



An Roinn Forbartha  
Tuaithe agus Pobail  
Department of Rural and  
Community Development



## Ireland's LEADER activities in the transition period

9th meeting of the Subgroup on Leader and  
Community Led Local Development

23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021  
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## LEADER COVID responses

- Department as the MA introduced a number of administrative flexibilities to assist with the ability of the LAGs to maintain programme continuity
  - *Flexibility around holding meetings via teleconferencing and written procedures,*
  - *Facilitated working from home by accepting electronic signatures on documents, email signatures, alternatives to scanning documents*
  - *Desk based OTSC, no on site visits*
- 1,425 core projects, with a value of over €60 million, were approved for LEADER funding by the LAGs in the twelve-month period to 31 January 2021



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## Engagement with Stakeholders

- Engagement with those implementing the programme on proposed Transitional Programme
- Extensive feedback on a number of areas
- Discussion on key themes and priorities:
  - *Responding to COVID*
  - *Responding to Brexit*
  - *Focus on new recipients*
  - *Explore and develop projects for funding in thematic areas likely to feature in next programme*
    - Climate agenda
    - Digital transformation
    - Smart Villages
- Request for further flexibility on 2014-2020 Programme:
  - *Minister Humphreys extended the 2014-2020 programme to 31st March 2021*



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## Transitional Programme features

- Launched in December 2020 by Minister Humphreys and begins on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022
- €20 Million initial allocation for the programme
- Allocated in line with the 2014-2020 programme across the 29 LAGs
- €15 million in projects and €5 million for administration
- Further allocation provided for administration for 2014-2020 programme
- Continue the two national LEADER Programmes: Lead Food Initiative & Cooperation measure.



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## Transitional Programme features continued

- Delivered through the current LAG and Implementing Partner structures
- New LDS not required but LAGs will be permitted to amend their existing LDS to address emerging challenges in their sub-regional area
- Current 2014-2020 programme project funding allocated by 31st March 2021.
- Recommit un-used funding until December 2022.
- Increasing the maximum rate of aid applicable for private enterprises from 50% to 75%
  - *Applies to community projects with commercial basis and social enterprises*
  - *Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 for new applications received on or after that date*



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## Aim of the Transitional LEADER Programme

- Work closely with communities, particularly new applicants, building their capacity in preparation for the next programming period
- Promote projects which support communities in a post-COVID environment
- Support job creation, entrepreneurship, enterprise development and innovation in a post-COVID and/or post-Brexit environment
- Explore and develop projects for funding in thematic areas which are likely to feature strongly in the next EU-funded programme



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## Priorities of Transitional Programme

- Supports to rural businesses seeking to reach new markets, expand, innovate and/or diversify in response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and/or Brexit, with a particular emphasis on providing support to businesses in the food sector
- Community based projects that seek to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic
- Supports and capacity building for communities that have not previously received assistance under LEADER or other rural programmes, using the Transitional Programme for the LAGs and Implementing Partners to engage directly with new applicants to develop projects and enhance collaboration within communities



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## Priorities of Transitional Programme

- Support for new and innovative projects in the areas of climate change, environmental protection and the green economy
- Maximising the potential of broadband and the digital economy in communities
- Projects that develop the concept of the Smart Village initiative or Rural Economic Development Zones (REDZs) which could serve as proof-of-concept for more substantial proposals in the context of the next EU-funded LEADER Programme
- **Not an exhaustive list and LAGs may consider other actions that seek to address key issues within their local area.**



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Thank You