

## Job Description

<b>Job Title</b>	Rural Development Officer
<b>Reporting to</b>	Rural Development Programmes Manager
<b>Responsible to</b>	CEO of Laois Partnership Company and the voluntary Board of Directors
<b>About us</b>	<p>Laois Partnership Company is the local development company for County Laois. We deliver a number of state and EU funded programmes that promote social inclusion, community and rural development, and to support employment creation and enterprise development. We provide a range of supports and services that aim to make Laois a better place to live, where people can prosper and achieve their full potential.</p> <p>At present the company delivers a number of funded programmes such as SICAP and LEADER, via the Department of Rural and Community Development; a CE scheme for community childcare services in Laois and a TUS work scheme for County Laois, via the Department of Social Protection as well as a Social Prescribing service funded via the HSE. We also run a childcare service, and a community services programme for elderly people, with funding via POBAL. Other programmes available within the service include a New Arrivals support service; rural development programmes such as Rural Walks Scheme and Rural Social Scheme.</p> <p>A key function of the organisation is to identify gaps in services and supports, particularly to those most disadvantaged, with a view to obtaining suitable funding streams to develop evidence-based programmes of support.</p>
<b>Purpose of the post</b>	<p>This position will involve working within the new LEADER 2023-2027 programme. The LEADER Programme supports the development of Ireland's rural areas and the rural development officer will be tasked with actively engaging and directing this local development through community led approaches in Co Laois. The Rural Development Officer's work will be guided by the Rural Development Programmes Manager and the themes, sub-themes and actions outlined in the 2023-2027 LEADER Local Development Strategy for County Laois.</p> <p>The role of Rural Development Officer requires a strong innovative focus with the ability to initiate new ideas, support communities to identify their needs and to assist in the development of project ideas.</p>
<b>Duties and Responsibilities</b>	<p><b>Programme Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Become familiar with the local development strategy for Co Laois and identify opportunities to animate and implement same.</li> <li>• Seeking out and assisting projects relevant to the Rural Development-LEADER Programme and the Laois local development strategy.</li> <li>• Work with project promoters (individuals, communities and enterprises) to build their capacity to participate in the Rural Development Programme and access available funding.</li> <li>• Working to stimulate local innovation in community development projects – assisting the development of new, or improved solutions to local needs.</li> </ul>

- Responding to queries concerning project ideas, recording details of same and providing information and follow-up, supporting individuals, enterprises and community & voluntary groups through the application process, including procurement etc.
- Ensuring that LEADER project promoters are fully aware of the requirements of the programme.
- Undertaking the preparation of projects for evaluation and presentation of projects to the independent Evaluation Committee and the LAG (Local Action Group).
- Working with project promoters post LEADER-approval to ensure successful completion of projects in a timely manner.
- Maintain all LEADER project files and ensure that all paperwork and administrative checks are complete as required under the operating rules of the programme and prepare for inspections as required.
- Liaise with a range of agencies to ensure integrated support for projects and to avoid duplication.
- To identify training opportunities required that may be delivered within the remit of the Local Development Strategy.
- Conduct research into relevant areas which will animate the region further.

#### **Communication and Teamwork**

- Develop effective working relationships with a range of stakeholders.
- Ability to advise, motivate and support individuals, enterprises and community groups.
- Be able to provide both written and verbal information in a confident, concise manner.
- Prepare reports for relevant committees, CEO, Board etc., as requested.
- Maintain an information service for individuals and groups and advise and keep them up to date with relevant issues, supports available etc.
- Work as part of the RDP team and be a flexible team player across the wider team of LPC.

#### **General Duties**

- To always comply with Laois Partnership policies and procedures.
- To work in a manner which positively promotes the aims, objectives, and values of the organisation.
- To actively participate in regular support meetings with the Rural Development Programmes Manager.
- To actively participate in service review meetings and contribute to organisational development, upholding a culture of integrity, equality, transparency, and quality service provision.
- Undertake any duties consistent with the post as may be reasonably requested by the Rural Development Programmes Manager, the CEO and the Board.

Please be advised that this is not an exhaustive list of duties for the role and changes may occur. This role is a developmental role and will require flexibility and adaption to new and changing situations on an ongoing basis.

Eligibility Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Third level qualification in Rural or Community development or relevant field</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project management qualification</li> </ul>
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least two years' paid experience in rural development or a related field</li> <li>• Good knowledge and understanding of rural development</li> <li>• Good understanding of rural development policy, tools and approaches</li> <li>• Ability to support community and voluntary groups in needs analysis/project development</li> <li>• Experience in stimulating, facilitating, and supporting local innovation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of delivering a LEADER programme or similar</li> <li>• Experience of using a CRM system</li> <li>• Experience of working in a target-based environment and meeting strict guidelines</li> </ul>
Skills and competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent communication skills</li> <li>• Effective teamwork skills</li> <li>• Excellent attention to detail in maintaining project files, documentation and records.</li> <li>• Strong monitoring and evaluation skills</li> <li>• Strong solution focused skills</li> <li>• Strong organisational skills</li> <li>• Ability to manage varied and busy workload effectively</li> <li>• Displays the ability to respond constructively to feedback, listens carefully and presents themselves professionally</li> <li>• Very good ICT and admin skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of presenting reports to internal and external stakeholders</li> <li>• Project Management experience</li> <li>• Strong organisational skills and ability to manage a complex workload</li> </ul>
Other requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good team player</li> <li>• Self-awareness and willingness to learn</li> <li>• Ability to use initiative.</li> <li>• Positive attitude with a focus on continuous improvement</li> <li>• Full driving license and access to car</li> </ul>	
Terms and Conditions	<p><b>Contract:</b> indefinite duration, subject to ongoing funding</p> <p><b>Hours:</b> 35 hrs/week</p> <p><b>Annual Leave:</b> 24days per annum</p> <p><b>Salary:</b> €40,854 - €54,210, commensurate with experience</p> <p><b>Other:</b> Access to Employee Assistance Programme; Death in Service benefit; paid sick leave policy</p> <p><b>Primary Location:</b> On-site at Laois Partnership Company Office in Portlaoise, Co. Laois. R32VY22.</p>	

	<p><b>Travel:</b> The role will involve some travel and evening work for which you must provide your own vehicle and travel expenses are paid as agreed.</p> <p>Satisfactory references will be sought prior to the successful candidate taking up the post.</p>
<b>How To apply</b>	<p>To apply, please send a letter of application, outlining why you believe you are suitable for this role, together with your Curriculum Vitae. Please submit this, via email, marked <b>RDP officer</b> to <a href="mailto:info@laoispartnership.ie">info@laoispartnership.ie</a></p> <p>Closing date for receipt of applications is <b>4.00pm on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2024</b></p> <p>No late applications will be accepted. Informal enquiries should be directed to <a href="mailto:info@laoispartnership.ie">info@laoispartnership.ie</a></p> <p>Canvassing will disqualify.</p>

**Laonis Partnership Company is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of gender, age, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, disability or membership of the travelling community.**