

Outline of LEADER 2014-2020 Sub-Regional Fund Allocation

Context

- The LEADER element of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 will provide €250 million in financial resources to address poverty reduction, social inclusion and economic development of rural areas over the 2014-2020 programme period.
- LEADER is a community led approach to the delivery of rural development interventions that is supported by a Local Development Strategy (LDS) and implemented by interested groups of people at a local level called Local Action Groups (LAGs).
- Ireland is reconfiguring the way in which local and rural development interventions are implemented in sub-regional areas. This is in line with Government policy to ensure that local government is positioned to support the effective and efficient delivery of local and rural development interventions. In this context the overall programme complement is being allocated to sub-regional areas based on administrative or county boundaries in the main.
- There are two exceptions, Dublin and Cork.
- There are significant urban populations in the Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal and South Dublin County Council areas. Rural communities can be found in each of these administrative areas, but as these areas are relatively small and contained within one geographical county, they are being considered as one sub-regional area for the purposes of LEADER.
- In view of the size of the Cork County Council area (excluding the city) and that there are three administrative areas within the County there will be three sub-regional areas for County Cork for the purposes of LEADER.

- This will mean **28 sub-regional areas** in total in Ireland for LEADER purposes for the 2014 – 2020 programme.
- The EU regulatory framework governing the programme requires each EU Member State to conduct an open and transparent selection process to select both the Local Development Strategies and the Local Action Group for each sub-regional area. Ireland will conduct a two stage process the first stage of which will be an Expressions of Interest (EOI) stage which will be launched shortly.
- Entities successful in the first stage of the process will be invited and supported in Stage 2 of the process to design a Local Development Strategy for their area. Local Development Strategies that reach the required standard will then be given an allocation from the overall allocation for their county, to support the implementation of the successful strategy. Given that each LDS will receive a minimum allocation there is a limit to the financial resources available to each county it may not be possible to fund all LDSs submitted. The final decisions regarding the selection of strategies will rest with the Selection Committee established for this purpose.
- Article 33 (2) of EU Regulation 1303/2013 states that it is the responsibility of the Member State to “*define criteria for the selection of community led local development strategies*”.
- In this context the Irish Government decided to determine county allocations in advance of beginning the first stage of the selection process. This will allow any entity that wishes to make an application to deliver the LEADER elements of the RDP to tailor their strategy for their area accordingly. Government believes that this process will support the design and development of more robust and implementable strategies.

- While each individual county has been given a financial allocation it is the outcome of the Local Development Strategy (LDS) selection process that will determine the funding actually given to any individual LDS and this will be determined largely by the quality of the strategy presented for assessment. The fact that interested entities are aware of the level of financial resources available will also serve to improve the quality of the strategy making it more realistic and based on the actual resources available.
- The process for the selection of Local Development Strategies will be open and transparent within the sub-regional areas described and the timelines and support available for all interested parties will be detailed at Stage one of the selection process. The LDS selection process has been detailed in the revised draft RDP which has been submitted to the European Commission and the negotiations at European level to finalise the draft are now at an advanced stage.

Methodology for determining Sub-Regional Allocations.

- The Programme complement/allocation of €250 million will be implemented in the following way;

Table 1	Indicative Allocation
Overall Fund	€250m
Cooperation Projects*	€10m
Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine Artisan Foods Initiative	€15m
Reserve/REDZ Initiative	€5m
Project/Admin: To be divided between 28 Sub-Regional areas	€220m

*Projects where two or more LAGS work together, these projects can be national or international with the 2014-2020 programme placing a particular emphasis on Irish cross border cooperation.

- In this context the allocations to the 26 individual counties announced on the 26th March 2015 were determined using the following three objective criteria;
 1. Each Sub-Regional area was given a **minimum allocation** of €3 million to ensure that each county received a viable allocation in line with European Commission guidelines. Cork was allocated €6 million as a minimum in order to ensure a viable allocation to each of the three municipal districts. The fact that the population in Cork, outside the city, is almost twice that of any other county and more than three times many, was also taken into consideration. These minimum allocations total €81 million euro.
 2. A measure of **population density** (county population divided by km²) was used to distribute one half of the remaining fund (€69.5m). An 'average amount' based on 26 counties was calculated. Each county's population density was

then compared to the average population density for the country. For those counties where the density was above or below average the average amount was adjusted upwards (below average) or downwards (above average) based on the percentage deviation from the average to determine an allocation to each county.

It should be noted that the percentage adjustment done on a banded basis i.e. deviation + or – 0 to 9% there was no adjustment, deviation + or – 10 to 19% there was an adjustment of + or – 10% and so on. It should also be noted that the adjustments were capped at + or - 40% to reduce the impact of extremes therefore any areas with population densities of + or – more than 40% above or below the average were only adjusted by + or - 40%. This methodology was used in order to ensure that the fund was weighted towards areas with lower population densities as a proxy for rurality.

3. The second half of the remaining fund (€69.5m) was allocated to each county using a **Resource Allocation Model (RAM)**. The model was developed by Turtz Haase using information from the 2011 census and the Trutz Haase deprivation index as a measure of deprivation. The underlying variables of the model include consideration of demographic decline, social class deprivation and Labour Market Deprivation. The model also used CSO area classification to measure the urban-rural spectrum.

The calculations done using this model were weighted towards rural areas and considered areas with low and medium deprivation.

LEADER 2014-2020 Allocations

- The final allocations for each county determined using the methodology outlined above can be seen in Table 2. It should be noted that for the purposes of these calculations Co Cork was considered as one unit. The allocation for Co Cork outlined below will be further sub-divided into 3 to mirror the 3 administrative areas of North Cork, South Cork and West Cork.

Table 1: LEADER Allocations 2014-2020	
Sub Regional Area	Programme Allocation
Rural Dublin	€6,370,438.43
Kildare	€5,261,600.01
Meath	€6,903,123.57
Wicklow	€6,336,549.00
Carlow	€6,416,803.43
Kilkenny	€7,791,572.91
Wexford	€9,840,140.56
Tipperary	€10,103,443.28
County Waterford	€7,522,796.18
County Cork	€13,938,823.22
Kerry	€10,219,868.29
Clare	€8,920,224.65
County Limerick	€9,276,593.96
County Galway	€12,195,883.61
Mayo	€11,121,431.88
Roscommon	€8,852,659.22
Louth	€6,101,862.01
Leitrim	€5,998,474.74
Sligo	€7,655,647.81
Cavan	€8,522,285.84
Donegal	€12,913,877.86
Monaghan	€7,592,719.51
Laois	€7,124,586.86
Longford	€7,597,623.07
Offaly	€8,036,763.90
Westmeath	€7,384,206.22
Total	€220,000,000.00

