the development of a strategic plan for Larchville & Lisduggan communities (incorporating Frances Court and Manor St John). The key aim in prioritising the two communities by Waterford LCDC is to develop long-term practical, collaborative actions to mitigate against the historical challenges within the communities of no variation in their designation of very disadvantaged communities over the past 3+ census. In coordinating the strategy as a member of Waterford LCDC, SICAP commits staff and financial resources to work with all stakeholders – residents, community organisations, service providers and state agencies – with a view to the actions requiring short, medium and long-term actions.

Other outcomes from these actions will strengthen SICAPs role in collaborative and

strategic partnerships in co-designing responses to local community needs. Collaborative structures help reduce barriers experienced by target groups by creating clearer referral pathways, integrated supports and improved access to services. Actions will enhance engagement of SICAP target groups and non-caseload beneficiaries with a particular focus on those most hard to reach e.g. members of the Traveller and Roma Communities in accessing relevant services and supports. While the Primary Target Group is People Living in Disadvantaged Communities others include Roma, Traveller, Heads of One-Parent Families with Thematic Focus Areas of Older people in isolation, Refugee & Migrant rights and integration, Climate action and just transition and Gender

SICAP 2025 carryover allocated budget €7,000 (Total G1 €31,986)

Target Group/Area	
Target Group	People living in disadvantaged communities
Focus Area	Refugee and migrant rights and integration

KPI Targets	
KPI 1: Total number of Local Community Groups, Social Enterprises and Networks supported	6
KPI 2: Total number of Individuals (aged 15 years and up) supported on a one-to-one basis	

Action Outcomes
2.1 Local Community Groups, Social Enterprises and Networks have increased capacity to support SICAP target groups and thematic focus areas

Action Costs	Total	Goal 1	Goal 2
Total	€33,324.00	€33,324.00	
SICAP	€33,324.00	€33,324.00	

Collaborative Partners
LDC Collaboration

LECP Objectives
5.3
6.3
7.1
7.2
8.1

(2026) 1.4 2026 Community Leadership & Peer Mentoring Network

Action Details

Targeted location within CAB/Lot

Local Priority Target Group 1 - People Living in Disadvantaged Communities (with specific focus on deprived small areas Waterford City, Dungarvan, Mid and West Waterford). 80 small areas are designated Disadvantaged, 17 as Very Disadvantaged and 4 as

Rationale

Key aim of this action: To enhance community leadership in building sustainable, inclusive and empowered communities.

Through our work with SICAP COs and service providers, it has become increasingly evident that Waterford's Community and Voluntary Sector is experiencing increased pressure and concerns. Fewer people are coming forward to volunteer, many long-standing leaders have stepped back or retired, and the demands of governance, HR and financial management are becoming more difficult for voluntary groups to manage. These issues are raising significant concerns within groups about the sustainability of community organisations and their ability to plan for future leadership and staffing.

In late 2025 we are engaging a consultant to commence a needs analysis with innovative approaches with focus groups, one-to-one meetings and surveys to capture the key needs and practical solutions to building community peer leadership and mentoring supports.

The rationale for this action is based on

- Many COs are facing challenges in recruiting and retaining volunteers and staff due to the increased workload in meeting KPIs, administrative and legislative compliance, maintaining their activities due to cost of living increases etc. which is leading to a reduction in community activities and services and a loss of key skills, knowledge and experience.
- The age profile of volunteers on COS committees and organising key activities is predominately 50+ years with limited succession planning. Our experience in working with many community leaders from SICAP target groups is their lack of confidence or awareness of the skills they utilise through their community work which is critical for the sustainability of their communities of interest and would enhance their CVs in progressing into employment.
- Community leaders from SICAP target groups are passionate, enthusiastic and committed to helping their communities. However, many experience the same barriers as the people they support e.g. low education attainment, limited literacy and digital skills and low self-confidence in new environments or formal settings. This is happening at a time where there is strong growth in employment opportunities within the community sector however the roles promoted require strong skills in innovation, leadership, digital and reporting skills, CRM databases, financial management, adhering to policies and procedures etc. to meet funding requirements and criteria. This can make it harder for Community Leaders to progress without the right supports.
- For many SICAP target groups especially Traveller, Roma and migrant communities' cultural sensitivities and discrimination create additional barriers to volunteering, employment and being leaders with their communities of interest.
- Our communities and decision-making structures benefit from Community Leaders lived experiences which bring valuable insights which can contribute to and strengthen local decision-making. By training mentors leaders to become peer mentors, this will support succession plan, build leadership skills and ensure that knowledge is retained within communities.
- This action is a long-term plan to create a Community Leadership and mentoring programme to provide opportunities and a safe environment for them, collectively and individually, to enhance their knowledge and skills, build networks and alliances with other communities and strengthen awareness of developments within the sector. This programme will be informed by best-practice and designed by an independent consultant to be rolled out in the second half of 2026.
- Progression pathways will be supported through Goal 2 and other services in providing specific training e.g. Train the Trainer, IT, file management etc. to community leaders who wish to progress into employment. Information on education courses available through

Waterford Wexford ETB, Community Work Ireland and other agencies will also create progression pathways for community leaders in formal education attainment.

- This action is a steppingstone to actively addressing the new principles within SICAP 2024-2028 of Targeted Recruitment & Training (Section 7).

In 2025 the aim of this action was to develop 2 local peer networks (Waterford city & Dungarvan) and in consulting with lead agencies and education providers they agreed with the action as a critical need for their communities of interest i.e. Migrants, Travellers, Roma, Women, People with Disabilities and those living in disadvantaged areas. However, they advised us to create pre-development approaches of informal training in event planning, communication, committee structures etc. as an initial step. Through this approach it would build awareness amongst volunteers of the need to enhance and develop their skills to strengthen their role as Community Leaders and/or progression to employment within the sector.

Another emerging issue identified through the consultation was the volunteer's belief that they were doing things right as 'that was the way we always did it' or based on their lack of knowledge of best practice. This is a key factor within migrant community groups who are developing leadership skills based on their own cultural practices which do not align with governance practices within Ireland.

The needs analysis with participation of community volunteers/leaders and staff will provide us with insights as to the barriers being experienced with a solution focussed approach and recommendations to inform key actions. The final report will include pathways for those who wish to strengthen key skills including informal and formal education courses, links to existing resources e.g. The Wheel Leadership Programme etc.

Buíon Phort Láirge is also engaged with our national network LDCN in developing an internship approach to recruiting those from our target groups and to support succession planning for the sector

Description

Under SICAP, Buíon Phort Láirge will develop a Community Leadership and Mentoring Programme (CLMP) based on the outcomes of the needs analysis. The CLMP framework will be designed to support the existing and future needs of community leaders, volunteers, staff and community organisations in building sustainable, inclusive and empowered communities across Waterford City & County.

A consultant is contracted to develop a practical CLMP framework and toolkit, that can be implemented from 2026 onwards. This will be informed by consultation with local community leaders, services and agencies and will be informed by key frameworks such as e.g. All Ireland Education Board Community Works Standards, Sustainable, Inclusive & Empowered Communities, A Guide for Inclusive Community Engagement in Local Planning and Decision-Making etc. Consultation with COs, SEs and lead organisations will identify key areas of training and skills development aligned with research of existing models in informal leadership programmes.

The consultant will design an innovative and creative leadership programme with a solution focused approach to barriers experienced by community leaders and organisations.

SICAP is proactively future planning for our local communities in building sustainable and empowered communities. Key leaders from the community and social inclusion sector will attend thematic sessions to share their wealth of knowledge, experiences and insights on community development, how to effectively influence policy development, human rights, equality, collaborative working and relevant decision-making structures.

To enhance community leadership in building sustainable, inclusive and empowered communities' key actions will include:

- Promote and organise initial meetings with community leaders i to progress the initiative, explore existing needs and agree approaches including calendar of meetings.
- Enhance leadership skills by building on the knowledge, lived experience and energy of local community leaders from SICAP target groups. This will empower local communities, strengthen leadership to support succession planning and progression to employment within the sector.

- Establish peer support networks for community leaders, voluntary and/or paid to explore and enhance their skills and learning whilst building connections and addressing community needs.
- Identify and create peer-led solutions to barriers in volunteering, engaging with community structures, representation on decision-making structures and employment opportunities
- Deliver informal skills based training delivered on community development, equality and human rights approaches, governance, policy development, leadership, strategic planning, collaborative working, event planning, communication, committee skills, conflict resolution and other identified areas as identified through the consultation.
- Collate and share policy documents for discussion including 'A Guide for Inclusive Community Engagement in Local Planning and Decision-Making' and All Ireland Standards for Community Work to enhance knowledge of national policy and tools to build skills, knowledge and best practice.
- Strengthen learning and skills in community structures, policy development, equality and human rights, consultation processes, needs analysis, strategic planning, climate justice with other identified areas. COs and SEs will benefit from this learning and skills which in turn will strengthen community representation and their participation on decision-making structures, locally and nationally to have confidence in their voice and the issues they promote.
- Provide information on progression routes to education and employment through SICAP Goal 2, Waterford Wexford ETB, The Wheel etc. or other employment and training routes.

Outreach & targeting strategies:

- SICAP will promote this initiative and consult with COs, SEs and lead organisations to identify needs and potential barriers.
- Adapting delivery to address issues such as time and venues, transport, digital access, literacy and cultural sensitivities will inform approaches and development of initiatives.
- Promotion of initiative including assessment of community leaders' needs through COs, SEs, lead organisations will provide the opportunity for them to inform delivery and create awareness of barriers for us to address in planning. Participation from SICAP Target Groups will be encouraged.
- Ongoing evaluation of the initiative will identify core areas of interest and allow for programme to adapt to collective needs.
- Offering one-to-one mentoring supports to ensure individuals progress into education and employment if that is their goal.

This action will be promoted widely with all SICAP target groups and focus areas to encourage participation, enhance peer learning and inclusive leadership development. Outcomes will include development of a programme and toolkit for a Community Leadership and Mentoring Programme which responds to the needs of the volunteers, staff and community in strengthening skills and succession for the sector.

Target Group/Area	
Target Group	People living in disadvantaged communities
Target Group	People living in disadvantaged communities

KPI Targets	
KPI 1: Total number of Local Community Groups, Social Enterprises and Networks supported	2
KPI 2: Total number of Individuals (aged 15 years and up) supported on a one-to-one basis	

Action Outcomes

1.1 Local areas/communities have built their collective capacity to identify and address their needs

Action Costs	Total	Goal 1	Goal 2
Total	€7,000.00	€7,000.00	
SICAP	€7,000.00	€7,000.00	

Collaborative Partners

LDC Collaboration

LECP Objectives

5.3

7.1

7.2

(2026) 1.5 2026 G1 New Arrivals Community Integration

Action Details

Targeted location within CAB/Lot

All small areas/electoral divisions of Waterford City and County designated 'very disadvantaged' or 'disadvantaged' and local communities where new arrivals are residing.

Rationale

Waterford currently has approx. 2,600 Ukrainians and 670 International Protection Applications residing in various accommodation centres across the city and county, many in rural areas with limited or no direct access to services and supports. Buíon Phort Láirge continues to be a key leading organisation, implementing activities and programmes to address emerging needs of refugees and migrant communities. Our strong relationships with local community organisations has strengthened integration and inclusion within urban and rural communities. Through local community activities, attending schools, churches, courses including Fáilte Isteach and gaining employment a sense of belonging and integration is being fostered. The organisation also has internal projects to link New Arrivals to including Intercultural Health Project for IPAs, Integration & Employment of Migrants to support employment progression and Community Connection Project.

There continues to be challenges within the community sector, local residents and migrants with the far-right rhetoric and social media messaging which is a critical barrier to integration. While Waterford is not experiencing protests on our streets there is an underlying fear within community leaders and residents due to misinformation and intimidation through leaflets and social media. This is impacting on organising community activities where the focus is on migrants and inclusion for fear of far-right protestors attending or causing unrest within communities and will have a significant impact on our 'ask' of local communities in welcoming new arrivals.

An ongoing issue is participation in volunteer opportunities as many cultures do not understand the concept of giving of your time with no pay. For those who see the benefits of volunteering other barriers are being experienced including limited or no English language, digital literacy, out of pocket costs and no possibility of being Garda Vetted which is a strong requirement for many organisations especially those working with vulnerable people. These issues are also impacting on employment progression into health care, community sector etc.

To foster and introduce new arrivals to volunteering within Irish culture and communities we continue to promote the benefits of participation with collective action, autonomy and a sense of belonging. In working with Waterford Volunteer Centre and other partners we will create opportunities to enhance skills and learning to support volunteering with experience supporting career progression.

By new arrivals participating in their local communities there are positive outcomes in mitigating against misinformation, sharing cultural norms and enhancing our diverse communities. In supporting migrant community organisations our staff provide knowledge of the ethos, values and practices within our Irish community sector. Many migrant COs have unrealistic expectations of access to staffing resources, funding and decision-making. Others are challenged with equality and human rights approaches based on their cultural norms. SICAP staff provide guidance on pre-development and developmental supports to migrant COs including Constitutions, committee structures, setting up bank accounts and building their work, experience and reputation through long-term planning and activities. Collaborative actions with our key partners including Waterford Community Integration Forum strengthens our collective responses and supports. SICAP will continue to host network events with service providers to minimise duplication and promote shared learning of local resources and policies.

Description

Key SICAP actions include:

SICAP continues to deliver our programmes and activities for New Arrivals within their local community, both urban and rural. This outreach approach ensures person-centred responses based on local dynamics, access to services, transport etc. Key SICAP actions include:

- SICAP will continue to build in existing engagement and outreach approaches within local communities, to support integration based on community animation and community development approaches based on a) community animation activities and b) pre-development and developmental supports
- Encouraging participation in volunteering and/or community leadership activities will enhance individual migrants' capacity, develop collective activities through COs and identify emerging needs to inform actions. All COs are supported to register with Waterford PPN and participate on their structures.
- Developmental supports to migrant COs will build their awareness of our community and charity sector, strengthen committee governance and capacity through access to funding and event planning.
- SICAP 'Integration through English' sessions will continue to support new arrivals in settling into their new community and living in Ireland. A strong orientation approach including physical visits to local libraries, An Post, parks, community facilities, heritage sites etc provides new arrivals with a strong sense of their local community. This strengthens a sense of belonging and breaking down barriers of exclusion.
- SICAP will build on the 'Growing Together' horticulture programme to strengthen inclusion and access to local community activities. In working with COs to facilitate these activities they are creating an environment of shared learning, building skills and knowledge while creating new models of inclusion. Such approaches are addressing barriers and perceptions built on misinformation through personal and one-to-one engagement.
- Addressing identified needs at a local level requires maintaining our strong networking with COs, Waterford City & County Council, LAIT, Waterford Red Cross, HSE, Tusla, Waterford Volunteer Centre, Waterford Migrant Integration Service etc. In organising network opportunities SICAP aims to strengthen collaboration, shared learning, existing resources to minimise duplication and develop responses to identified needs.
- SICAP Community Leadership programme (Action 1.4) will build capacity and skills in knowledge establishing new COs and/or participating in volunteer opportunities promoted by Waterford Volunteer Centre. Through mentoring of community leaders, formation of relevant structure, training etc. will lead to sustainable, inclusive groups.
- DRCD Community Connect Programme will provide resources to build resilience and skills in local communities and with LCGs and partners to proactively address misinformation through development of toolkits. Waterford's project will link with the national coordination being led by ILDN to share learning and resources.
- Promotion approaches will enhance participation in local community activities and organisations and will adhere to Universal Design principles with translation where possible.

Through activities and programs delivered to date inclusion, well-being and connectivity is embedded within local communities. The vision of Sustainable, Inclusive & Empowered Communities 2019-2024 (Government of Ireland) is to create vibrant, sustainable, inclusive, empowered and self-determining communities that support the social, cultural and economic well-being of all members. Grassroot communities are affecting positive social change for those living in their locality. In working with collaborative partners this will promote strategic coordination and reduce duplication of services Outcomes from this action will align with other programmes and supports delivered by G1 and G2.

Through outreach approaches, SICAP staff visit the accommodation centres to promote local supports e.g. English language and employment supports. As some centres are in remote rural areas, we deliver activities within local communities and/or support existing COs to strengthen their activities through inclusion and integration. Local community events organised by COs and/or SICAP non-caseload activities will promote services and supports to increase access including G2 actions, Local Area Employment Services, Waterford Wexford ETB, Waterford Volunteer Centre etc.

Target Group/Area	
Target Group	Refugees
Target Group	International Protection Applicants

KPI Targets	
KPI 1: Total number of Local Community Groups, Social Enterprises and Networks supported	
KPI 2: Total number of Individuals (aged 15 years and up) supported on a one-to-one basis	

Action Outcomes
1.2 New Local Community Groups, Social Enterprises and Networks are formed
1.1 Local areas/communities have built their collective capacity to identify and address their needs

Action Costs	Total	Goal 1	Goal 2
Total	€27,768.00	€27,768.00	
New Arrivals	€27,768.00	€27,768.00	

Collaborative Partners
LDC Collaboration

LECP Objectives
5.3
7.1
7.2

(2026) 1.6 Social and Community Enterprise

Action Details

Targeted location within CAB/Lot

Local Priority Target Group 1 - People Living in Disadvantaged Communities.
Local Priority Target Group 2 – Climate Action & Just Transition.

Targeted focus on the Comeragh Region and Larchville/Lisduggan

Rationale

The delivery of actions to cultivate an awareness of and support for the social and circular economy, including social enterprise and social entrepreneurship, within the lot area. The overall purpose of the action will be to mirror the National Social Enterprise Policy's 2024-27 aim of enriching the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of people living in our communities. This action will respond to the priorities of Trading for Impact: Increasing Awareness of the business model, Growing Social Enterprise within the lot area, Building Support Networks and Harnessing Impacts.

National and local policy developments to promoting circular enterprise will also continue to be a focus of this action which is key to community engagement with local climate action opportunities, as is the potential to harness innovation opportunities with third level institutions and multi-sectoral partnerships.

Description

The action will be delivered in partnership with Local Community Groups and Networks across the LOT area identified by interest and need. A specific focus will continue with the Comeragh District and Larchville & Lisduggan communities in order to build progressive action from collaborative work undertaken in 2025. Work will also be continued with individuals across the lot area that meet programme requirements and are referred from: SICAP/Buion Enterprise & Employment Supports and in collaboration with other Buion programmes focusing on specific target groups such as New Arrivals and Disabled People.

1. Increasing Awareness of the Social & Circular Enterprise Models

Ongoing delivery of pre-development and information-based workshops to community groups, tenant groups, community gardens groups, internal Buion programmes and interested Social Entrepreneurs to increase awareness of the model. This will include short case studies gathered from other agencies and LCDs to enable understanding of the model and its potential within communities.

Follow up idea generation mentoring and second phase pre-development workshops to build on ideas and grow understanding.

2. Growing Social Enterprise

Collaboration with Waterford Local Enterprise Office to deliver The Social Foundry #2 in partnership with the Entrepreneurs Academy. This will be a second training and mentoring collaboration between the 3 agencies to deliver a Social Enterprise Development Programme for group representatives and individuals who have either come through Buion's pre-development programme or are ready to move towards enterprise build. The Social Foundry delivers blended workshops on; Financial Planning, Lean Model Canvas, Climate Planning for Business, Marketing etc.

Additional collaboration with WLEO will see the next phase mentoring of attendees from the Social Foundry #1 towards strengthening each individual's business plan and organising pitch sessions for harnessing agency and business contacts for business advancement. Social Enterprise Small Grant Programme: in 2025 5 SICAP registered Social Enterprises received small grant funding for essential costs as per programme requirements. This opportunity will be repeated in 2026.

3. Social Enterprise Networks

Waterford Social Enterprise Network was re-invigorated in 2025 through our work with the attendees of the Social Foundry. This network will be developed in 2026 as a peer network providing valuable information, insights and support in a learning and collaborative environment. SICAP staff will promote case studies from local established social enterprises

and other LDCs and organise networking opportunities with other LDCs and links to national social enterprise networks.

Buíon staff will continue to attend the LDCN Social Enterprise Community of Practise and engage with SERI and other national networks for continued professional development and collaborative opportunities.

4. Comhar Comaraigh Social Enterprise Network

We will continue to work with CCN to promote their proposed pilot programme as a community led, ground up opportunity for rural regeneration in the Comeragh region through social enterprise development. Our work with this group will be defined by their needs as they continue to lobby for an innovative response to connect and build on enterprise potential within the region. Their requirement to harness funding for a Social Enterprise Co-ordinator for the region is in line with our research on the needs of the social enterprise sector in Waterford (2023/4) which highlighted a common understanding that human resources will enable growth and halt the decline of volunteering in communities as a result of multiple social factors both in rural and urban areas.

5. Circular Economy (Green Transition)

We will continue to collaborate with the Larchville & Lisduggan Community to build a Repair, Recycle, Re-Use economy through delivering skills-based workshops, monthly Repair Cafes and build knowledge that connects locally based climate actions towards the achievement of outcomes anticipated by The People's Transition Report. We will continue to test different offerings and promotional tools to build engagement with various groups and ages in the community.

We will also explore the potential to expand the Repair Café initiative into another community in the city through collaboration with Buíon/SICAP Community Development Workers.

We will continue to network with other agencies that deliver circular initiatives or learning opportunities such as Waterford Libraries, SETU and Waterford Learning City Team to expand circular innovation in the Lot area.

6. Impact Measurement

Exploring actions to improve levels and quality of social enterprise data locally through networking and learning.

Target Group/Area

Target Group	People living in disadvantaged communities
Focus Area	Climate action and the just transition

KPI Targets

KPI 1: Total number of Local Community Groups, Social Enterprises and Networks supported	11
KPI 2: Total number of Individuals (aged 15 years and up) supported on a one-to-one basis	

Action Outcomes

Action Costs	Total	Goal 1	Goal 2
Total	€12,000.00	€12,000.00	
SICAP	€12,000.00	€12,000.00	

Collaborative Partners**LDC Collaboration****LECP Objectives**

5.2

5.3

7.2

(2026) 2.1 2026 Lifelong Learning and Education

Action Details

Targeted location within CAB/Lot

This action will prioritise disadvantaged and very disadvantaged areas. Small areas identified as high concentration of disabled people, people parenting alone and jobless households. All TPA/IPA centres. All Deis schools.

Rationale

The rationale for Action 2.1 is firmly grounded in the core objectives and operating principles of the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), which seeks to reduce poverty, promote social inclusion, and strengthen the capacity of individuals and communities experiencing disadvantage. Lifelong learning is a central mechanism through which SICAP achieves these aims, as educational disadvantage is both a cause and a consequence of social exclusion, unemployment, poor health outcomes, and intergenerational poverty.

Across the Lot area, persistent inequalities in educational attainment, digital access, literacy and numeracy skills, and progression to further and higher education continue to impact individuals and families living in disadvantaged and very disadvantaged communities. These challenges are particularly acute in areas with high levels of unemployment, high proportions of people with disabilities, New Communities, and families experiencing poverty and social isolation. Action 2.1 responds directly to these structural and place-based inequalities by providing targeted, locally delivered lifelong learning supports that are accessible, flexible, and responsive to identified need.

SICAP places strong emphasis on additionality, early intervention, and preventative approaches. The information provision, referral, and signposting elements of Action 2.1 are designed to address systemic barriers such as lack of awareness, complexity of education systems, financial constraints, and low confidence resulting from negative educational experiences. By providing tailored information, supported referrals, workshops, and small financial and travel supports, the action reduces practical and psychological barriers to participation and enables individuals to make informed choices about education and progression pathways. Representation on strategic structures such as the Waterford Wexford Regional Adult Literacy Coalition and engagement with the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities further ensures that local delivery is aligned with regional and international best practice, while remaining grounded in community need.

The programme delivery strand of Action 2.1 reflects SICAP's commitment to engaging those furthest from education and employment through community-based, learner-centred approaches. The continued development of literacy, numeracy, digital literacy, creative, practical, and well-being-focused programmes recognises that engagement often begins outside formal education settings. These programmes act as entry points to learning for individuals who may be isolated, long-term unemployed, living with disabilities, or from migrant backgrounds. By offering both accredited and unaccredited options, the action supports diverse learner journeys, builds confidence, and creates pathways towards further education, training, and employment in line with SICAP's progression-focused model.

The inclusion of innovative initiatives, such as the Academy for Good Introduction to AI module, aligns with SICAP's objective to future-proof disadvantaged communities by improving access to emerging skills and addressing the digital divide. Ensuring that such programmes are delivered in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, with practical supports to participation, reflects SICAP's place-based and equality-focused ethos, and supports inclusion in rapidly evolving learning and labour market contexts.

Action 2.1 also recognises the intergenerational nature of educational disadvantage, which is a key concern within SICAP. The targeted supports for children at risk of early school

leaving and their families are preventative in nature and reflect SICAP's emphasis on early intervention and family-centred approaches. By supporting access to Summer Camps, out-of-school learning, and parental learning opportunities, the action contributes to improved educational engagement, well-being, and social inclusion for children, while simultaneously strengthening parental capacity to support learning and school retention. Collaboration with DEIS schools, School Completion Programmes, Tusla, Family Resource Centres, and community organisations ensures coordinated delivery and avoids duplication, consistent with SICAP governance and partnership principles.

The geographic targeting of Action 2.1 is based on robust socio-economic data and local intelligence, in line with SICAP requirements to prioritise disadvantaged and very disadvantaged areas. By focusing resources on communities with low educational attainment, high unemployment, and higher rates of disability, while retaining flexibility to respond across the wider City and County, the action ensures that SICAP resources are directed where they can achieve the greatest social impact.

Overall, Action 2.1 is designed to operationalise SICAP's core objectives through a coherent lifelong learning framework that addresses immediate barriers, builds individual and community capacity, and supports long-term social and economic inclusion. The action's emphasis on collaboration, additionality, progression, and targeted place-based delivery ensures that it contributes meaningfully to SICAP outcomes while responding to the lived realities of disadvantaged individuals, families, and communities across the Lot area.

Description

Action 2.1 for 2026 will deliver a coherent and integrated lifelong learning response across the Lot area, focused on information provision, programme delivery, and targeted supports for children and families at risk of educational exclusion. The action will prioritise disadvantaged and very disadvantaged communities and will align with SICAP objectives to improve access, participation, and progression in education and lifelong learning for Priority and Target Groups.

Under Action 2.11, Information Provision on Lifelong Learning and Education Opportunities and Supports, the organisation will deliver a structured programme of information, guidance, and referral activity, with a KPI of 70 participants, including 50 non-caseload individuals. Throughout 2026, tailored dissemination of information will be provided based on individual educational needs, ensuring that participants are informed of relevant education and training opportunities, financial supports, and progression pathways. This will be complemented by active referral and signposting to appropriate education services and providers, including Further Education, community education, and specialist supports. Where gaps in awareness or access are identified, workshops will be organised to highlight education pathways, particularly for individuals experiencing educational exclusion. A small grant scheme will be maintained to support entry into Further Education, alongside travel supports where required. The organisation will continue to refer participants to, and collaborate closely with, relevant lead agencies to support literacy, numeracy, and digital skills development across Priority and Target Groups. Strategic engagement will be sustained through representation on the Waterford Wexford Regional Adult Literacy Coalition, and through collaboration with the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities, including the delivery of services and programmes within the first identified Neighbourhood of Learning in the Larchville/Lisduggan area.

Action 2.12 will focus on the delivery of lifelong learning programmes in response to identified needs, with a KPI of 110 participants. Building on learning and outcomes from the previous two years, this action will expand programmes in literacy and numeracy, digital literacy, and social therapeutic gardening and crafting. These programmes have demonstrated strong engagement with hard-to-reach individuals from extremely disadvantaged areas, particularly Larchville and Lisduggan, as well as people with disabilities. In 2026, the organisation will continue to deliver a mix of unaccredited and accredited lifelong learning programmes designed around identified needs, with the objective of engaging Priority and Target Group individuals in supportive adult learning environments. The focus will be on improving knowledge, skills, and competencies that

support personal goal achievement. Programmes will include the Driving Ambitions Programme, which continues to be an effective first point of contact for engagement, especially with New Communities, alongside programmes focused on re-use and recycling, creative education, and practical home improvement skills.

A key innovation within Action 2.12 for 2026 will be the delivery of the Academy for Good Introduction to AI module, delivered in partnership with Google and Maynooth University. This three-day, practice-based programme provides accessible AI and data literacy learning for underserved communities, covering data fundamentals, algorithms, ethics, and real-world applications, with a strong emphasis on confidence-building and critical understanding. The programme removes barriers to participation by providing free access to laptops, software, and travel supports. In 2026, the organisation proposes to host this module in April, with a venue sourced in the Larchville/Lisduggan area to maximise local access and participation.

Across Actions 2.11 and 2.12, SICAP activities will be delivered through ongoing collaboration with stakeholders in the Further Education, primary school, WWETB, and community education sectors. The organisation will work with DEIS schools and target group-focused organisations to identify service gaps and to provide coordinated programmes and events that support children and families facing specific barriers to educational progression. Regular consultation with statutory and community organisations will ensure that areas and individuals experiencing educational and social exclusion are identified and supported. Well-being and lifelong learning programmes and events will be developed to enhance participation, supported by the continued provision of a small grant scheme and travel assistance.

Geographically, Action 2.1 will prioritise disadvantaged and very disadvantaged areas including Larchville, Lisduggan, Ballybeg, North and Inner City small areas, Cappoquin, Kilmacthomas, Dungarvan urban areas, and Ardmore, all of which experience low educational attainment and high levels of unemployment. Particular attention will be given to areas with high prevalence of disability, including Cappoquin, Cheekpoint, Villierstown, Lismore, Passage East, and within Waterford City the areas of Grange North, Newtown, Kingsmeadow, and Shortcourse. In addition, services will be delivered across the wider City and County in consultation with individuals and community groups to ensure equitable access.

Action 2.13 will provide targeted supports to children at risk of early school leaving and their families, with a non-caseload KPI of 600. In 2026, this action will expand access to Summer Camps for families engaged with Family Resource Centres, Tusla, Barnardos, and other services, particularly those impacted by poverty. Buíon Phort Láirge will act as lead agency, working in collaboration with these services and with Summer Camp providers to ensure clear and effective referral pathways. The Summer Camp Access Programme for Children with Disabilities will continue in partnership with Waterford Sports Partnership, supporting families who otherwise lack capacity to access out-of-school social and learning opportunities. Ongoing collaboration with target group representative organisations, DEIS schools, School Completion Programmes, and key networks will identify gaps in provision and inform the development of programmes that engage parents in learning and skills development, thereby strengthening their capacity to support their children's school retention. Collaboration with School Completion Programmes will also ensure greater equality of opportunity across schools in the Lot area, through the identification of unmet needs and the provision of appropriate SICAP and WAP supports.

The timescale for Action 2.1 in 2026 will begin in January with structured consultation with stakeholders, partners, and individuals to identify needs and design programmes. From February to May, programmes and events will be rolled out alongside ongoing collaborative work. A mid-year review and evaluation will take place in May to assess progress and inform adjustments. Delivery will continue from June to December 2026.

All activities under Action 2.1 will be designed in consultation with stakeholders to ensure that SICAP interventions provide additionality, address identified gaps, and avoid

duplication. Lifelong learning and well-being programmes will be delivered in partnership with local community and voluntary groups, with a particular focus on responding to needs identified in the Larchville/Lisduggan area following engagement in 2025. This will include follow-on internet training requested after smartphone training delivered in the previous year. SICAP grants will continue to support Priority and Target Group participants engaged in formal education, whether online or in person, on a part-time or full-time basis, with grants generally capped at €400. Travel supports will be available for learners required to attend courses outside their local area.

Planned activities supporting Action 2.1 in 2026 will include the provision of Easter and Summer Camp places through initiatives such as Klub Muzik for children from New Communities and disadvantaged areas; snack and hot lunch provision in partnership with SETU/WIT Novus for Learning for Life Access programmes and summer camps; room hire and delivery of an International Women's Day event ; bus hire to facilitate participation by children from Shalom House IPAS accommodation; online dyslexia awareness training; educational and recreational trips to locations such as Tramore and Fota wildlife park; Summer Camp places and trips for children in shared accommodation and IPAS centres, including the Lismore centre; delivery of a Summer Camp Assistance Programme; provision of basic first aid courses; and delivery of Creative Mindfulness programmes for children. Together, these activities will support a comprehensive, inclusive, and responsive lifelong learning framework across the Lot area in 2026

2025 Carryover €14,724.00 to be used for this action

Target Group/Area	
Target Group	People impacted by educational disadvantage
Target Group	People living in disadvantaged communities

KPI Targets	
KPI 1: Total number of Local Community Groups, Social Enterprises and Networks supported	
KPI 2: Total number of Individuals (aged 15 years and up) supported on a one-to-one basis	136

Action Outcomes
3.3 SICAP target groups soft skills and/or wellbeing improved
1.1 SICAP target groups are informed about lifelong learning supports and services
1.2 SICAP target groups complete lifelong learning programmes
3.3 SICAP target groups soft skills and/or wellbeing improved
1.3 SICAP target groups at risk of early school leaving progress their formal education

Action Costs	Total	Goal 1	Goal 2
Total	€100,226.00		€100,226.00
SICAP	€100,226.00		€100,226.00

Collaborative Partners**LDC Collaboration****LECP Objectives**

6.1

6.3

7.1

(2026) 2.2 2026 Employability & Labour Market Prospects.

Action Details

Targeted location within CAB/Lot

This action will prioritise disadvantaged and very disadvantaged areas which have low levels of education attainment and a higher than average population of unemployed men and women.

Rationale

The rationale for Action 2.2 is rooted in the core purpose of the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), which is to reduce poverty and social exclusion by supporting individuals and communities experiencing disadvantage to improve their social, economic, and employment outcomes. Access to decent, sustainable employment is a primary pathway out of poverty; however, for many SICAP Priority and Target Groups, participation in the labour market is constrained by structural inequalities, cumulative disadvantage, and systemic discrimination. Action 2.2 is therefore designed to address both the immediate employability needs of individuals and the wider barriers that limit labour market participation and progression.

Labour market conditions in 2025 indicate increasing instability, with rising unemployment, growing long-term unemployment, and declining participation rates. These trends disproportionately affect those already furthest from the labour market, including people living in disadvantaged communities, individuals with low educational attainment, those in jobless households, and people experiencing multiple vulnerabilities. Local SICAP data confirms this pattern, with a significant proportion of participants identified as long-term unemployed and living in households with no attachment to the labour market. Evidence from the ESRI highlights that factors such as age, literacy challenges, caring responsibilities, previous spells of unemployment, and insecure employment significantly reduce the likelihood of re-entry to work. Action 2.2 responds directly to these realities by providing structured, supported pathways that recognise the complexity of individuals' lives and the non-linear nature of progression.

SICAP places a strong emphasis on additionality and targeted intervention. Many individuals supported under Action 2.2 are not adequately served by mainstream employment services due to discrimination, accessibility barriers, or a lack of tailored supports. This is particularly evident for people with disabilities, members of the Traveller and Roma communities, migrants, older workers, women returning to employment after caring roles, and individuals with a criminal history. Ireland's persistently high disability employment gap, extremely high unemployment rates among Travellers, and the concentration of migrants in low-paid and precarious work underscore the need for focused, community-based employability interventions. Action 2.2 aligns with SICAP's equality and human rights ethos by designing interventions that actively mitigate discrimination, build confidence, and create equitable access to labour market opportunities.

The pre-employment strand of Action 2.2 reflects SICAP's progression model, which recognises that individuals often require incremental steps before achieving employment. Community-based, pre-employment supports such as confidence building, soft skills development, digital and job search skills, and sector-specific training provide accessible entry points for those distant from the labour market. The targeted focus on women re-entering the workforce responds to gendered labour market inequalities and caring responsibilities that disproportionately affect women, particularly older women. By engaging locally, including through schools and community networks, the action addresses practical and cultural barriers to participation and supports sustainable re-entry to employment.

Action 2.2 also reflects SICAP's commitment to partnership working and joined-up service delivery. Collaboration with Local Development Company employment actions, WorkAbility, Local Enterprise Office, WWETB, disability service providers, youth organisations,

Probation Services, and community and voluntary organisations ensures that supports are coordinated, complementary, and non-duplicative. This wraparound approach is central to SICAP, enabling individuals to receive consistent support while progressing through different stages of employability, training, or enterprise development. The inclusion of targeted training grants further reflects SICAP's role in removing financial barriers that can prevent individuals from accessing employment-linked training.

The self-employment strand of Action 2.2 recognises enterprise as a viable and appropriate pathway for some SICAP target groups, particularly where traditional employment options are limited due to discrimination, inflexible working conditions, or local labour market constraints. SICAP's role in promoting self-employment is not to replace mainstream enterprise supports, but to provide early-stage, accessible, and confidence-building interventions that enable disadvantaged individuals to consider and test self-employment as an option. Business awareness workshops, mentoring, start-up supports, and small grant aid are consistent with SICAP's additionality principle and its focus on progression towards economic independence.

Importantly, Action 2.2 is underpinned by a place-based approach, targeting disadvantaged and very disadvantaged areas identified through socio-economic data and local intelligence. This ensures that resources are directed to communities experiencing the greatest labour market exclusion while maintaining flexibility to respond to emerging needs across the wider City and County. The action also aligns with broader strategic frameworks, including the Local Economic and Community Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals on decent work and economic growth, reinforcing SICAP's role as a key delivery mechanism for inclusive local development.

In summary, the rationale for Action 2.2 is to provide a targeted, equitable, and responsive employability framework that addresses both individual and structural barriers to labour market participation. By combining pre-employment supports, self-employment pathways, financial assistance, and strong interagency collaboration, the action operationalises SICAP's core objectives and contributes to sustainable employment outcomes, reduced long-term unemployment, and improved social and economic inclusion for Priority and Target Groups across the Lot area

Description

Action 2.2 for 2026 will focus on improving employability and labour market prospects for individuals from Priority and Target Groups who experience multiple and compounding barriers to employment. The action will prioritise disadvantaged and very disadvantaged areas, with a broader deprivation footprint than in 2025, and will concentrate on individuals with low educational attainment, high levels of unemployment, and additional vulnerabilities. These include people with disabilities, migrants, members of the Traveller and Roma communities, older workers seeking to enter or re-enter the labour market, and individuals engaging with the Probation Services. The action is informed by current labour market trends, local SICAP data, and national evidence on long-term unemployment and labour market exclusion.

Recent labour market data highlights a deteriorating employment context that disproportionately impacts SICAP target groups. The unemployment rate among those aged 15 to 65 increased to 5.3 per cent in the third quarter of 2025, compared to 4.5 per cent in the same period in 2024, while labour market participation declined slightly to 66.5 per cent. Unemployment rose sharply among men, increasing by over 25 per cent year-on-year, while long-term unemployment increased to over 32,600 individuals nationally. Locally, 30 per cent of SICAP participants in 2025 identified as long-term unemployed, with 44 per cent living in jobless households. Evidence from the ESRI indicates that progression out of long-term unemployment is significantly affected by age, literacy challenges, caring responsibilities, previous spells of unemployment, and insecure or casual work. These structural barriers are further intensified for specific groups due to discrimination and systemic inequality.

Disability remains a significant factor in labour market exclusion in Waterford, where 14.4

per cent of the population has a disability, exceeding the national average. Ireland continues to have the largest disability employment gap in the EU, and in 2025 almost one fifth of SICAP-supported individuals identified as having a disability. Similarly, members of the Traveller community experience extremely high unemployment rates, with over 60 per cent unemployed and significantly lower educational attainment levels than the general population. The Roma community also experiences persistent labour market exclusion, with low employment rates, precarious work, high poverty levels, language and literacy barriers, and discrimination. Migrants, despite often holding qualifications, continue to be overrepresented in low-paid, manual, and insecure employment, as highlighted in the Waterford Integration Strategy and local Roma inclusion initiatives. Older workers, particularly women returning to employment following caring responsibilities, face additional challenges related to confidence, skills currency, and employer bias. In 2025, women accounted for 60 per cent of SICAP participants, reinforcing the need for gender-responsive employment supports.

Against this backdrop, Action 2.2 will deliver a structured and integrated employability response aligned with SICAP objectives, LECP Priority 5 on Liveability and Quality of Life, and the Sustainable Development Goals relating to decent work and economic growth. The action will be delivered through two interlinked strands: pre-employment progression pathways and self-employment promotion and supports.

Under Action 2.21, the development and delivery of pre-employment progression pathways will support 180 participants from Priority and Target Groups. In 2026, a tailored programme will be developed and delivered specifically for women re-entering the workforce, with a particular focus on older women and those with school-aged children. This programme will be delivered in identified areas of high disadvantage, including Larchville and Lisduggan in Waterford City and the Childers Estate in County Waterford. Engagement with local schools will form part of the outreach approach to ensure that women are informed of available supports, including CV development, interview preparation, online job search skills, confidence building, and presentation skills. Practical, interactive career workshops will be delivered to address both skills gaps and confidence barriers, with clear signposting to further local supports and progression routes.

Industry-related pre-employment training will be delivered to broaden career options and respond to sectors experiencing skills shortages. While retail and hospitality will remain a focus, training provision will expand to include areas such as construction-related supports, healthcare support roles, certified barista training, and other sectors with high vacancy rates. Training needs will be identified through engagement with community and statutory agencies across Waterford City and County to ensure relevance and additionality. Follow-on enhancement training will be provided where appropriate to increase participants' readiness for immediate employment.

The action will also engage with youth organisations across the city and county to identify opportunities for additional employment-focused supports for young jobseekers, complementing existing youth provision rather than duplicating services. Core employability supports will include the delivery of CV preparation, job search, and interview skills workshops, delivered alongside soft skills development such as confidence building, effective communication, presentation skills, and the use of social media platforms for job searching. Participants will be offered follow-up support, including assistance with updating CVs and interview preparation, to strengthen outcomes.

Action 2.21 will be delivered in close collaboration with other employment-focused actions within the Local Development Company and across SICAP to identify opportunities for service enhancement and shared learning that benefits the Waterford cohort. Collaboration with the WorkAbility programme will continue to ensure coordinated employment supports for people with disabilities, including access to training, work placements, and progression pathways. Ongoing liaison with disability service providers such as Rehab Vitahub, Carriglea Services, and other relevant stakeholders will ensure that training provision is aligned with identified needs and avoids duplication. A training grant scheme will be managed to support individuals to access specific training linked to immediate employment

opportunities, with broader promotion of this support through community groups, WWETB, and job fairs, while remaining within budgetary constraints.

Wraparound, non-duplicative supports will be delivered in partnership with statutory and community and voluntary organisations that refer clients to SICAP, enabling coordinated monitoring and progression planning. Action 2.21 will also work closely with other SICAP actions and Buíon programmes to enhance service reach to marginalised groups, including the Traveller and Roma communities, and to individuals engaged with the Probation Services. Building on existing relationships with local Probation staff, the action will explore additional ways to support clients through informal information sessions and tailored employability interventions that support reintegration into the labour market.

Action 2.22 will focus on the development and delivery of self-employment promotion and supports for 165 participants from Priority and Target Groups. In 2026, Business Fundamentals workshops will be expanded to raise awareness of self-employment as a viable option, building on the success of five workshops delivered in 2025, with a minimum of eight planned for 2026. These group-based workshops will provide an accessible introduction to self-employment and enterprise, particularly for individuals who may not traditionally view entrepreneurship as an option.

One-to-one mentoring will continue to be a core element of this action, supporting individuals with business ideas, including those referred by the Department of Social Protection as Back to Work Enterprise Allowance applicants. Start Your Own Business workshops will support participants to develop their ideas further and to understand key requirements such as regulatory compliance, finance, marketing, and sustainability. A small SICAP Start-Up Grant Aid facility will be managed to support early-stage self-employment, building on the 22 beneficiaries supported in 2025, with a planned increase in capacity in 2026.

A wide range of targeted enterprise training workshops will be delivered in response to emerging business needs and changes in the business landscape. These will include training in social media and digital marketing, Facebook and Instagram bootcamps, Canva, ChatGPT and AI in business, TikTok and video editing, website development, branding and communications, sales and marketing, photography for small business, and core business finance topics such as bookkeeping, end-of-year accounts, and Revenue Online Service compliance. Certified and practical training such as Safe Pass, HACCP Levels 1 and 2, manual handling, customer service, and barista training will also be delivered where relevant to support both employment and self-employment outcomes.

Engagement with the WAP Business Support Network will be strengthened to support networking, peer learning, and access to specialist expertise. Following initial engagement with the Local Enterprise Office, collaboration will progress in early 2026 with the aim of delivering at least three networking events during the year, focusing on themes such as business finance for growth and pension planning for sole traders. Building on a successful pilot in 2025, a closed Facebook group will continue and expand as a platform for networking, peer support, and ongoing engagement with enterprise clients.

2025 Carryover €14,724.00 to be used for this action

Target Group/Area	
Target Group	People who are long-term unemployed
Target Group	Disabled People/People with Disabilities

KPI Targets	
KPI 1: Total number of Local Community Groups, Social Enterprises and Networks supported	
KPI 2: Total number of Individuals (aged 15 years and up) supported on a one-to-one basis	340

Action Outcomes
2.2 SICAP target groups are better prepared to enter the labour market
2.4 SICAP target groups progress into self-employment and establish businesses, including social enterprises
2.3 SICAP target groups progress to employment
2.1 SICAP target groups are informed about labour market supports and services

Action Costs	Total	Goal 1	Goal 2
Total	€108,800.00		€108,800.00
SICAP	€108,800.00		€108,800.00

Collaborative Partners
LDC Collaboration

LECP Objectives
5.2
5.3
6.1
7.1
7.2

(2026) 2.3 2026 Soft Skills and Wellbeing

Action Details

Targeted location within CAB/Lot

Areas with higher-than-average rates of lone parent households, bad/very bad health, more than 16% of the total population with a disability, more than 5% the total population, with a caring responsibility, DPCs, Rest Centres.

Rationale

The rationale for Action 2.3 is grounded in the core objectives of the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), which recognises that social inclusion, employability, and educational progression cannot be achieved in isolation from individual wellbeing, confidence, and social connection. For many people living in disadvantaged and very disadvantaged communities, poor mental health, chronic stress, disability, trauma, caring responsibilities, and social isolation represent significant barriers to engagement with education, training, employment, and community life. Action 2.3 addresses these barriers by providing low-threshold, preventative, and relationship-based supports that align closely with SICAP's emphasis on early intervention, additionality, and progression.

SICAP is designed to engage those who are furthest from mainstream services, including individuals who may lack the confidence, stability, or readiness to participate in more formal interventions. The soft skills and wellbeing supports delivered under Action 2.3 create an essential entry point for engagement, particularly for individuals who have experienced repeated disadvantage, exclusion, or negative interactions with statutory systems. By offering accessible, familiar, and non-stigmatising activities within local communities, this action supports trust-building and sustained participation, which are foundational to SICAP's person-centred model.

The focus on creative, arts-based, practical, and physical activities reflects evidence and practice within SICAP that such approaches are effective in engaging isolated individuals and those with complex needs. Programmes such as drama, creative writing, mindfulness, group cooking, and creative wellbeing allow participants to build confidence, communication skills, emotional resilience, and social networks in a supportive group environment. These outcomes are directly aligned with SICAP's objectives to improve personal development, wellbeing, and social inclusion, and they support progression by helping individuals re-establish routine, self-belief, and a sense of agency.

Action 2.3 also reflects SICAP's place-based and community development ethos. Targeting areas such as Larchville–Lisduggan, Dungarvan, and rural communities acknowledges the concentration of health inequalities, disability, and social isolation in these locations. Delivering programmes locally reduces practical barriers such as transport and cost, while strengthening community connections and local capacity. The alignment with the Learning Cities Initiative and the Learning Neighbourhood approach further reinforces SICAP's commitment to lifelong learning as a community-wide process, where wellbeing, identity, and belonging are recognised as integral to learning and participation.

Partnership working is a central principle of SICAP and is fundamental to the rationale for Action 2.3. Collaboration with Healthy Waterford, Healthy Cities, Family Resource Centres, schools, social prescribers, community healthcare providers, and local organisations ensures that wellbeing supports are coordinated, safe, and complementary to existing services. This integrated approach avoids duplication, enhances referral pathways, and supports individuals to access the right support at the right time. Cross-goal collaboration within SICAP further strengthens impact by linking wellbeing supports with education, employability, and community engagement actions.

The inclusion of modest pilot initiatives, such as targeted programmes for carers and confidence-building interventions using drama, reflects SICAP's learning-oriented and

responsive framework. SICAP encourages innovation where it responds to identified need, while also emphasising accountability and evidence of impact. By testing new approaches at a small scale and continuing them only where positive outcomes are demonstrated, Action 2.3 balances innovation with responsible use of resources.

Finally, Action 2.3 supports SICAP's long-term outcomes by addressing the underlying conditions that prevent individuals from progressing. Improvements in wellbeing, confidence, social connection, and soft skills are critical enablers of participation in lifelong learning, employment pathways, and community life. By investing in these foundational supports, the action contributes to more sustainable progression outcomes, reduces the risk of disengagement, and strengthens individual and community resilience.

In summary, the rationale for Action 2.3 is to provide an essential, preventative layer of support within the SICAP framework that enables disadvantaged individuals and communities to build the confidence, wellbeing, and social capital necessary to engage with broader social inclusion, education, and employment opportunities.

Description

Action 2.3 in 2026 will continue to provide a supportive, low-threshold foundation for individuals who are not yet ready to engage in formal training, education, or employment. This action recognises that for many people living in disadvantaged and very disadvantaged communities, particularly in the Larchville–Lisduggan neighbourhood and other identified areas, barriers such as poor mental health, disability, chronic health conditions, trauma, caring responsibilities, and social isolation significantly affect confidence, motivation, and readiness to progress. In response, Action 2.3 will deliver accessible, relationship-based soft skills and wellbeing supports that prioritise trust, inclusion, and gradual engagement.

The action will be delivered primarily within communities experiencing multiple forms of disadvantage, including Larchville–Lisduggan, Dungarvan, and selected rural locations such as An Ghaeltacht. These areas experience higher levels of disability, health inequalities, and social isolation, which can limit participation in mainstream services. Programmes under this action will focus on building stability, self-confidence, resilience, and social connection through a range of creative, physical, practical, and arts-based approaches. Activities such as drama, creative writing, mindfulness, group cooking, and creative wellbeing sessions will be used as engagement tools, as they have a proven track record of attracting and retaining participants who are otherwise isolated or disengaged, while supporting improvements in mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Building on the successful collaboration with Healthy Cities in 2025, Action 2.3 will continue to deliver cross-goal, local community health and wellbeing events in 2026. These events will provide opportunities for community participation, informal learning, and social interaction within a holistic and inclusive environment. The events will be designed to bring together residents, service providers, and community organisations in a non-clinical setting, reducing stigma and encouraging engagement with wellbeing supports. Delivery will take place across a range of locations, including Larchville–Lisduggan, Dungarvan, and rural areas, ensuring that both urban and rural communities benefit from this action.

Alongside the continuation of core programmes, Action 2.3 will pilot a small number of new wellbeing approaches in 2026, informed by participant feedback and partner insight. These pilot initiatives will include “Opening Doors,” a confidence-building programme that uses drama as a learning and engagement medium, and “Time Out,” a wellbeing programme specifically designed for parents and carers of adults or children with additional needs. These initiatives will be modest in scale and carefully evaluated, with continuation dependent on demonstrated benefit to participants. This approach reflects SICAP's emphasis on responsiveness, learning, and evidence-informed delivery.

The established wellbeing and soft-skills activities that demonstrated positive outcomes in 2025 will remain central to this action. Group cooking programmes, mindfulness sessions, creative wellbeing activities, and confidence-building workshops will continue to be delivered, as they provide familiar, low-pressure entry points for engagement. These

activities help participants rebuild routine, improve self-esteem, and develop social connections in a supportive group setting. Maintaining these core elements will provide continuity and stability for participants, supporting gradual progression towards further engagement with learning, training, or employability supports under other SICAP actions.

Action 2.3 will also align with the Learning Cities Initiative and related cross-goal activities, particularly within the Learning Neighbourhood framework in Larchville–Lisduggan. Through collaboration with the Learning Cities Coordinator, soft skills and wellbeing activities will contribute to fostering a sense of local identity, belonging, and community pride. This alignment will support lifelong learning principles at neighbourhood level and reinforce the role of wellbeing as a foundation for learning and participation.

All activities delivered under Action 2.3 will be underpinned by strong partnership working. The action will continue to build and strengthen collaborations with Healthy Waterford, Family Resource Centres, schools, social prescribers, community healthcare providers, and a wide range of local community and voluntary organisations. These partnerships ensure that programmes are relevant, trauma-informed, and complementary to existing services, and that appropriate referral pathways are maintained for participants requiring additional or specialist supports.

Planned activities in 2026 will include the delivery of an International Women's Day event with a strong wellbeing and empowerment focus, a programme of community wellness events, play-based wellbeing activities for Traveller families delivered in collaboration with Goal 1 and Minceirí, and ongoing wellbeing classes and workshops in Dungarvan and other targeted locations. Through these activities, Action 2.3 will continue to provide an essential foundation of wellbeing and soft skills development, enabling individuals and communities to build confidence, connection, and readiness for progression in line with SICAP objectives.

2025 Carryover €14,724.00 to be used for this action

Target Group/Area

Target Group	People living in disadvantaged communities
Target Group	Heads of One-parent Families

KPI Targets

KPI 1: Total number of Local Community Groups, Social Enterprises and Networks supported	
KPI 2: Total number of Individuals (aged 15 years and up) supported on a one-to-one basis	136

Action Outcomes

3.3 SICAP target groups soft skills and/or wellbeing improved
3.2 SICAP target groups participate in activities to improve their soft skills and wellbeing
3.1 SICAP target groups are informed about soft skill and wellbeing supports and services
2.2 SICAP target groups are better prepared to enter the labour market
1.3 SICAP target groups at risk of early school leaving progress their formal education
1.2 SICAP target groups complete lifelong learning programmes

Action Costs	Total	Goal 1	Goal 2
Total	€56,376.23		€56,376.23
SICAP	€56,376.23		€56,376.23

Collaborative Partners

LDC Collaboration

LECP Objectives

5.2

5.3

6.1

7.1

8.1

(2026) 2.4 2026 New Arrivals

Action Details

Targeted location within CAB/Lot

All DPCs (Direct Provision Centres), temporary accommodation centres, and areas with International Protection Applicants (IPAs) and Temporary Protection Applicants (TPAs) in the LOT region., including Designated Accommodation Centres

Rationale

The rationale for Action 2.4 is firmly grounded in the core objectives and operating principles of the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), which seeks to reduce poverty, promote social inclusion, and support the empowerment and participation of those who are most marginalised. New Arrivals—particularly International Protection Applicants, Temporary Protection Applicants, and members of emerging migrant communities—are explicitly recognised within SICAP as priority target groups due to their heightened risk of social exclusion, economic marginalisation, and isolation from mainstream services.

New Arrivals often experience multiple and overlapping barriers that directly align with SICAP's focus on disadvantage. These include language barriers, disrupted education and employment histories, trauma and uncertainty linked to displacement, limited understanding of Irish systems, and restricted social networks. For many, these challenges are compounded by insecure accommodation, limited access to transport, caring responsibilities, and poor mental wellbeing. Without targeted, locally delivered supports, these barriers can become entrenched, leading to long-term dependency, disengagement from services, and intergenerational disadvantage.

Action 2.4 responds to these challenges by providing early, preventative, and enabling supports that are consistent with SICAP's emphasis on activation rather than crisis response alone. Language acquisition is positioned as a foundational intervention because it underpins access to education, employment, health services, social welfare, and community participation. By prioritising accessible, practical English language provision and progression pathways such as IELTS, the action directly supports SICAP's Goal 2 objectives of improving labour market participation and educational outcomes for disadvantaged individuals.

The action also reflects SICAP's commitment to additionality and local responsiveness. National integration and protection systems cannot, on their own, address the day-to-day barriers experienced by New Arrivals at local level. Through flexible delivery, rapid response capacity, and close coordination with statutory agencies and community partners, Action 2.4 fills critical gaps that would otherwise leave individuals unsupported during periods of transition, relocation, or policy change. This localised approach ensures that supports are timely, relevant, and embedded within the communities where people are living.

Employability-focused interventions within Action 2.4 are aligned with SICAP's activation model, which recognises that progression towards employment is often incremental. Short, targeted training programmes, recognised certifications, and tailored guidance help participants build confidence, develop relevant skills, and move step-by-step towards work or further training. For those with professional qualifications obtained outside Ireland, focused English language and progression supports prevent deskilling and enable more effective utilisation of existing skills, contributing to both individual wellbeing and local economic development.

The inclusion of one-to-one guidance and casework reflects SICAP's person-centred approach, ensuring that interventions are tailored to individual circumstances, aspirations, and capacities. This support is particularly critical for New Arrivals who must navigate

complex systems while coping with stress and uncertainty. By supporting informed decision-making and linking individuals into appropriate SICAP and mainstream supports, the action strengthens pathways to independence and self-sufficiency.

Action 2.4 also aligns with SICAP's social inclusion and community development objectives by promoting social connection, participation, and mutual understanding. Low-key intercultural activities, community-based learning, and practical "in the community" modules reduce isolation and build bridges between New Arrivals and host communities. These approaches support integration in a way that is respectful, confidence-building, and sustainable, while also contributing to more cohesive and resilient local communities.

Finally, the action reflects SICAP's emphasis on partnership and coordination. By working closely with local authorities, education and training providers, community organisations, volunteer networks, and statutory agencies, Action 2.4 avoids duplication, maximises impact, and ensures coherent service delivery. This collaborative model is essential in a context characterised by rapid change and ongoing pressure on national systems.

In summary, the New Arrivals Action Plan is a necessary and strategic SICAP intervention that addresses acute and structural disadvantage, supports progression and participation, and strengthens community integration. It delivers measurable social inclusion outcomes while remaining flexible, locally grounded, and responsive to emerging needs—core principles at the heart of SICAP.

Description

Action 2.4 in 2026 will focus on providing structured, flexible and responsive supports to New Arrivals across all Direct Provision Centres, Designated Accommodation Centres, temporary accommodation settings, and neighbourhoods with concentrations of International Protection Applicants (IPAs) and Temporary Protection Applicants (TPAs) throughout Waterford City and County. The action is grounded in both national evidence and local operational experience, which continue to demonstrate significant inequalities in wellbeing, integration outcomes, and access to opportunity for people arriving through international and temporary protection pathways.

Data from the Understanding Life in Ireland: Well-Being Dashboard consistently highlight poorer outcomes for migrants, people in insecure or rented accommodation, and those with temporary or international protection status. Mental health challenges remain prevalent among IPAs and TPAs, driven by trauma, displacement, prolonged uncertainty, and, in many cases, pre-existing vulnerabilities. These challenges are compounded by language barriers, limited familiarity with Irish systems, and restricted opportunities for meaningful participation in employment, education, and community life.

Ireland experienced a record number of International Protection applications in 2024, with approximately 18,500 applications, followed by a reduction in 2025. Despite this decline, pressure on the system remains high, with over 10,800 applications lodged by October 2025 and significant backlogs remaining at both the International Protection Office and the International Protection Appeals Tribunal. In parallel, the number of Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection from Ukraine continues to increase nationally, reaching over 119,000 PPSNs issued by November 2025. Waterford has experienced sustained growth in this cohort, with 2,553 BoTPs resident in the county by August 2025. These figures underline the scale and persistence of need and the requirement for both short-term and medium-term supports that can adapt quickly to changing circumstances.

Throughout 2025, Buíon was required to operate in a highly flexible, emergency-response mode due to rapid changes in Government policy, the closure of a Designated Accommodation Centre in Dungarvan, and the large-scale relocation of TPAs from Youghal to Waterford. Similar patterns are anticipated in 2026, including the possibility of further emergency relocations, accommodation reconfiguration, or sudden increases in population in specific locations. Action 2.4 is therefore designed to maintain a high degree of responsiveness while also providing structured pathways that support stability, progression, and integration.

The overarching objective of Action 2.4 in 2026 is to improve quality of life and facilitate the integration of New Arrivals into Irish society, while maintaining the operational capacity to respond rapidly to emerging needs and emergency accommodation changes. The action recognises that effective integration depends on a combination of language acquisition, access to information, employability supports, wellbeing, and sustained relational engagement.

A central component of the action will be the continued capacity for flexible and emergency response. Buíon, through SICAP, will remain prepared to respond quickly to changes in accommodation and population patterns, including the opening or re-profiling of Designated Accommodation Centres and large-scale relocations from other counties. This will involve the rapid establishment of English language and information supports within new or existing centres, the delivery of short, intensive orientation programmes for newly arrived groups, and close coordination with LAIT, IPAS, Waterford City and County Council, and local NGOs to ensure that essential supports are in place within the first weeks of any move.

English language provision will remain the cornerstone of Action 2.4, reflecting its critical role in integration, wellbeing, and access to services and employment. The Buíon Phort Láirge / Fáilte Isteach English Language Programme will continue to provide beginner, intermediate, and advanced classes across Waterford City and County, with a strong emphasis on practical conversational skills, functional vocabulary, and real-life communication. Provision will include A0–A1 groups for learners with little or no English, A1–B2 level classes, weekly conversational English clubs in Waterford, Dungarvan, and Tramore, and specialised “English for Work” groups tailored to sectors such as healthcare, engineering, hospitality, care, warehousing, and service industries. Delivery will be coordinated in partnership with SICAP colleagues, LAES, SETU, WWETB, local organisations, volunteer tutors, and community leaders, supported by regular integration partnership meetings to ensure coherence and avoid duplication.

Building on strong demand in 2024 and 2025, IELTS preparation will remain a priority progression pathway in 2026. Dedicated IELTS preparation courses will be organised in partnership with relevant schools and providers, including continued collaboration with The Language People in Dungarvan. These courses will target individuals with intermediate or higher English levels who have clear progression goals related to further and higher education, skilled employment, or professional recognition of qualifications. Flexible delivery formats will be explored for participants unable to attend full-time courses due to work, family responsibilities, or location, and exam fee support will be provided where possible to remove financial barriers.

Employment-focused training will form another key strand of Action 2.4. Buíon/SICAP will support and organise targeted short training programmes for New Arrivals, including Manual Handling, HACCP Level 2, CV and interview preparation, and other sector-specific training such as Safe Pass with language support. These programmes will be delivered in collaboration with WWETB and other partners where possible, aligned with local labour market needs, and designed to move participants closer to employment or into work.

A specific development for 2026 will be a shift in the delivery of security training. In 2025, individual grants supported a small number of participants to access Security Courses, primarily residents of IPAS centres. In 2026, this approach will transition towards the organisation of at least two full group-based Security Courses targeted at IPAS residents. Where appropriate, these courses will be complemented by CV and interview preparation and employer engagement to maximise progression into the security sector.

Individual one-to-one guidance and casework will remain central to the action. This support will assist New Arrivals to identify personal goals in education, employment, and integration; navigate Irish systems including social welfare, education, health, childcare, and housing; and access appropriate SICAP Goal 2 supports such as training opportunities and employment grant aid. Participants interested in self-employment will be supported to access training and mentoring in collaboration with SICAP enterprise staff, ensuring that

entrepreneurial pathways are also available where appropriate.

Wellbeing, social integration, and community participation will be embedded throughout Action 2.4. Support will be provided for the delivery of Buíon/SICAP summer camp programmes to foster integration for children and families. Where feasible, low-key intercultural events and community gatherings will be piloted or continued, creating opportunities for New Arrivals to build local networks, reduce social isolation, and participate in community life in a non-threatening, inclusive manner.

A key feature of the 2026 plan is the expansion of practical, real-life learning approaches that integrate language, cultural understanding, and confidence-building. Building on a successful pilot delivered in an IPAS centre in Lismore in 2025, short modular programmes will be delivered that focus on specific everyday activities such as shopping, using cafés, accessing public transport, completing forms for libraries and services, and attending local cultural events and markets. These modules will combine targeted language learning with exploration of social norms, customs, and etiquette, and will culminate in supported real-world experiences. The Lismore café module demonstrated strong outcomes in terms of confidence, practical language use, and positive interaction with local businesses and community members. In 2026, this approach will be extended to additional groups in Dungarvan, Lismore, and potentially Waterford City.

Experience has shown that attendance and engagement are stronger when language classes are delivered in short, goal-oriented modules with a clear practical outcome. In response, a greater proportion of provision in 2026 will be structured in this way. Additional modules under consideration include language preparation for the Irish driving test and driving in Ireland, potentially delivered in coordination with local driving schools; targeted support for highly skilled migrants who are unable to access their professions due to lack of recognised English qualifications such as IELTS, Cambridge PET, or OET; language programmes focused on supporting parents to engage with the Irish school system, addressing communication around attendance, reports, and school processes; and literacy-based English classes linked to library visits and reading groups.

2025 Carryover €44,976.00 to be used for this action - Proposal presented to LCDC 20/02/2026

Target Group/Area	
Target Group	International Protection Applicants
Focus Area	Refugee and migrant rights and integration

KPI Targets	
KPI 1: Total number of Local Community Groups, Social Enterprises and Networks supported	
KPI 2: Total number of Individuals (aged 15 years and up) supported on a one-to-one basis	340

Action Outcomes
3.1 SICAP target groups are informed about soft skill and wellbeing supports and services
2.4 SICAP target groups progress into self-employment and establish businesses, including social enterprises
2.3 SICAP target groups progress to employment
2.2 SICAP target groups are better prepared to enter the labour market
1.2 SICAP target groups complete lifelong learning programmes
1.1 SICAP target groups are informed about lifelong learning supports and services

Action Costs	Total	Goal 1	Goal 2
Total	€20,290.00		€20,290.00
New Arrivals	€20,290.00		€20,290.00

Collaborative Partners
LDC Collaboration

LECP Objectives
5.2
5.3
6.1
8.1