

BACKGROUND

LEADER is an EU funded programme to support activities to improve the quality of life in rural areas and to diversify the rural economy. It supports the delivery of local development actions in rural communities and has formed part of EU funding supports since 1991. The LEADER programme is now established as a key funding pillar within the national Rural Development Programme.

For the new LEADER element of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, it is proposed that Laois Local Community Development Committee will be the Local Action Group with Laois Partnership Co. the lead Implementation Partner. Laois Partnership Co. (previously Laois LEADER) has implemented the LEADER programme in Laois since 2005.

Under Ireland's Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, LEADER will primarily address Priority 6 of the European Union priorities for rural development which is promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas.

LAOIS LEADER PROGRAMME

The proposed framework for delivery of the 2014 – 2020 programme in Laois is:

- Managing Authority - Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government
- Lead Financial Partner - Laois County Council
- Local Action Group - Laois Local Community Development Committee
- Lead Implementation Partner - Laois Partnership Co.

The budget for Laois for the 2014 to 2020 programme is €7.1m. This represents a significant opportunity for development of the rural economy and services in Laois.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY PREPARATION

It is proposed to commence the process of preparing a Local Development Strategy (LDS) for County Laois. This LDS will set out the objectives and actions proposed for the new LEADER programme. Laois Partnership Co. will prepare the LDS for Co Laois on behalf of the Local Action Group, Laois Local Community Development Committee (LCDC).

As a community led local development approach, LEADER is a methodology that places the rural community at its centre. Through the preparation of LDS, it is hoped to facilitate participation by all parties who wish to contribute to the process. The precise projects to be supported will emerge from the bottom-up approach used in the design of the Local Development Strategy.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY THEMES

The proposed Local Development Strategy (LDS) will outline a range of Actions which will be delivered under the three main themes of the LEADER programme. The three themes, which have been set out to guide the strategy development, are:

Theme 1: Rural Economic Development

Sub-themes: Enterprise Development and Job Creation - Rural Tourism - Development - Broadband - Rural Towns

Theme 2: Social inclusion through building community capacity,

Sub-themes: Training and animation - Basic Services for hard to reach communities - Rural Youth

Theme 3: Rural Environment*

Sub-themes: Protection and sustainable use of water resources, the protection and improvement of biodiversity and the development of renewable energy.

(*Note that Rural Environment is a cross cutting requirement for all 3 LEADER interventions)

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION: CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

As part of the LDS, local people are invited to have their say in what they think needs to happen in Laois. A series of public consultations will be held around the county over the coming weeks. Interested parties are also invited to prepare written submissions. We would welcome your views and hope you can take the time to complete the questions below.

This submission can also be submitted electronically via the [following link](#):

If you wish to submit any additional documents or material with your submission then please email to Laois Partnership Co. at info@laoispartnership.ie with the subject title "Laois LDS".

Alternatively, please post to: Laois Partnership Co., Block 2, County Hall, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.

The closing date for responses will be Monday 7th Sept, 2015.

If you have any queries on the submission process then please do not hesitate to contact Laois Partnership at 057 8661900. Further information available at the [following link](#)

ALL RESPONSES WILL BE TREATED CONFIDENTIALLY

Name

Signed:

Address

Organisation/ Enterprise (if relevant)

Phone:

Email:





What are the Current and/or Future Growth Opportunities that can support development in your community/ business sector and in County Laois?

What are the Current and/or Future Growth Challenges & Constraints facing your community/ business sector and County Laois?



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**What role can the Laois Partnership Co. play, through the LEADER programme, in supporting development in your community, business and in County Laois over the coming 5 – 10 years?
*E.g. what kind of focused training/ facilitated community development?***

What role would you as an individual stakeholder/group play in supporting this development?



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Have you a specific project idea that you feel would suit LEADER funding. If so, please provide some brief details?



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