



Circular No: 03-2026

From: LEADER Policy and Operations Unit

To: All LAGs, Implementing Partners and Administrative Check Bodies

Date Issued: 08 June 2026

Subject: Smart Villages, Monitoring & Reporting (L800s)

This circular is being issued to give recipients clarity on the concept of Smart Villages, on LEADER Smart Village projects, and on the EU reporting requirements for projects that are related to, or support the development of, a Smart Village strategy. It also requests that LAGs review their approved projects within the LEADER IT system to ensure that all projects are correctly linked to the Smart Village Result indicators, R40 and L807, as appropriate. In addition, further information on the L800 questions and associated Result indicators, is also provided.

1. What is a Smart Village?

The EU Smart Villages policy framework was introduced in 2017 with the goal of strengthening the socio-economic fabric of rural areas. At its heart was a desire for local communities to identify the challenges facing them, and to implement solutions to these challenges. A Smart Village refers to a community that uses modern technology, digital assets and local resources to combat local challenges. Whether it concerns issues such as social inclusion, a lack of services or of economic opportunities, connectivity, or climate, the Smart Village approach is a method of harnessing local strengths, resources and connections to help improve the quality of life for communities, and to ensure that these areas are sustainable and attractive places to live and work. Although digital technologies can play a role in the Smart Village concept it is not essential. What is of primary importance is the collective nature of how a community identifies the issues at stake and uses its local resources to plan and implement a strategy to



improve the quality of life of its inhabitants, promote resilience and enable the further development of actions at a local level.

2. Smart Village Strategies

Put simply, a Smart Village Strategy is the outcome of local consultation and formulates a response to the challenges identified locally. It identifies the priority areas requiring action, lists the resources available and plots a route toward achieving these goals. The development of this strategy may be funded by LEADER, or by another streaming source. Similarly, the actions identified within the strategy can be funded from different sources and LEADER projects arising out of this can be said to support the development of the strategy. Projects aligning broadly with the actions identified in a Smart Village strategy can be said to be related to the strategy. Both points are important to DRCDG from a monitoring and reporting perspective.

3. Monitoring & reporting of Smart Village Strategies

As part of reporting on the 2023-2027 LEADER programme the Department is required to report to the EU on how the 2023-2027 LEADER programme supports Smart Villages through the following indicators:

- (i) (R40) the number of supported Smart Village Strategies and
- (ii) (L807) the number of projects related to a Smart Village Strategy.

L807 refers to projects that relate to a Smart Village Strategy, i.e., it is broadly aligned with the actions identified in the strategy. R40 is more explicitly tied to the development of the strategy locally, i.e., it is a project that supported directly the development of the Smart Village Strategy itself (the plan), or it is a project being undertaken to address one of the issues identified in the consultation and can be said to directly support the development of the strategy.



When a project supports the development of the strategy R40 should be answered on the LEADER IT system with a 'Yes'. The name of the Smart Village Strategy should be added, either by selecting from the list already there, or by adding a new entry. If a project supports the development of multiple Smart Village Strategies, it is recommended that the Department is notified.

The Department expects that where a project is related to a Smart Village Strategy that L807 is answered with a 'Yes'.

It is anticipated that where R40 is answered with 'Yes' then L807 will also be answered with 'Yes'.

Although these two phrases may seem interchangeable, from a reporting perspective their difference is important. R40 counts the number of strategies supported, and these cannot be double counted. L807 counts the number of projects that relate to Smart Village strategies and every project is counted.

As multiple projects could support the development of a single Smart Village Strategy this allows the Department to count the number of projects, but also to recognize how many individual Strategies these refer to. By having a separate identifier for R40 this mitigates against the risk of double counting the strategies supported.

To ensure we are accurately reporting on the achievements of the LEADER programme, the Department is requesting that all Local Action Groups perform a review on how these indicators have been populated to date in respect of approved projects. If changes are required, please notify Pobal so that we can accurately report to the EU on the achievements of the programme.

4. L800 reporting requirements

The Department is required to report to the EU on certain outputs generated by LEADER projects to identify the value of LEADER, highlight its achievements and show how it is making an impact. The L800 questions are Yes/No questions that show the number of projects that



support certain categories. In some cases, these are tied to an additional Result Indicator question.

An important point to note is that a single project can answer 'Yes' to multiple L800 questions, and all should be answered appropriately.

If there are projects that have not been answered correctly, can you please review and notify Pobal so that we can accurately report to the EU on the achievements of the programme.

5. L801 – L810 questions

Listed below are the L800 questions and their associated Result Indicators. Project officers should be answering 'Yes' to all applicable questions.

- **L801** - Is this project related to knowledge transfer, including advice, training, and knowledge-exchange on sustainable, economic, social, environmental, and climate-friendly performance?
- **L802** - Is this project related to producer organisations, local markets, short supply chains and quality schemes, including investment support, marketing activities, etc.?
- **L803** - Is this project related to renewable energy production capacities, including bio-based?
- **L804** - Is this project contributing to environmental sustainability, climate mitigation and adaptation goals?
 - *Associated Result Indicator: R27* – This is answered Yes/No together with L804.
- **L805** - Is this project creating jobs?
- **L806** - Is this project supporting rural businesses, including bio-economy?
 - *Associated Result Indicator: R39* – When a rural business is supported L806 is answered with a 'Yes'. This then prompts a second question: Has this business received LEADER support previously through the 2023-2027 LEADER Programme, including A&D projects / Feasibility studies etc.? This question should be answered 'No' if this is the first time this business is being supported under the 2023-2027 LEADER programme.



- **L807** - Is this project related to a Smart Village strategy?
 - *Associated Result Indicator: R40* – See Smart Village information above.
- **L808** - Is this project improving access to services or infrastructure?
 - *Associated Result Indicator: R41* – This information auto-populates after the first claim is paid if answered with a Yes.
- **L809** - Is this project supporting Social Inclusion?
 - *Associated Result Indicator: R42* – Please enter the number of people benefitting from this project. As Rural Infrastructure & Social Inclusion is one of the 2023-2027 LEADER themes, it is thought that projects approved under this theme will be answered 'Yes', with the number of people benefiting being provided.
- **L810** - Is this Project of “another” category?

In the event that L800 – L809 are all 'No', then L810 should be answered 'Yes' and list the project category.

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

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