



Louth Leader Partnership
Ceannaire Comhpháirtíochta Lú
Building Community & Enterprise



Louth Local Community Development Committee



County Louth Local Development Strategy

August 2016



Comhshaoil, Pobal agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Community and Local Government

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

Contents

<p>Glossary of Terms 4</p> <p>1 The Local Action Group 5</p> <p>1.1 Legal Status 5</p> <p>1.1.1 LAG 5</p> <p>1.1.2 Implementer 5</p> <p>1.2 LAG Composition 5</p> <p>1.2.1 LAG Members' Experience 7</p> <p>1.2.2 Rotation 8</p> <p>1.2.3 Gender Equality 8</p> <p>1.3 Implementer Composition 9</p> <p>1.3.1 Implementer Experience 10</p> <p>1.4 Roles and Responsibilities 11</p> <p>1.4.1 LAG Decision-Making Processes 11</p> <p>1.4.2 Lead Financial Partner 11</p> <p>1.4.3 Implementer Decision-Making Processes 12</p> <p>1.4.4 Contractual Arrangements 12</p> <p>1.4.5 Payment Functions 12</p> <p>1.4.6 Control Functions: Administrative Checks 12</p> <p>1.4.7 Running Costs and Animation 12</p> <p>1.4.8 Principles of Partnership Approach 13</p> <p>1.4.9 Governance Standards 13</p> <p>1.5 Financial Management 14</p> <p>1.5.1 Management Overview 14</p> <p>1.5.2 Control Overview 14</p> <p>1.5.3 Financial Oversight 14</p> <p>1.5.4 Implementation Oversight 14</p> <p>1.5.5 Public Procurement 15</p> <p>1.6 LEADER Programme Staffing 15</p> <p>1.7 Project Selection Procedures 15</p> <p>1.7.1 Evaluation Committee 15</p> <p>1.8 Other Operational Responsibilities 16</p> <p>1.8.1 The Implementer 16</p> <p>1.8.2 The LAG 16</p> <p>1.8.3 Project Selection 16</p> <p>1.8.4 Letter of Offer, Project Implementation and Payment 17</p> <p>1.8.5 Summary High-Level Process Flow 18</p> <p>1.9 Relevant Experience 18</p> <p>2 LDS Area Profile 19</p> <p>2.1 Area Selection 22</p> <p>2.1.1 Population 22</p> <p>2.1.2 Population by Age 23</p> <p>2.1.3 Marital Status and Lone Parents 23</p> <p>2.1.4 Household Structure 23</p> <p>2.1.6 Languages 24</p> <p>2.1.7 Education 24</p> <p>2.1.8 Migration and Nationalities 24</p> <p>2.1.9 Travel To Work 24</p> <p>2.1.10 Disability and Carers 24</p> <p>2.1.11 Housing, Internet and Car Ownership 25</p> <p>2.1.12 General Health 26</p> <p>2.1.13 Disadvantage 26</p> <p>2.1.14 Crime 27</p> <p>2.2 Socio-Economic Profile 27</p> <p>2.2.1 Employment 28</p> <p>2.2.2 Labour Force 28</p> <p>2.2.3 Unemployment 29</p> <p>2.2.4 Live Register 29</p> <p>2.2.5 Social Class 30</p> <p>2.3 Key Economic Sectors 30</p> <p>2.3.1 Agriculture Industry 32</p> <p>2.3.2 Foreign Direct Investment 34</p> <p>2.3.3 Industry 35</p>	<p>2.3.4 Construction Industry 35</p> <p>2.3.5 Retail Industry 36</p> <p>2.3.6 Tourism Industry 36</p> <p>2.4 Key Services and Programmes 36</p> <p>2.4.1 Economic Service Provision 36</p> <p>2.4.2 Social Service Provision 37</p> <p>2.4.3 Cultural Service Providers 37</p> <p>2.4.4 Environment and Conservation Service Providers 37</p> <p>2.5 Area Needs Analysis 38</p> <p>2.5.1 Demographic Profile Headlines 38</p> <p>2.5.2 Community Profile Headlines 38</p> <p>2.5.3 Economic Profile Headlines 39</p> <p>2.5.4 Sustainable Transport 40</p> <p>2.5.5 Education 40</p> <p>2.5.6 Environment 41</p> <p>2.5.7 Current Economic Position 41</p> <p>3 Participative Planning 43</p> <p>3.1 Consultation Process 43</p> <p>3.1.1 Community Consultation Stage 43</p> <p>3.1.2 Engagement with Hard-to-Reach Groups 43</p> <p>3.2 SWOT Analysis 44</p> <p>3.3 Local Development Strategy Priorities 45</p> <p>3.3.1 Agreed LDS Themes and Objectives 47</p> <p>4 LDS Action Plan 49</p> <p>4.1 Process for Action Plan Development 49</p> <p>4.2 RDP Vision, Themes and Sub-Themes 49</p> <p>4.3 Plan Structure 50</p> <p>4.3.1 Louth LDS Roadmap 51</p> <p>4.4 Action Framework 52</p> <p>4.4.1 Theme 1: Economic, Enterprise & Job Creation 52</p> <p>4.4.2 Theme 2: Social Inclusion 92</p> <p>4.4.3 Theme 3: Rural Environment 106</p> <p>4.5 Strategic Action Plan Summary 124</p> <p>4.5.1 LEADER Allocation by Theme 124</p> <p>4.5.2 LEADER Allocation by Sub-Theme 124</p> <p>5 Strategic Integration 125</p> <p>5.1 Cross-Cutting Objectives 125</p> <p>5.1.1 Innovation 125</p> <p>5.1.2 Environment 125</p> <p>5.1.3 Climate Change 126</p> <p>5.1.4 Animation of Measures: Cross-Cutting Themes 127</p> <p>5.1.5 Monitoring of Progress 127</p> <p>5.2 Policy Context 127</p> <p>5.2.1 International Level 127</p> <p>5.2.2 National Policy Level 128</p> <p>5.2.3 Regional Policy Level 130</p> <p>6 Networking and Co-operation 131</p> <p>6.1 Networking 131</p> <p>6.2 Networking Structures 131</p> <p>6.2.1 Regional Networking 132</p> <p>6.2.2 Mechanisms 132</p> <p>6.2.3 Policy Influence 132</p> <p>6.3 Co-operation 134</p> <p>6.3.1 LAG 134</p> <p>7 Monitoring and Review 136</p> <p>7.1 Project Level Monitoring 136</p> <p>7.1.1 Application Stage 136</p> <p>7.1.2 LAG Assessment of Application 136</p> <p>7.1.3 Reporting on Outputs and Outcomes 136</p>
---	---

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

7.2	Annual Planning and Reporting	137
7.3	LEADER Monitoring Framework.....	138
7.3.1	Monitoring Framework Theme 1.....	139
7.3.2	Monitoring Framework Theme 2.....	141
7.3.3	Monitoring Framework Theme 3.....	143
7.4	Monitoring and Review Process	143
7.5	Evaluation	144
7.6	Audit and Inspections	144
7.7	Data Protection	145
8	Financial Plan.....	146
9	Additional Information	147
9.1	LEADER Programme Outcomes 2007-13	147
10	Form of Declaration.....	148
11	Appendices	149
11.1	Appendix: Governance Model	149
11.1.1	Louth LEADER Partnership.....	149
11.1.2	Principles of the Partnership Approach	149
11.1.3	LAG Decision-Making Processes.....	149
11.1.4	Implementer Decision-Making Processes	150
11.1.5	LAG Governing Document	150
11.1.6	Roles and Responsibilities: LAG Members	150
11.1.7	Operational Procedures.....	151
11.1.8	Job Descriptions.....	152
11.1.9	Staff Training and Skilling.....	153
11.1.10	Professional Experience and Remuneration	153
11.2	Appendix: LDS Boundary Area.....	155
11.3	Appendix: Consultation Profile	157
11.4	Appendix: Consultation Feedback.....	158
11.4.1	Theme 1.1: Rural Tourism.....	158
11.4.2	Theme 1.2: Enterprise Development.....	160
11.4.3	Theme 1.3: Rural Towns and Villages.....	161
11.4.4	Theme 1.4: Broadband.....	162
11.4.5	Theme 2.1: Basic Services for Hard to Reach Communities	163
11.4.6	Theme 2.2: Rural Youth	163
11.4.7	Theme 3.1: Water Resources.....	164
11.4.8	Theme 3.2: Bio-Diversity	164
11.4.9	Theme 3.3: Renewable Energy.....	165
11.5	Appendix: Financial Plan	167
11.6	Appendix: LDS Expressions of Interest.....	171
11.7	Appendix: Declaration and Disclaimer.....	174

Tables

Table 1	Local Action Group/LCDC Composition.....	6
Table 2	LAG Members' Experience	7
Table 3	Louth LEADER Partnership Board.....	10
Table 4	Governance Standards: LAG	13
Table 5	Implementation Staff	15
Table 6	Households by Composition	24
Table 7	Focus of Disadvantage by SAP 2011	26
Table 8	Recorded Crime Offences 2014-2015	27
Table 9	Co. Louth Workforce Profile 2011	28
Table 10	Live Register Flows March 2015.....	29
Table 11	Live Register: Skill Profile Co. Louth 2015.....	30
Table 12	Comparative Economic Strengths of Co. Louth.....	31
Table 13	Regional Agriculture Sectoral Trends 2015-2020	33
Table 14	Field Vegetable Production 2008.....	34
Table 15	Summary Economic Position	41
Table 16	Key Public Consultation Meetings.....	43
Table 17	SWOT Analysis	45

Table 18	Identified Overarching Priorities.....	46
Table 19	Agreed LDS Themes and Objectives.....	48
Table 20	LEADER Allocation by Theme	124
Table 21	LEADER Allocation by Sub-Theme	124
Table 22	Local Policy Influencing Structures	132
Table 23	National Policy Influencing Structures	133
Table 24	European Policy Influencing Structures	133
Table 25	Theme 1.1 Monitoring Framework	139
Table 26	Theme 1.2 Monitoring Framework	139
Table 27	Theme 1.3 Monitoring Framework	140
Table 28	Theme 1.4 Monitoring Framework	140
Table 29	Theme 2.1 Monitoring Framework	141
Table 30	Theme 2.2 Monitoring Framework	142
Table 31	Theme 3.1 – 3.3 Monitoring Framework	143
Table 32	Headline Outcomes LEADER 2007-2013	147
Table 33	Governance Standards: LAG	149
Table 34	Governance Standards: Implementer	150
Table 35	Professional Experience and Remuneration.....	153
Table 36	Electoral Areas and Divisions	155
Table 37	Community Consultation Profile.....	157
Table 38	Visitor Services Consultation Feedback.....	158
Table 39	History and Heritage Consultation Feedback.....	159
Table 40	Activities Consultation Feedback	159
Table 41	Technology Consultation Feedback.....	159
Table 42	Enterprise Development Consultation Feedback.....	160
Table 43	Rural Towns and Villages Consultation Feedback.....	162
Table 44	Broadband Consultation Feedback.....	162
Table 45	Basic Services Consultation Feedback.....	163
Table 46	Rural Youth Consultation Feedback	163
Table 47	Water Resources Consultation Feedback.....	164
Table 48	Bio-Diversity Consultation Feedback	165
Table 49	Renewable Energy Consultation Feedback	165
Table 50	Other Consultation Feedback	166
Table 51	Implementation of LDS Operations/Projects.....	167
Table 52	Administration and Animation Costs.....	168
Table 53	Staffing Costs.....	169
Table 54	Summary.....	170
Table 55	Expressions of Interest.....	171

Maps

Map 1	LDS Area.....	19
Map 2	Co. Louth Topographical.....	20
Map 3	Co. Louth Implementation Area	156

Figures

Figure 1	Co. Louth LAG	7
Figure 2	Implementer Composition	9
Figure 3	Project Selection Process	16
Figure 4	Letter of Offer, Project Implementation and Payment..	17
Figure 5	Summary High-Level Project Flow.....	18
Figure 6	Co. Louth Occupation Profile 2011.....	28
Figure 7	Employment by Sector 2011.....	29
Figure 8	Social Class Composition	30
Figure 9	Family Farms by Farm Holder Age 2010	32
Figure 10	Farm Diversification 2011	33
Figure 11	LDS Priorities Development Process.....	45
Figure 12	Louth LDS Roadmap	51
Figure 13	County Louth LAG Evaluation Model.....	144

Glossary of Terms

Abbreviation/Term	Definition
BTWEA	Back to Work Enterprise Allowance
CEDRA	Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas
CLLD	Community-Led Local Development
CPR	Common Provisions Regulation (EU Regulation 1303/2014)
CRO	Companies Registration Office
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CSP	Community Services Programme
DECLG	The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
ED	Electoral Division
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
LAG	Local Action Group
LCC	Louth County Council
LCDC	Local Community Development Committee
LDS	Local Development Strategy
LEADER	Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale Links between Actions for the Development of the Rural Economy
LECP	Local Economic and Community Plan
LEO	Local Enterprise Office
LLP	Louth LEADER Partnership
LMETB	Louth and Meath Education and Training Board
MA	Managing Authority for the entire RDP (Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine)
NEETs	Young People who are Not in Employment, Education or Training
Promoter	Promoter of a project (beneficiary of funding)
RAPID	Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development (<i>now closed</i>)
RDP	Rural Development Programme (also known as Operational Programme)
REDZ	Rural Economic Development Zones
RSS	Rural Social Scheme
RTP	Rural Transport Programme
SA	Small Area
SICAP	Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
TCC	Tax Clearance Certificate

The design and operation of Louth Local Development Strategy will be in full compliance with the requirements of the **LEADER Operating Rules: Rural Development Programme Ireland**

1 The Local Action Group

Legal Name: Louth Local Community Development Committee
Contact: Ms. Mary Deery, Chief Officer, Louth Local Community Development Committee,
Louth County Council,
Social and Community Development Section,
County Hall,
Millennium Centre,
Dundalk.
A91 KFW6
Telephone: 1890 202 303
E-mail: info@louthcoco.ie
Website: www.louthcoco.ie

Implementing Body

Legal Name: Louth LEADER Partnership Limited
Contact: Ms. Mary-Ann McGlynn, Chief Executive Officer,
Louth Leader Partnership,
Bridge Street,
Ardee,
Co. Louth.
A92 X750
Telephone: 041 685 7374
E-mail: mary-ann.mcglynn@louthleaderpartnership.ie
Website: www.louthleaderpartnership.ie

1.1 Legal Status

1.1.1 LAG

Louth Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) was established in 2014 for a three-year term under the provision of Part 6 of the Local Government Reform Act. The LCDC comprises of public and private sector members, including local authority members and officials; State agencies; private sector representatives; and, local and community development representatives. Working in partnership, Louth LCDC will prepare and implement the community elements of the 6-year Local Economic and Community Plan, and will coordinate generally the local and community development activity to reduce overlap, avoid duplication and improve the targeting of resources.

1.1.2 Implementer

Louth LEADER Partnership (LLP) is a Company Limited by Guarantee that was established in 1991 to address rural decline in Co. Louth by mobilising the local area to access appropriate EU and State funds in the development of physical and human capital of the area. LLP will operate as the implementer for the LCDC in respect of the delivery of the prospective RDP/LEADER Programme.

1.2 LAG Composition

In conformity with Article 32 of EU Regulation 1303/2013, Louth LCDC will operate in Co. Louth as a Committee *'composed of representatives of public and private local socio-economic interests, in which at the decision making level neither public authorities....nor any single interest group represents more than 49% of the voting rights.'*

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

Membership of the LCDC has been fixed by statutory instrument. The current composition is shown below.

Every meeting of the LCDC where decisions are approved is required to: -

- ❑ Maintain a quorum with a ratio of 51% Community and Social Partner representation, and 49% statutory representation; *and*
- ❑ Operate in line with the *Best Practice* requirements underpinning the establishment of the LCDC, EU, and national rules and guidelines.

Table 1 - Local Action Group/LCDC Composition

Ref.	Name	Representing	Sector	Pillar
1	Cllr. Colm Markey (Chairperson)	Louth County Council	Public	Local Government
2	Cllr. Liam Reilly	Louth County Council	Public	Local Government
3	Cllr. Dolores Minogue	Louth County Council	Public	Local Government
4	Cllr. Pearse McGeough	Louth County Council	Public	Local Government
5	Joe McGuinness	Director of Service: Social and Community	Public	Local Government
6	Thomas McEvoy	Louth LEO	Public	Local Government
7	Anne Keely	Department of Social Protection	Public	State Agencies
8	Fiona Murphy	Health Service Executive	Public	State Agencies
9	Peter Kierans	Louth Meath ETB	Public	State Agencies
10	Breffni Martin	Environment	Private	Environment
11	Eddie Phelan	Community and Voluntary	Private	Local and Community Development
12	Marian Sloane	Community and Voluntary	Private	Local and Community Development
13	Anthony McArdle	Social Inclusion	Private	Local and Community Development
14	Michael Gaynor	Social Inclusion	Private	Local and Community Development
15	Kevin Moran	Social Inclusion	Private	Local and Community Development
16	John Cotterell	Chamber of Commerce, Drogheda	Private	Business
17	Frank O'Brien	ICTU	Private	Social Partners
18	Breda Tuite	Farming Sector	Private	Agriculture
19	Mary Ann McGlynn	Louth LEADER Partnership	Private	Louth LEADER Partnership

Gender balance: 68% of the LCDC membership is male, and 32% are female.

Community and Social sector members constitute 52% of the membership of the LCDC, whilst 48% are statutory sector.

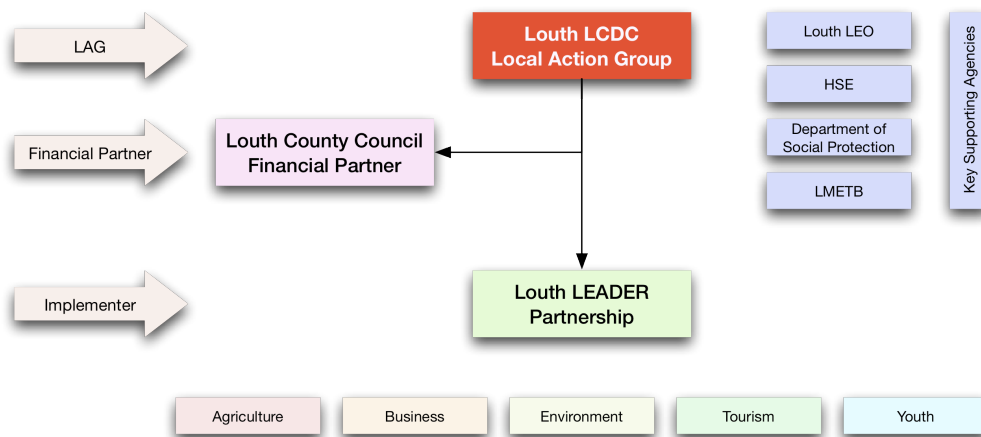
Every meeting of the LAG where decisions are approved will be required to maintain a quorum with a ratio of a minimum 51% Community and Social Partner representation, and 49% statutory representation.

The LAG members represent a wide range of interested parties, community representatives, elected officials and statutory bodies with exceptional skills and experience locally, while many have direct experience within a LAG in the past. These inherent skills and the previous experience of delivering LEADER programmes, including management of programme funding, managing LEADER development staff, project selection, project approval and approval of payments, are essential to the successful delivery of the LEADER programme 2014-2020 in the Co. Louth. Members of the Louth LAG have served previously on a LAG Board, and their experience in this specialised area will support an efficient, innovative and accurate implementation of the programme.

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

The LAG has the support of the implementing partner, representing 25 years of experience in the delivery of LEADER I, LEADER II, LEADER+ and the Rural Development Programme 2007-2017. Skills and experience exist within the LAG at all levels, including the LDC Board of management, CEO, co-coordinators, administrators, financial management and project development. The staff, through direct programme delivery, management and completion, have the necessary skills and experience required to execute all aspects of programme delivery including animation, capacity building, project application, IT systems management, file management, preparing project evaluation reports, presenting projects to the LAG for approval, liaising with the managing authority, monitoring and evaluation, and financial reporting.

Figure 1 – Co. Louth LAG



1.2.1 LAG Members' Experience

Table 2 – LAG Members' Experience

Ref.	Name	Representing	Experience
1	Cllr. Colm Markey (Chairperson)	Louth County Council	Chairperson of the Co. Louth LCDC charged with oversight of SICAP. Convenor of Co. Louth PPN
2	Cllr. Liam Reilly	Louth County Council	Experienced in a wide range of community programmes / initiatives
3	Cllr. Dolores Minogue	Louth County Council	Experienced in a wide range of community programmes / initiatives
4	Cllr. Pearse McGeough	Louth County Council	Experienced in a wide range of community programmes / initiatives
5	Mary Deery <i>Joe McGuinness (Acting)</i>	Director of Service: Social and Community	Experienced in a wide range of community programmes / initiatives
6	Thomas McEvoy	Louth LEO	Funding application evaluation experience through the LEO evaluation process Significant experience in managing public funding programmes to support enterprise
7	Anne Keely	Department of Social Protection	Responsibility for large, externally dispensed budget lines, requiring budgetary and performance management Familiarity with contracts for services e.g. Local Employment Services and Jobs Club structures, as well as through Supported Employment (employability) activities

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Ref.	Name	Representing	Experience
8	Fiona Murphy	Health Service Executive	Broad experience of public tendering and managing significant public budgets.
9	Peter Kierans	Louth Meath ETB	Broad experience of public tendering and managing significant public budgets.
10	Breffni Martin	Environment	Environmental representative Experience in community and environmental initiatives
11	Eddie Phelan	Community and Voluntary	Community Activist
12	Marian Sloane	Community and Voluntary	Social Support Interventions.
13	Anthony McArdle	Social Inclusion	
14	Michael Gaynor	Social Inclusion	President, Dundalk Chamber
15	Kevin Moran	Social Inclusion	Youth Support Services Public Participation Network
16	John Cotterell	Chamber of Commerce, Drogheda	Experienced in a wide range of funding programmes and initiatives to support the business community.
17	Frank O'Brien	ICTU	Member of the Governing Body of DKIT. Chair of Louth Leader Partnership. Former member of the County Louth Development Board.
18	Breeda Tuite	Farming Sector	Farming representative. Experienced in a wide range of funding programmes and initiatives. Former member of Louth County Development Board.
19	Mary Ann McGlynn	Louth LEADER Partnership	Executive support to LEADER LAG and Evaluation Committee.

1.2.2 Rotation

In conformity with the *Guidelines for the Establishment and Operation of Local Community Development Committees*, the Chief Officer will ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for the rotation, every three-years, of representatives of the community and voluntary social inclusion, and environmental interests, together with other local community and social partner interests. There is no requirement to rotate or renew the public sector or to rotate local authority members.

The Co. Louth Public Participation Network (PPN) will serve as a *bottom-up* approach for appointment of community and voluntary sector representatives.

1.2.3 Gender Equality

Louth LCDC was constituted in 2014 through a process of open invitation to the respective nominating bodies. The LCDC endeavoured to achieve the Private/State balance of representation on the Committee. It is noted that the nominating bodies were requested to be mindful of the need for gender balance; however, the open invitation process was not successful at addressing government policy on gender parity on decision-making where a minimum of 40% of the LCDC membership is to be female.

The LCDC recognises this shortcoming, and will address gender parity through the following five-step process: -

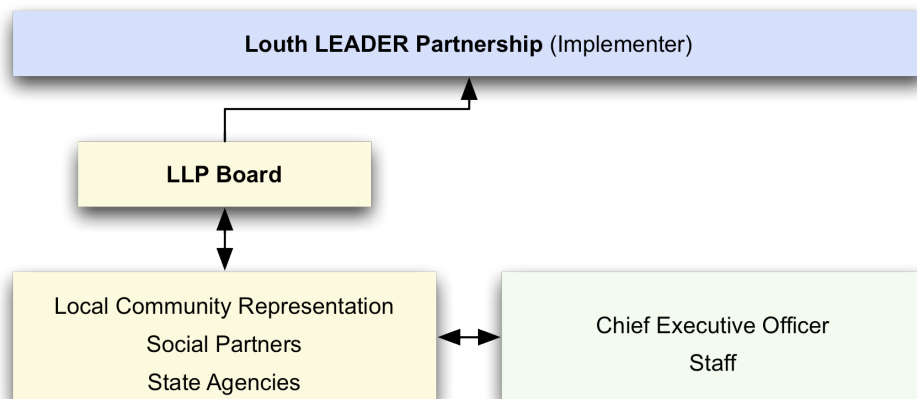
1. All nominating bodies will be appraised in writing by the Chairman of the LCDC that over the next 4 years the Committee is committed to attaining the national target of 40% female participation. To achieve this all nominating bodies will be requested to forward two nominees for consideration.

2. In association with the nominating bodies, as per Government recommendation under the 2013 Report, *‘Towards Gender Parity’*, the LCDC will offer both help and advice, and will endeavour through the Louth and Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB) to devise and implement a training package for potential female participants.
3. All nominating bodies will, in future, be asked to nominate two candidates, one male and one female, to Louth LCDC for any vacant position;
4. The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, with the technical support of the Chief Officer on behalf of Louth LCDC will recommend the candidate most appropriate to the requirements of the LCDC at the time of nomination. The nomination will then be considered and approved by Louth LCDC
5. With respect to the community and voluntary sector, Louth LCDC will request a *‘Talent Bank’*, to be formed within the Public Participation Network (PPN), and notify it of the need to identify appropriate female candidates for any relevant vacancy on the LCDC.

1.3 Implementer Composition

The structure of the implementer has evolved over the past two decades, and conforms with the requirements of all of the funding bodies and agencies within whom the organisations works in partnership.

Figure 2 – Implementer Composition



The Board of LLP is based on the consensus model that was developed in the early years of the Partnership process (1991-1995). This has brought together statutory services, social partners, community and voluntary sector activists and later, elected members, to collectively identify and address local needs. The Board currently has statutory sector representatives from LMETB, HSE, Solas, Teagasc, and Louth County Council. The social partner sector is represented by IFA and ICTU. Nominees represent the community and voluntary sector from the former Louth Community Forum and from the (former) Drogheda and Dundalk RAPID areas.

The Board meets monthly, and delivers SICAP, the former Rural Development Programme (LEADER), the Local Employment Services (LES) in Drogheda and Dundalk, the Jobclub in Dundalk, the TÚS Programme (with 194 participants based in 42 community projects countywide), the Rural Walks Scheme, the Rural Social Scheme, and more recently the ABC/Genesis programme.

Louth Leader Partnership Board of Directors consists of voluntary members from four sectors, as follows: -

1. Local Authority/Government;

2. Community and Voluntary;
3. Social Partners; *and*
4. Statutory Agencies.

The board is responsible for policy making and overseeing the implementation of the annual programme of work. They are also responsible for the effective governance of the company, including financial and legal considerations.

Table 3 – Louth LEADER Partnership Board

Representative	Representing
Frank O'Brien – (Chairperson)	Social Partner, representing ICTU
Martina Ralph	Statutory sector nominee, representing HSE
Ray Murphy	Statutory sector nominee
Maeve McKenna	Environmental Pillar
Fiona Oster	Statutory sector nominee, representing DKIT
John Roche	Social Partner nominee, representing IFA
Ide Lenihan	Community nominee (Older Peoples Forum, Women's Group, Minority Group)
Larry Magnier	Community nominee (Rural and Urban Residents Associations Forum)
Kevin Mulgrew	Community nominee (Dundalk RAPID Area Groups Forum)
Cllr. Finnan McCoy	Elected Member (Louth County Council)
Harry McCarthy	Community nominee (Louth Community and Voluntary Forum)
Benny Devlin	Community Nominee (Youth)
Niall O'Lamhna	Statutory Sector, representing Teagasc
Geraldine Lennon	Community Sector, representing PPN
Sadie Ward McDermott	Statutory Sector, representing Louth Meath ETB
Tim Mullins	Business Incentive District Scheme

1.3.1 Implementer Experience

Louth LEADER Partnership was established in January 2009 as part of the process of restructuring of the local development sector nationally. The process, referred to as cohesion, was aimed at merging the activities of Area Partnership and LEADER companies within one Local Development Company at county level.

The main purpose of Louth Leader Partnership is to promote support both the urban and rural communities, promote social inclusion, support enterprise development and employment creation, facilitate access to education, training and lifelong learning and assist community groups in identifying needs and developing local solutions.

The main objective of Louth LEADER Partnership is to promote, support, assist and engage in the following: -

- Social development;
- Enterprise development to facilitate rural regeneration; *and*
- Community development, designed to benefit and promote the welfare of local communities or to deal with the causes and consequences of social and economic disadvantage or poverty.

Two of the main programmes that are delivered by Louth LEADER Partnership are: -

- The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP); *and*

- ❑ The Rural Development Programme (LEADER).

They both have an important role in developing innovative responses to local problems, and in building local capabilities to address local needs and develop local resources and services.

Additionally, during the recent past Louth LEADER Partnership has been responsible for: -

- ❑ Local Employment Service Network (OBAIR);
- ❑ Rural Social Scheme (RSS);
- ❑ Rural Transport Programme;
- ❑ Start-Your-Own Business Programme; and
- ❑ TÚS.

1.4 Roles and Responsibilities

1.4.1 LAG Decision-Making Processes

Louth LCDC is the Local Action Group (LAG). Louth LCDC is a committee of the County Council. However, unlike the Corporate Policy Group (CPG) and Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs), the LCDC is independent from the local authority in the performance of its functions. This independence is provided for explicitly in sections 49A(2) and 128B(8) of the 2014 Act, which sets out the functions of the LCDC.

The role of the LAG will be to: -

- ❑ Set overall strategic direction and LDS priorities;
- ❑ Approve parameters for calls for proposals in accordance with priorities and objectives set out in the LDS;
- ❑ Give approval for project applications in accordance with Art. 34 (3) (f) of regulation 1303/2013;
- ❑ Monitor and review the performance of implementation partners, with reference to a service level agreement with the LAG;
- ❑ Monitor and review the performance of Louth County Council in its role as lead financial partner; *and*
- ❑ Monitor and review progress under the LDS on an ongoing basis and agree corrective action where required.

1.4.2 Lead Financial Partner

Louth County Council will be the Lead Financial Partner to the LAG. Accordingly, it will carry out the following administrative tasks: -

- ❑ Provide advance administration and animation funding to Louth LEADER Partnership;
- ❑ Approve the issuing of contracts following Article 48 Checks¹;
- ❑ Make payments to promoters on behalf of the LAG; *and*
- ❑ Request quarterly drawdown of monies from DECLG.

Should the DECLG delegate the Article 48 Checks to the LAG, Louth County Council will be responsible for these checks. These checks may be carried out in house by Louth County

¹ Commission Regulation (EU) No 65/2011 of 27th January 2011 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005, as regards the implementation of control procedures as well as cross-compliance in respect of rural development support measures – Article 28f: LEADER - The Member States shall implement an appropriate system for supervision of local action groups.

Council, or may be subcontracted to a competent provider. Article 48 Checks will be undertaken by DECLG on LAG 'in-house' projects.

1.4.3 Implementer Decision-Making Processes

The Implementer (LLP) will deliver the majority of project and animation related actions associated with the implementation of the LDS. Louth County Council, operating as the lead financial partner, will undertake actions related to the financial and administrative aspects of implementation.

Accordingly, LLP will carry out all work from issuing calls for proposals; managing application processes; implementing, managing and coordinating animation activity; developing funding proposals with project promoters; developing, managing and monitoring work with project promoters up to, and including its key function of facilitating formal evaluation of projects by an Evaluation Committee and then submitting project recommendations to the LCDC for approval.

1.4.4 Contractual Arrangements

The contract for the implementation of the LDS will be held by the Louth LCDC, which will sign the contract with DECLG. Louth LCDC will enter into agreements with Louth County Council and Louth Leader Partnership for carrying out their respective roles.

1.4.5 Payment Functions

DECLG will operate an arrears payment system for the LDS under which the Louth LCDC will issue payments to beneficiaries and claim reimbursement of these payments from DECLG on a quarterly basis (*to be finalised by DECLG*). This will require the Louth LCDC to have a Lead Financial Partner with the capacity to operate under an arrears payment system. Louth County Council will be the Lead Financial Partner.

In addition to managing the local authority Budget of almost €70m (2014), Louth County Council has very significant experience in managing budgets for large-scale capital projects, including grants for Roads, Housing, Library Services, Urban and Village Renewal Schemes, Water Services, Environmental Protection and Conservation Grants. The local authority manages income from other Government Departments and Agencies including Roads, Higher Education Grants, and Community Employment Schemes.

The local authority fully complies with both EU and national public procurement procedures.

1.4.6 Control Functions: Administrative Checks

If the DECLG delegates the Article 48 Administrative Checks to Louth LCDC these will be carried out by Louth County Council, or may be contracted to a competent service provider. The preparation of documentation and files for administrative checks will be the responsibility of LLP.

1.4.7 Running Costs and Animation

Article 35(1) of the Common Provisions Regulation provides that support for community-led local development shall cover, inter alia: -

- ❑ Running costs linked to the management of the implementation of the community-led local development strategy consisting of operating costs, personnel costs, training costs, costs linked to public relations, financial costs as well as the costs linked to monitoring and evaluating the strategy;
- ❑ Animation of the community-led local development (CLLD) strategy in order to facilitate exchange between stakeholders to provide information, to promote the strategy, and to support potential beneficiaries with a view to developing operations and preparing applications (support from the European Structural Investment Funds for CLLD shall also

cover costs of preparatory support, implementation of operations, and preparation and implementation of Louth LCDCs cooperation activities).

Article 35(2) provides that ‘support for running costs and animation shall not exceed 25% of the total public expenditure incurred within the CLLD Strategy.’ A minimum of 95% of the available running costs and animation budget will be allocated to LLP. The remaining 5% will be allocated towards other actions supporting the implementation of the LDS, as Louth LCDC determines appropriate. This will include work undertaken by Louth County Council in its capacity as Lead Financial Partner.

1.4.8 Principles of Partnership Approach

The arrangements will operate on the following basis: -

- ❑ LLP will discharge its role under a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Louth LCDC;
- ❑ LLP’s role will run for the duration of the LEADER Programme Period, subject to continued compliance with the requirements of the Managing Authority and as per the Service Level Agreement with Louth LCDC;
- ❑ Louth County Council will provide independent legal advice to the LCDC;
- ❑ The implementing role will be assigned to LLP for all project implementation elements of the programme. There will be no fragmentation of the programme delivery role among other Louth LCDC partners; *and*
- ❑ A fully electronic, on-line reporting and record maintenance system will support the administration of the programme.

1.4.9 Governance Standards

Table 4 - Governance Standards: LAG

Policies and Procedures	Louth LCDC operates under, and is fully compliant with, the policies and procedures of the Louth County Council. Where any variance exists within the LEADER rules and regulations, the latter will take precedence.
LEADER Rules and Regulations	Louth LCDC will adhere to the rules and regulations of the LEADER Programme, as required by DAFM, and DECLG. Each Louth LCDC member will be required to familiarise themselves with the rules and regulations of the LEADER Programme and to be aware of Departmental Circulars.
Conflict of Interest	Every Louth LCDC member must declare any potential conflicts of interest to the Committee. Subsequently, they must absent themselves from the element of any meeting at which conflicted subjects are dealt with. Where Louth County Council is co-financing a project, then all local authority executive and elected members must be absent from the element of the meeting at which discussion is undertaken and subsequent decisions are reached. The CEO of LLP is a member of the Louth LCDC. It follows, therefore, that he/she will observe the conflict of interest rules where the contract between LLP and Louth LCDC is being discussed, and also where any LLP internal projects are being discussed. Details of all conflicts of interest will be fully recorded in the minutes of each Louth LCDC meeting.
Governance Code	Louth LCDC will move towards the principles set out by the <i>Governance Code</i> ² . This details the roles, duties and responsibilities of all those who sit on boards and management committees of CVC organisations.

LLP will continue to operate under clear standards, providing staff and Board Members with detailed guidance in terms of policy and procedures to ensure a structured, balanced, transparent and focussed operation.

² *The Code of Good Practice for Community, Voluntary and Charitable (CVC) Organisations in Ireland*

1.5 Financial Management

1.5.1 Management Overview

Louth County Council will be the lead Financial Partner for Louth LCDC. LLP will be the implementer of the LEADER/RDP Programme on behalf of Louth LCDC.

It has been agreed that Louth LCDC will have financial responsibility for the Programme, but Louth County Council will operate through a Service Level Agreement to be responsible for the financial oversight and management of the LDS. LLP will prepare all the financial data for Louth LCDC. This will include the review and approval functions (or otherwise), and will include Article 48 Checks for all third-party applications.

All Article 48 checks relating to Louth LCDC, Louth County Council and LLP applications will be carried out by a department-approved external invigilator.

Financial Management Experience

Louth County Council has significant professional competence of managing and implementing programmes funded by the EU and by the State. It follows that the Financial Partner is familiar with the control and reporting requirements of various funding agencies, and all related regulation and legislation.

Louth County Council has extensive experience obtained from involvement in cross-border initiatives, including those of the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB). SEUPB is responsible for managing two EU structural funds programmes: PEACE III and INTERREG IVA - designed to enhance cross-border co-operation, promote reconciliation and create a more peaceful and prosperous society. The programmes operate in Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and, in the case of INTERREG IVA, Western Scotland.

1.5.2 Control Overview

The financial management controls to be implemented by the LAG, Louth LCDC, the Financial Partners, Louth County Council, and the implementer in relation to LEADER will be common to all three parties to the SLA and the Heads of Agreement.

1.5.3 Financial Oversight

The Financial Controller will provide direct financial support to Louth LCDC and Louth County Council on LEADER/RDP, and on the Article 48 Checks under the SLA/MOU. The Financial Controller will provide the following on a monthly basis to Louth LCDC and Louth County Council: -

- ❑ Update on LEADER Payments;
- ❑ Budget versus Actual Expenditure;
- ❑ Variances and Irregularities Report; *and*
- ❑ Article 48 Check Report.

The Chief Officer will circulate a copy of the RDP/LEADER Bank Statement³ to Louth LCDC on a monthly basis.

1.5.4 Implementation Oversight

The Implementer will provide the following implementation oversight: -

1. LLP will maintain the LEADER ICT system on a real-time basis;
2. All information inputted into the ICT system will be factual;

³ Or *electronic system equivalent*.

3. All of the Implementer’s actions under LEADER/RDP are to be in line with the Strategy;
4. Louth LCDC will have full view of the LEADER ICT system to verify compliance; *and*
5. All targets and indicators will be formally reviewed quarterly by the contracting parties, and negative variances will be addressed in the following quarter. Positive variances will be acknowledged.

1.5.5 Public Procurement

Louth LCDC will have the support of LLP and Louth County Council to ensure that Public Procurement is carried out in line with EU and national procurement guidelines with respect to: -

- Third party applicants to the LEADER/RDP Programme;
- Louth LCDC in its internal administration of the programme;
- All projects applied for by Louth County Council; *and*
- All projects and works to be undertaken by LLP that are supported by LEADER/RDP.

1.6 LEADER Programme Staffing

Louth LCDC does not employ any staff. Louth County Council operates the LCDC through the Chief Officer and Louth County Council staff. The implementer will continue to employ the staffing structure shown in the table below:

Table 5 – Implementation Staff

Chief Executive Officer	Mary Ann McGlynn
Programme Manager	Mary O’Neill
Project Officer	Tony McCready
Financial Administrator	Phyllis Louth
Clerical Administrator	Mavis Kelly

1.7 Project Selection Procedures

As operated under the previous programme, the Evaluation Committee will be totally independent of the decision-making body (LAG). This will facilitate a very clear and distinct segregation of duties: the Evaluation Committee will recommend, and the LAG will review and decide upon the investment. This operational arrangement provides a segregation of duties and will ensure transparency.

1.7.1 Evaluation Committee

The members of the Evaluation Committee have many years of experience in public administration, private enterprise, finance, tourism and voluntary community activities involving the elderly, and the less well off in society. The Evaluation Committee membership will include: -

- Louth County Council senior staff member with procurement experience and qualifications
- Louth County Council senior staff member from Finance Department
- Senior member of staff from Louth Local Enterprise Office
- Representative from Dundalk Chamber of Commerce
- Representative from Drogheda Chamber of Commerce
- Representative from Ardee Traders Association

- Environmental Sector Representative
- Social Inclusion Sector Representative
- Community and Voluntary Sector Representative
- Louth LEADER Partnership Board Member
- Representative from Tourism industry
- Representative from Broadband industry
- Representative from Agriculture sector
- Senior member of staff from Regional Development Centre

1.8 Other Operational Responsibilities

1.8.1 The Implementer

The Implementer will support the Evaluation Committee by ensuring that the implementation of the programme is in line with SLA/MoU.

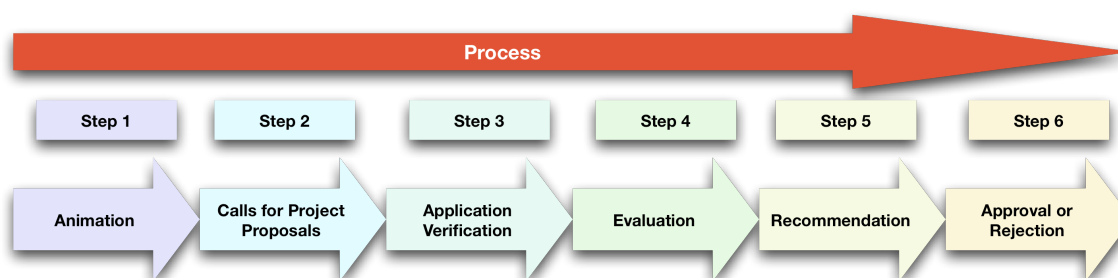
1.8.2 The LAG

The LAG confirms that 40% minimum project budget will be allocated to *'time limited'* calls for proposals as required under the programme. These calls will be designed and developed, as needs arise, by each Implementer, appropriate to the specific Themes, Sub-themes and Actions. This process will be used to encourage engagement with the LEADER programme from communities, business and individuals across Co. Louth.

1.8.3 Project Selection

The project selection process will comprise of six steps.

Figure 3 – Project Selection Process



Step 1: Animation - The Objectives of the LDS will be outlined at both Public and Individual Meetings prior to the Public Calls for Projects. The process for project selection, evaluation/scoring, and subsequent approval/rejection will be outlined in advance in written and electronic format.

Louth Leader Partnership staff will meet all prospective applicants prior to and up to the closing of the Call Process (see below) to go through the standard requirements that have to be met, provide templates, and advice or access to advice through the LEO Office, Louth County Council, Fáilte Ireland, and other appropriate bodies.

Step 2: Under the Draft Operating Rules, a minimum of 40% of the project budget over the duration of the programme to be allocated to *'time limited'* calls. These calls will be made using a mix of the local press and broadcast media, through social media, and on the LAG and Implementer's website's.

The calls will be linked to the objectives and actions of the LDS, and will be at regular intervals.

Step 3: In accordance with the Operating Rules, potential applicants will be required to complete an *'Expression of Interest'* (EoI) for funding form prior to any application for support. No decision to accept or refuse a project will be made on the basis of the EoI. The EoI should be followed by a full application. All Expressions of Interest will be recorded on the ICT system and a list of EoI's that have not progressed further will be provided periodically to meetings of the LAG.

Step 4: The Evaluation Committee is composed of members who are totally independent of the LAG. The individuals will have experience in Public Administration, Private Enterprise, Banking, Public Administration and Voluntary Community Activity.

Evaluation will be undertaken against a standard score card, and the Evaluation Committee will rank the applications according to comparative merit, and make their recommendation accordingly. The recommendation will be made on a standard template.

Step 5: Recommendation - The recommendation of the Evaluation Committee will be passed by the LLP Board to ensure that it has carried out its due diligence function prior to the recommendation going to the LAG/LCDC. The Implementer's Board cannot change or alter the recommendation, however it can advise the LAG/LCDC of any concerns it may have.

Step 6: Approval or Rejection - The recommendation, with or without comment, will be sent to the LAG who will consider the recommendation. The LAG has three options: -

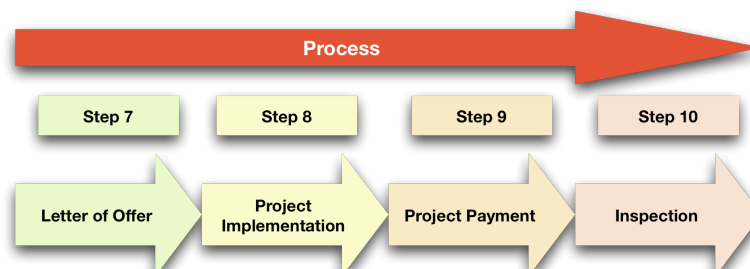
1. Accept the recommendation;
2. Reject the recommendation; *or*
3. Return the project to the Evaluation Committee for further review.

The LAG will formally instruct LLP to contact the applicant and inform them as to the outcome of their application. All applications evaluated will go before the LAG/LCDC, regardless of whether they have been recommended for acceptance/rejection. If accepted, a standard Letter of Offer will issue within two weeks. If rejected, a letter outlining the reason(s) will issue, also within two weeks.

1.8.4 Letter of Offer, Project Implementation and Payment

Step 7: Letter of Offer - The Implementer will draw up a draft Letter of Offer as per the LAG decision. The Chief Officer of Louth LCDC will approve and sign-off the Letter of Offer. LLP will subsequently issue the Letter of Offer on LAG headed paper. The Applicant will have 10 working days to accept or reject the offer.

Figure 4 - Letter of Offer, Project Implementation and Payment



Step 8: Project Implementation - LLP staff will work with the project promoter to ensure implementation as agreed within a six-month time frame. Contract extensions may be offered in exceptional circumstance subject to LAG approval. LLP staff will maintain the project file, and prepare these for Article 48 Checks.

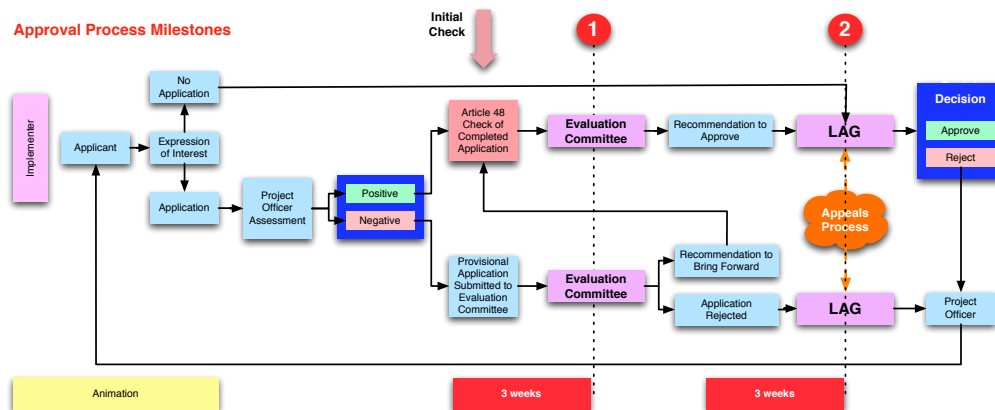
Step 9: Payment - Payment will be made after completion of Article 48 checks by Louth County Council, the Financial Partner.

Step 10: Inspection - Projects will be subject to pre- and post-payment inspections. Post-payment inspections can occur up to five years after the date of final payment.

1.8.5 Summary High-Level Process Flow

The following diagram summarises the high-level project process flow that will be adopted for the Louth LDS.

Figure 5 – Summary High-Level Project Flow



The above is offered subject to conformity with the Operating Rules. The Board of the Implementer will review and provide a recommendation on each project following the recommendation by the Evaluation Committee and prior to consideration by the LAG.

Appeals Process

In the event of a project promoter being dissatisfied with the outcome of the project process, an appeals procedure will be enacted. This will conform to the requirements of the Operating Rules, and will be detailed in the SLA, and will contain target timeframes for such process.

1.9 Relevant Experience

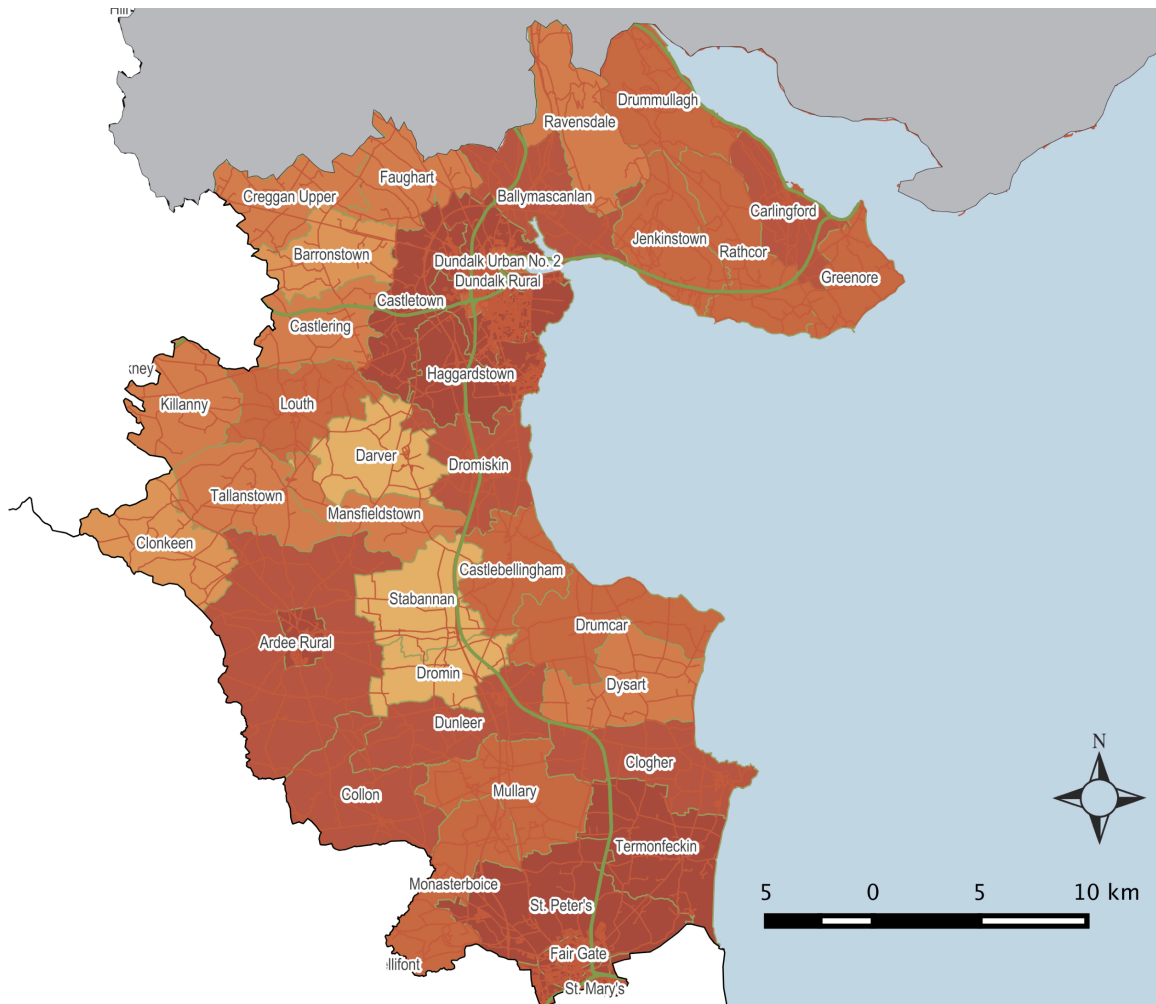
The implementer (LLP) and the financial partner (LCC) both have professional staff trained in public procurement procedures. LLP will manage all calls for proposals in line with specific National and EU guidelines. LLP has over 20 years experience in successfully devising, operating and delivering an area-based approach to economic and community development in rural areas. LLP also has over 20 years experience in delivering the LES/Intreo, TÚS and RSS in rural Co. Louth. The company currently operates these programmes on behalf of DSP.

Louth County Council has extensive professional experience in the design and delivery of initiatives and programmes for the infrastructural, economic and social development of the county. It is responsible for the statutory planning process through the implementation of the principal regulations underpinning the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2006 via the Planning and Development Regulations 2001.

2 LDS Area Profile

Co. Louth is the smallest county in the State. It is also one of the most densely populated, containing as it does the two largest towns in the country, namely Dundalk and Drogheda. In addition to these major urban centres, the County also contains a number of substantial towns and villages including Ardee, Dunleer, Clogherhead and Carlingford.

Map 1 – LDS Area



Source: CSO

The county is strategically located on the Dublin-Belfast economic corridor, and has strong links to Northern Ireland. By reason of this location combined with high quality infrastructure (road and rail), accessibility to ports and airports (north and south), high speed broadband, a skilled and educated workforce, the county is well placed for the future.

Co. Louth LECP reports that statutory, business and community organisations are very active in Co. Louth and all have generated significant outcomes for the community. The Dundalk Economic Development Group (DEDG) was established in 2006 by Louth County Council and has positively engaged a number of key agencies including the Chambers of Commerce, Enterprise Ireland, IDA, Newry-Dundalk Business Linkage Programme, Louth LEADER Partnership, SOLAS Ireland, Louth LEO, LCDC and Dundalk Institute of Technology. It is believed that the model approach adopted in Co. Louth has been responsible for continued economic investment programmes; both new and those that replaced reduced or departed

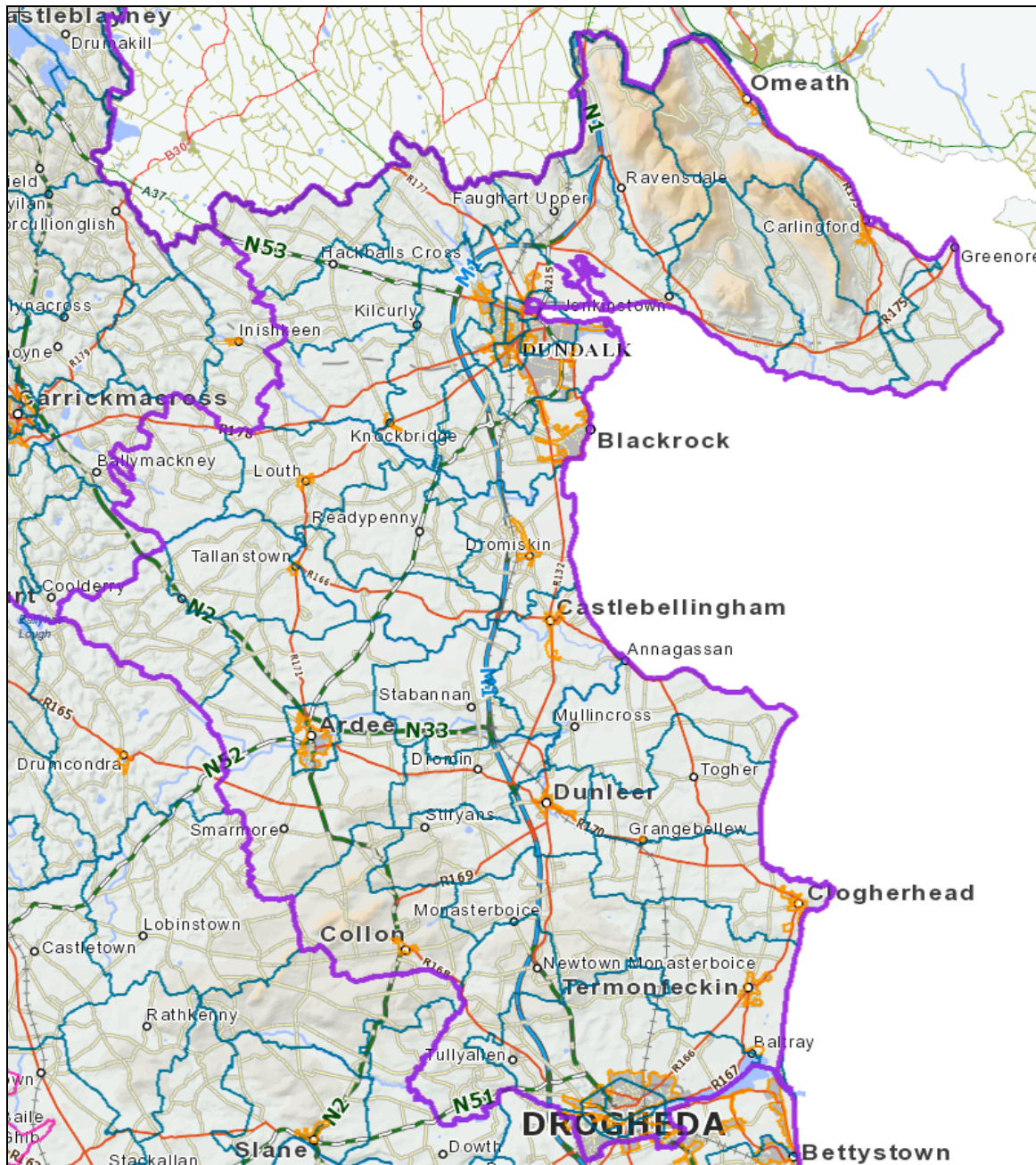
County Louth: Local Development Strategy

companies and organisations. At the same time, the community and voluntary sector has worked in partnership with statutory agencies to ensure that a wide range of social inclusion measures are targeted at people who people experiencing disadvantage.

Geography and Topography

Co. Louth is one of twelve counties in the province of Leinster. Despite being on the coast and its small size, it shares a border with three other counties. They are Armagh to the north, Monaghan to the northwest and Meath to the southwest.

Map 2 - Co. Louth Topographical



Source: MyPlan

Because of its location on the border with Northern Ireland, Co. Louth has a very strong link with its neighbours, particularly in County Armagh and across the Carlingford Lake in County Down.

The length of the county, from the boundary south of Drogheda to the boundary north of Ravensdale, is only 47km. The breadth of the county is on average only 19-21km. It has a total area of only 821km².

The **Cooley Mountains** are located in the north of the county. The highest peaks are Carlingford Mountain at 590m followed by Clermont Carn at 510m in height. The Cooley Mountains are a very popular destination for hill walkers. The Tain Way, which is a national walking route, covers 40km of the Cooley Mountains. This includes forest tracks, mountain paths and country roads. It also includes a selection of walks visiting the Windy Gap and Barnavave.

Carlingford Lough is a sea lough located between County Down in Northern Ireland and County Louth in the Republic of Ireland. The Newry River and the Newry Canal feed the lough. It is 13km long and its upper parts lie between the lower slopes of the Mountains of Mourne and the Cooley Mountains. The lough is supported by the towns of Warrenpoint and Rostrevor in County Down and Omeath, Carlingford and Greenore in County Louth.

Dundalk is the county town of Co. Louth and is located close to the border with Northern Ireland. The town is based around the Castletown River. By the 12th century the town was developed further with the building of walls and other fortifications in the manner of a Norman fortress.

Dundalk is located halfway between Belfast and Dublin, encouraging many businesses to locate in the area. In 2003, Dundalk was one of nine towns and cities in Ireland that were given Gateway status in the government's National Spatial Strategy. It was chosen as a centre for development in industry, education, housing, transport and other social areas.

Drogheda is one of Ireland's oldest and most historical towns. It is situated only 45km from Dublin. Drogheda is unusual in that the town lies in two separate counties, Co. Louth and Co. Meath.

The **River Boyne** is roughly 113km long and reaches the sea just outside Drogheda. The Boyne River Bridge, which carries the M1 motorway, crosses it just to the west of Drogheda. Also, the Boyne Viaduct carries the Dublin-Belfast railway line to the east of Drogheda.

Coastline

The coastline of County Louth stretches for more than 120 kilometres, from north of from the County Down border, through Carlingford Lough, Dundalk Bay and as far south as the Boyne Estuary outside Drogheda. The coastline and the adjoining landscapes vary considerably in character from the steep mountainous slopes of Carlingford Lough to the flat and undulating landforms and sand dune systems of mid and south Louth. There are a number of attractive beaches that provide excellent recreational opportunities including Blackrock, Lurganboy, Termonfeckin Strand, Gyles' Quay, Port Beach, Shellinghill (Templetown) and Clogherhead. The latter three are blue flag beaches.

The coastline is of high intrinsic and special amenity value and is home to a variety of natural habitats. Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA) designations cover much of the coastline. The coastline also contains economically significant sites that include the ports at Drogheda, Greenore, Dundalk and Clogherhead.

Forestry

Coillte has a total forest area of almost 1,400 hectares in Co. Louth, of which just over 100 hectares are broad leaf. It also has three recreational sites at Ravensdale, Slieve Foye Wood and Townley Hall.

Natural Resources

Co. Louth has significant deposits of high-grade stone, sand and gravel quarries, with substantial building sand reserves located in the Cooley area.

Although located on the east coast, where wind availability and speed tends to be less than west coast locations, Co. Louth still has significant potential for wind energy production.

Recreation and Amenity

The County Development Plan notes that recreation areas perform an important role in creating a sense of community by providing people with an opportunity to congregate and also for children to interact and play together.

In addition to its many fine beaches and scenic mountains, Co. Louth has much to offer in terms of active and passive recreational facilities, such as parks, children's play grounds, picnic areas, designated walking and cycling routes and other amenities such as Stephenstown Pond and the facilities at Rathescar Lake.

County Louth contains two distinct areas that have been designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) by reason of their unspoiled natural landscapes and spectacular scenic quality. The larger of the two areas is found in the north of the county and encompasses the Carlingford and Feede Mountains. Slieve Foye at 588m and Black Mountain at 508m are the highest points in the range. Much of the area remains in its natural state, covered in gorse, bracken and heather, parts of which are designated a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA) under European and Irish legislation.

Spectacular views are available from a number of vantage points over Carlingford Lough to the Mourne Mountains in Northern Ireland and over Dundalk Bay to the central and south of County Louth.

The second area that is designated as an AONB is located at Clogherhead and encompasses Port Oriel and the surrounding headland. Although less rugged and remote than the Carlingford and Feede Mountains, this area, nevertheless, contains equally spectacular views eastwards to the Irish Sea, southwards towards the Boyne Estuary and County Meath and northwards over Dundalk Bay to the Carlingford and Mourne Mountains.

2.1 Area Selection

Ireland experienced a population growth of 30.1% over the inter-censal period 1991-2011. County Louth has grown at 35.5% and the Border Region grew at a marginally lower rate (27.8%) over the same period. Between 2006 and 2011 Ireland's population grew by 8.2%, and Co. Louth's population grew by 10.5%.

Co. Louth is the smallest county by area 826 km² in the province and the State. It is the 19th largest in terms of population in the State (6th largest by population in Leinster).

Co. Louth is the second most densely populated county in Ireland behind Dublin, and the fourth on the island of Ireland. The overall population of Co. Louth and its hinterland is set to grow to almost 140,000 by 2020. The Leader Development Strategy covers all of Co. Louth.

2.1.1 Population

The CSO Census 2011 records the population of the county as 122,897 persons⁴, 60,763 males (49%) and 62,134 (51%) females.

⁴ *EU Regulation 1303/2013, Article 33: 'Community-led local development strategies' states that the eligible population size 'shall be not less than 10,000 and not more than 150,000 inhabitants'.*

Since 2006 Drogheda has experienced over 56% increase in population, and it has become part of the Dublin commuter belt. Other fast growing EDs include Carlingford (30.1%), Collon (28.3%) and Termonfeckin (27.9%). Ardee experienced considerable population growth, but the near 37% increase came of a much lower base figure than for the other ED's.

The 2011 census shows that 69% of the population in Louth is classified as urban and 31% classified as rural. This is due to the presence within the county of the two largest regional towns in the State, the Gateway Town of Dundalk and the Primary Development Centre of Drogheda.

In terms of the population growth, the town populations of Dundalk and Drogheda has increased by 7.3% and 4.9% respectively over the 2006-2011 period; the percentage increase in population in the rural areas of Louth has been significantly higher, with the Louth Rural Area ED experiencing 23.3% growth over the same period despite being the smallest of the three rural ED's in the County.

2.1.2 Population by Age

The population of pre-school age (0-4) was 10,411, of primary school going age (5-12) was 14,935 and of secondary school going age (13-18) was 9,459. There were 13,477 persons aged 65 years and over. The number of persons aged 18 years or over was 89,605.

There was a continuous decline in the age dependency rate⁵ throughout Ireland in the period 1991-2006, from 38.1% (1991) to 31.4% (2006). The ratio increased to 33.0% in 2011. A marginally smaller decline applied to Co. Louth in the period 1991-2006 (38.5% to 32.5%). In 2011 the age dependency rate for Co. Louth stood at 34.3%, which was marginally above the national average.

Within Co. Louth, there is a typical urban-rural differential, with Dundalk Urban No. 3 (28.8%), Dundalk Urban No. 2 (28.9%) and Dundalk Urban No. 5 (29.6%) having the lowest age dependency rates. Barronstown (39.7%) and Dysart (38.9%) had the highest rates.

The average age of the Co. Louth population is 35 years old, representing the seventh lowest county average in the State.

2.1.3 Marital Status and Lone Parents

Of the 94,235 persons aged 15 years and over, 37,942 were single, 45,198 were married, 3,612 were separated, 2,539 were divorced and 4,944 were widowed.

The proportion of lone parents⁶ in Ireland has exactly doubled from 10.7% in 1991 to 21.6% in 2011. Co. Louth had a rate of 24.3% in 2011. Dundalk Urban No. 1 (41.9%), Castletown (Pt.) (38.5%) and Dundalk Rural (Pt.) (35.3%) all had rates that were high by national comparison. In contrast, there were nine EDs where the rate was under 10%.

2.1.4 Household Structure

There were 43,972 private households in Louth in April 2011, of which 10,070 were single person households. Of the 32,411 families in the area, 8,486 were couples with no children. The average number of children per family was 1.4 similar to the national measure.

⁵ *The proportion of population under 15 years of age or over 64 as part of the total population.*

⁶ *Measured as a proportion of all households with dependent children.*

Table 6 - Households by Composition

	Co. Louth		State
	No. of households	% Breakdown	% Breakdown
One Person	10,070	22.9	23.7
Couple without children	7,737	17.6	18.9
Couple with children	16,194	36.8	34.9
Lone parent family	5,473	12.4	10.9
Other	4,498	10.2	11.6
Total	43,972	100.0	100.0

Source: CSO Census of Population 2011

2.1.6 Languages

Among those indicating that could speak the Irish language (42,106 persons) 15,833 spoke the language daily. A total of 12,826 persons spoke a language other than Irish or English at home and of these 2,412 could not speak English well or at all. Polish was the most common foreign language spoken at home with 1,862 speakers.

2.1.7 Education

There was a continuous improvement in the level of education amongst the adult population over the inter-censal period 1991-2011 throughout Ireland. The rate for Co. Louth has fallen from 41.6% in 1991, to 21.7% in 2006, and 18.7% in 2011, and has consistently remained above the national average.

Despite the considerable improvement at county level, there are several rural EDs where considerable numbers of the adult population had primary education only. These were Drumcar (32.3%) and Dundalk Urban No. 1 (32.3%), both of which are characterised by levels that are twice as high as the national average.

The reverse applies with regard to third-level education completion, which has more than doubled nationally over the inter-censal period 1991-2006, from 13.0% to 30.5%, but increasing by only another 0.1 percentage point to 30.6% in 2011.

The proportion of Co. Louth's population with third-level education grew from 10% to 26% over the same period, but has marginally decreased by 0.3% to 25.6% in 2011. At ED level, and mirroring the situation with regard to the higher incidence of low levels of education, there were particularly low numbers of population with third-level education in Dundalk Urban No. 2 (15.8%), Dundalk Urban No. 1 (15.8%) and West Gate (17.2%).

2.1.8 Migration and Nationalities

In 2011, non-Irish nationals accounted for 10% of the population of Co. Louth compared with a national average figure of 12%. UK nationals (2,018 persons) were the largest group, followed by Polish (1,880 persons).

2.1.9 Travel To Work

The most popular means of travel to work was by car (driver), accounting for 62% of all journeys. A total of 2,350 persons commuted using public transport (bus or rail). The average journey time was 26 minutes and 24% of workers faced a commuting time in excess of 30 minutes.

2.1.10 Disability and Carers

In Co. Louth 15,932 persons indicated a disability in Census 2011, of whom 5,314, representing 33% of the total, were aged 65 years and over.

In terms of regular unpaid personal help 4,948 persons (1,912 males and 3,036 females) provided for a friend or family member with a long-term illness, health problem or disability; 22% of these provided care for more than 6 hours per day.

2.1.11 Housing, Internet and Car Ownership

Housing

There was a 2% decrease in the proportion of local authority housing in Ireland from 10% in 1991 to 8% in 2011. Co. Louth saw a similar decline from 11% to 9%; however, the proportion in the Border Region increased from 7% to 8%. At ED level, the highest concentrations of local authority housing are found in Castletown (Pt.) (18%), St. Mary's (Louth Pt.) (16%) and Dundalk Rural (Pt.) (16%).

A total of 31,676 dwellings (72%) were owner occupied while 11,538 dwellings (26%) were rented. In Co. Louth, 27% of the dwellings were built in the ten years before the census. The average number of persons per household was 2.8 compared with 2.7 nationally.

Although Co. Louth is more urbanised than other border counties, rural settlements and the countryside have experienced unprecedented housing demand and growth over a continued period since the 1996 census.

IT Connectivity

The Dundalk Gateway Report⁷ notes that in 2011, 62% of households had private broadband access, up 44% since 2006.

The equivalent figure for north Co. Louth was 63% in 2011 representing a 53% increase since 2006 when it was just 10%. The overall average IT connectivity across Gateways nationally was 64% in 2011; by comparison, the EU average for all 27 Member States in 2011 was 67%.

The IT connectivity indicator results for Dundalk Gateway reveal that despite significant increases, it has the third lowest proportion of any of the Gateways, and is below the average for household take-up (a result which is also reinforced in perception survey results).

Poor broadband access is a restrictive factor in attracting new business to the region and, while this indicator is a measure of take-up as opposed to availability and quality, it is important that the Gateway provide quality broadband (for regional competitiveness in attracting new business). Further improvements are necessary, and the recently launched National Broadband Plan for Ireland, which sets out targets to achieve broadband download speeds of 70Mbps with a minimum of 40Mbps generally available and 30Mbps available in harder to reach rural areas, will support further advancement in this area.

Transport

The Dundalk Gateway Report states that all of Gateways benefited from investments in transport and connectivity related infrastructure since 2006; in the case of Dundalk, this investment has produced mixed results. Although remaining above the average for all Gateways, the amount of people who live less than 30 minutes from their place of work shows a minor decrease between 2002-2011.

Public transport accessibility, especially in Dundalk town, has produced a positive result. There is a relatively positive perception of public transport that is encouraging and suggests that opportunities to widen modal choices to include more sustainable options will be well received in the Gateway.

In recent years, supported by the national *Smarter Travel Programme*, there has been a substantial investment in cycling lanes and general improvements to facilitate both cyclists and pedestrians in Dundalk. Most recently, a 'Safer Routes' for walking and cycling to school

⁷ *Gateways Hubs Development Index 2012 - A Review of Socio-Economic Performance.*

initiative was launched under the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, with Dundalk participating as a pilot town.

2.1.12 General Health

In Co. Louth, 107,936 persons stated they were in very good or good health, representing 88% of total persons, similar to the national measure. A total of 2,060 persons stated they were in bad or very bad health, representing 2% of total persons in the county compared with 1.5% of total persons nationally.

2.1.13 Disadvantage

The Pobal HP Deprivation Index measures the relative affluence or disadvantage of an area using data compiled from various censuses. A score is given to the area based on a national average of zero, and ranging from approximately -35 (being the most disadvantaged) to +35 (being the most affluent).

In 2011, the Border Region was the most disadvantaged region of Ireland, however Co. Louth was the third most affluent local authority area within the region.

Co. Louth has been massively affected by the economic downturn after 2007, reflected in the drop in the absolute deprivation score from -3.7 in 2006 to -10.5 in 2011. This represented a drop of 6.8, compared to a nationwide drop of 6.5. However, the county is not characterised by particular extremes of affluence or deprivation. Of the 43 EDs in Co. Louth, most (28) were marginally below national average while 13 were marginally above average. The slightly more affluent areas comprise the wider peripheries of Dundalk and Drogheda, but not of the towns themselves. The most disadvantaged areas were found within Dundalk.

At local level, the most disadvantaged EDs were Dundalk Urban No. 1 (-12.8), Dundalk Urban No. 2 (-11.8), Castletown (Pt.) (-9.5) and West Gate (-9.3). The former two EDs are the only EDs in Co. Louth that fell into the 'disadvantaged' category. All other EDs are, at the most, marginally below the national average.

The most affluent EDs in Co. Louth were Haggardstown (Pt.) (5.7), Monasterboice (3.4) and Jenkinstown (3.3), although these were just above the national average.

Focus of Disadvantage

The EDs in the table below form the spatial focus of social inclusion measures within the LDS designed to address underlying issues that might contribute to exclusion.

Table 7 – Focus of Disadvantage by SAP 2011

SAPs With ED	Total Very Disadvantaged Population 2011	Total Disadvantaged Population 2011	Total Very Disadvantaged and Disadvantaged Population 2011	Total ED Population 2011	Total Very Disadvantaged and Disadvantaged Population as % of Total ED Population 2011
Dundalk Urban No. 1	180	1,603	1,783	2,148	83.01
West Gate	1,044	1,921	2,965	6,042	49.07
Fair Gate	803	3,496	4,299	9,806	43.84
Castletown	1,241	419	1,660	4,210	39.43
Ardee Urban	713	1,024	1,737	4,554	38.14
Dundalk Urban No. 2	0	669	669	2,148	31.15
Tallanstown	327	0	327	1,059	30.88
Louth	0	449	449	1,505	29.83

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

SAPs With ED	Total Very Disadvantaged Population 2011	Total Disadvantaged Population 2011	Total Very Disadvantaged and Disadvantaged Population 2011	Total ED Population 2011	Total Very Disadvantaged and Disadvantaged Population as % of Total ED Population 2011
Dundalk Rural	2,079	3,295	5,374	18,160	29.59
St. Mary's	695	1,230	1,925	6,563	29.33
Castlebellingham	0	455	455	1,617	28.14
Dundalk Urban No. 4	0	1,167	1,167	6,039	19.32
Dunleer	0	520	520	2,796	18.60
Clogher	0	490	490	3,031	16.17
St. Laurence Gate	0	621	621	4,004	15.51
St. Peter's	424	814	1,238	9,151	13.53
Total	7,506	18,173	25,679	82,833	31.00

Source: Pobal HP Deprivation Index 2012

2.1.14 Crime

The CSO records crime offences by Garda Division. Co. Louth falls within the Northern Division.

Table 8 – Recorded Crime Offences 2014-2015

Northern Region: Louth Garda Division	2014Q2	2014Q3	2014Q4	2015Q1	2015Q2
01 Homicide offences	0	0	0	0	0
02 Sexual offences	11	13	16	14	15
03 Attempts/threats to murder assaults harassments and related offences	140	110	150	108	145
04 Dangerous or negligent acts	50	39	50	32	36
05 Kidnapping and related offences	0	2	0	2	2
06 Robbery extortion and hijacking offences	11	12	24	29	23
07 Burglary and related offences	244	269	271	295	295
08 Theft and related offences	514	545	588	591	629
09 Fraud deception and related offences	34	22	50	56	36
10 Controlled drug offences	77	33	106	74	59
11 Weapons and Explosives Offences	27	21	12	18	21
12 Damage to property and to the environment	272	243	296	263	283
13 Public order and other social code offences	210	177	196	157	152
15 Offences against government justice procedures and organisation of crime	40	49	35	43	50

Source: CSO StatBank / Recorded Crime / Table CJQ03

2.2 Socio-Economic Profile

Co. Louth has a tradition as a hub of manufacturing industry. Drogheda, Dundalk, Ardee and Dunleer were all centres where 'factory work' was concentrated in the past.

2.2.1 Employment

Table 9 – Co. Louth Workforce Profile 2011

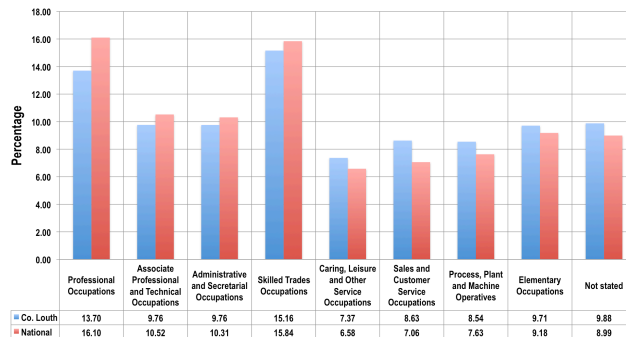
		At Work	Looking For First Job	Unemployed having Lost or Given Up Previous Job	Student	Looking After Home/Family	Retired	Unable To Work due to Sickness or Disability	Other	Total
Males	Co. Louth Totals	23,150	620	8,232	5,013	465	6,100	2,523	97	46,200
	National Totals	954,541	19,512	254,815	201,203	18,040	237,409	79,502	6,488	1,771,510
Females	Co. Louth Totals	21,082	447	4,493	5,130	8,643	5,699	2,406	135	48,035
	National Totals	852,819	14,654	135,862	207,635	321,878	219,985	77,491	6,828	1,837,152
Males	Co. Louth %	50.11	1.34	17.82	10.85	1.01	13.20	5.46	0.21	100.00
	National %	53.88	1.10	14.38	11.36	1.02	13.40	4.49	0.37	100.00
Females	Co. Louth %	43.89	0.93	9.35	10.68	17.99	11.86	5.01	0.28	100.00
	National %	46.42	0.80	7.40	11.30	17.52	11.97	4.22	0.37	100.00

Source: CSO Census of Population 2011

The 2011 Census of Population indicated that in Co Louth there was 47% of total working population (94,235 persons) at work, compared to 50% who were at work, nationally.

Employment Profile

Figure 6 – Co. Louth Occupation Profile 2011



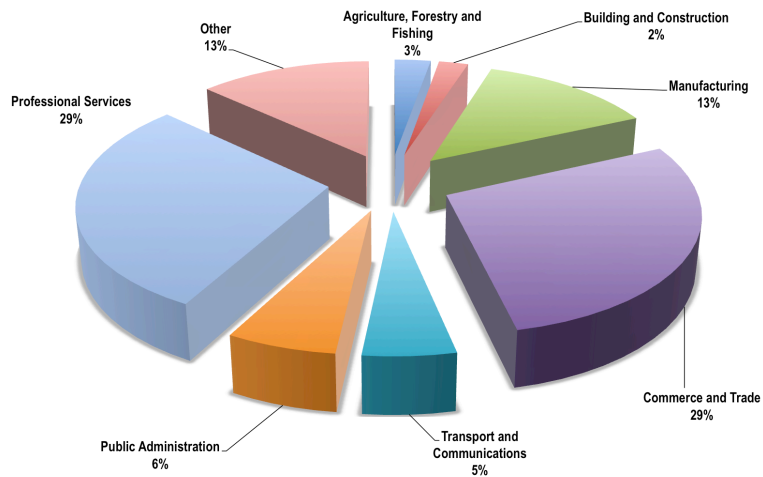
Source: CSO Census of Population 2011

2.2.2 Labour Force

There were 58,024 persons aged 15 years and over in the labour force in 2011 and of these, 76% (44,232 persons) were at work. The unemployment rate for the county in 2011 was 24%, compared with a national average rate of 19%.

Of the 36,211 persons aged 15 years and over who were outside the labour force, 28% were students, 25% were looking after the home or family and 33% were retired. Just under a quarter of the workforce worked outside the county. The daytime working population (resident and non-resident) of Co. Louth was 32,809, with professional services being the largest industry.

Figure 7 – Employment by Sector 2011



Source: CSO Census of Population 2011

2.2.3 Unemployment

Over the period 2006-2011, male unemployment in Co. Louth experienced a two-and-a-half fold increase, reaching 28% in 2011. This compared to a national male unemployment rate of 22%. Correspondingly, the female unemployment rate almost doubled between 2006 and 2011, reaching 19%. In 2011 unemployment rates were highest in Dundalk Urban No. 2 (39% male, 32% female), followed by Dundalk Urban No. 1 (40% male, 24% female); Castletown (Pt.) (37% male, 24% female); Ardee Urban (36% male, 23% female); and, Dundalk Rural (Pt.) (33% male, 25% female).

2.2.4 Live Register

The Live Register is not specifically designed to measure unemployment, however, it provides an invaluable short-term trend indicator of unemployment trend. The number and profile, whether categorised as stayers, joiners or leavers, of persons on the Live Register in June 2015 is shown in the table below. Individuals registered at specific DSP local offices may not necessarily reside within their immediate environs.

Live Register Flows

Table 10 – Live Register Flows March 2015

DSP Intreo Offices	Live Register (Total)	No. Stayers	No. Joiners	No. Leavers
Co. Louth	13,920	13,180	740	960
Ardee	1,750	1,650	100	120
Drogheda	6,290	5,930	360	450
Dundalk	5,880	5,600	280	390

Source: CSO StatBank LRM31

Live Register: Skill Profile

The table below provides a profile of the occupation last held by individuals on the Live Register for Co. Louth during Q1 2015.

The table below covers those occupations with greater than 1,000 individuals recorded on the Live Register in March 2015 and thus provides an approximate profile of the skillbase currently available in the county.

Table 11 – Live Register: Skill Profile Co. Louth 2015

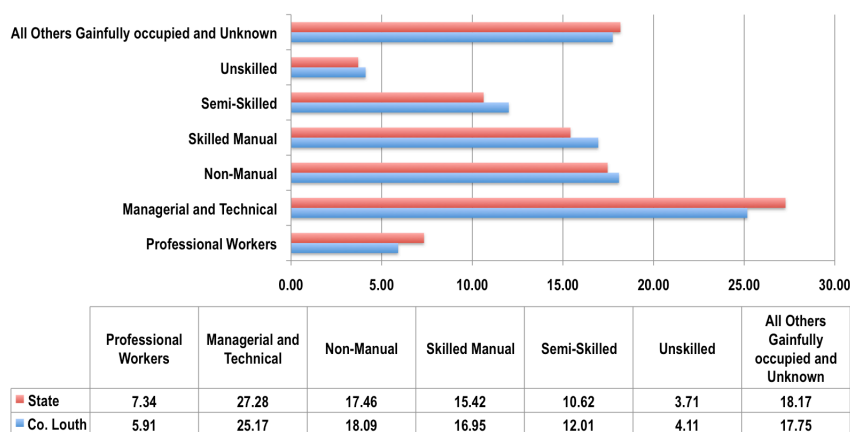
Occupation Last Held	January	February	March
Craft and related	3,260	3,190	3,140
Construction, woodwork and metal and related industries	3,180	3,100	3,070
Plant and machine operatives	2,500	2,440	2,440
General operatives	2,100	2,050	2,040
Retail, sales	1,740	1,740	1,720
Personal and protective services	1,760	1,730	1,700
Sales	1,640	1,640	1,620
Blocklayer, bricklayer, builder, building contractor, dry liner, ganger, glazier, mason, painter (construction), plaster, stonemason, tiler	1,550	1,510	1,490
Other broad occupational groups	1,520	1,490	1,460
Check-out operator, petrol-pump attendant, sales assistant, salesman/woman/persons, shop assistant	1,370	1,380	1,370
Clerical and secretarial	1,350	1,330	1,310
Office admin, clerical, secretarial	1,310	1,290	1,260
Domestic and catering	1,190	1,180	1,170

Source: CSO Statbank LRM31

2.2.5 Social Class

At the national level, the proportion of professionals in all classes rose from 25% in 1991 to 35% in 2011, whilst the proportion of the semi- and unskilled classes declined from 28% to 17.5% over the same period. In Co. Louth, the proportion in the professional classes (31%) was below the national average and the proportion in the lower skilled professions (20%) marginally above. Haggardstown (Pt.) had the highest composition (49% professionals, 11% semi- and unskilled manual classes), and Dundalk Urban No. 2 having the lowest (12% professionals, 31% manual classes).

Figure 8 – Social Class Composition



Source: CSO Census of Population 2011

2.3 Key Economic Sectors

Co. Louth is strategically located on the Dublin to Belfast economic corridor, and has strong links to Northern Ireland. This location, combined with high-quality infrastructure (road and rail), accessibility to ports and airports (north and south), high speed broadband, a skilled and educated workforce, means that the county is well placed to continue to grow in both population and economic terms into the future.

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

The County Louth Economic Development Strategy 2009-2015⁸ summarises the following comparative strengths and development opportunities for the county.

Table 12 - Comparative Economic Strengths of Co. Louth

Characteristic	Comparative Economic Strength
Location	Co. Louth enjoys a very favourable location along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor, with close proximity to Dublin and the related advantages of easy access to Dublin Airport, 3 rd /4 th level institutions, and domestic and export markets.
People Resources	Co. Louth has a significant population that has expanded at a faster rate than across State. Drogheda and Dundalk are the largest towns and are also among the fastest expanding towns in Ireland.
Education and Skills	In terms of educational attainment and 3 rd level qualifications Co. Louth has comparative strengths in Computing and in Engineering, Manufacturing, and Construction disciplines.
Infrastructure	Co. Louth is located along the M1 route providing access to very high quality, national motorway infrastructure. Co. Louth is well served by rail services along the key Dublin-Belfast rail line. Three commercial seaports are located along Co. Louth's coastline, including Drogheda, Dundalk and Greenore ports.
Sectoral Economic Activity	Employment within Co. Louth is primarily focused in Commerce (31.1%), Education, Health and Social Work (22.3%), and Manufacturing Industries (17.9%).
Cost Competitiveness	Housing costs in Co. Louth are significantly lower than in the Greater Dublin Area.
Quality of Life	Co. Louth residents enjoy a high quality of life and this is regarded by businesses as a particular strength for the county.

Source: County Louth Economic Development Strategy 2009-2015

The Economic Development Strategy identifies the following key sectoral economic development requirements: -

- ❑ The need to ensure a diversified economic base encompassing high value-added activities in foreign-owned industry, and domestically-owned, internationally traded services, thus minimising the risk of over-emphasis on any one sector or on a limited number of potentially vulnerable sectors;
- ❑ The need to target Co. Louth and its main towns as high-quality locations for investment by indigenous and foreign-owned firms;
- ❑ A focus on cost competitiveness and the provision of a choice of investment locations to maximise the relative attractiveness of Co. Louth as a location for investment;
- ❑ The need to implement a labour and skills strategy that provides an education and skills base aligned with the requirements of inward and domestic investment, and industry;
- ❑ At a spatial level, the need to bring into closer alignment the location of jobs with that of population so as reduce unsustainable commuting to areas outside the county, potential leakage of skills while also making best use of existing and future additional infrastructure; *and*
- ❑ The need to address specific issues within Co. Louth in relation to localised social exclusion and economic deprivation/high unemployment.

Rural Context

The Draft County Development Plan 2015-2021⁹ notes that Dundalk, Drogheda, Ardee and Dunleer have considerable tracts of lands zoned for commercial, industrial and employment uses. Large-scale commercial and industrial development will be directed to these

⁸ *Louth County Council*

⁹ *Louth County Council*

serviceable sites. However, it is recognised that the location of certain resource based and location specific developments of significant regional or national importance and critical infrastructure projects in rural areas may need to be accommodated at suitable locations in rural areas outside of existing settlements.

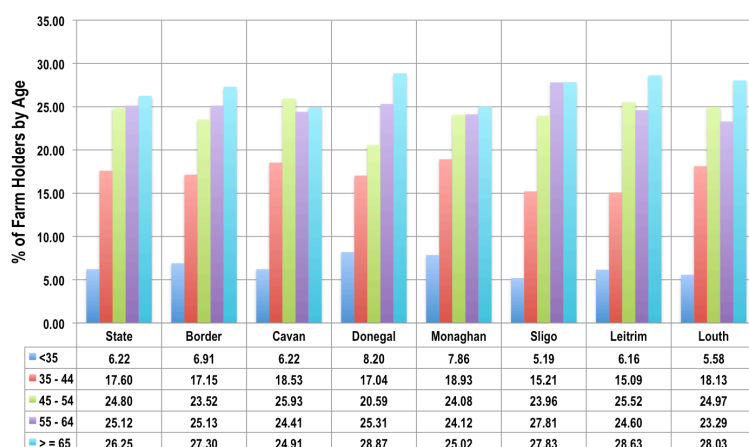
The Plan promotes the establishment of small incubator units to accommodate new enterprises within designated rural settlements and the development of alternative home-based micro-enterprises of appropriate nature and scale. Subject to a number of criteria, the Plan supports low-impact rural and marine resource-based industrial, commercial, business and service uses that contribute to diversification and growth of the rural economy, and which are intrinsically linked to the rural area and cannot be operated from existing urban settlements. Acceptable uses, broadly similar in theme to the Leader themes, include the following: -

- ❑ Agricultural diversification;
- ❑ Provision of tourism facilities: including the renovation of farm buildings for tourism purposes, walking, cycling, angling, pony trekking, and bird watching;
- ❑ Development of niche tourism and educational services such as arts and crafts, specialty food provision, and open farms;
- ❑ Development of farm shops selling home/locally grown and manufactured products;
- ❑ Organic food production;
- ❑ Small-scale renewable energy projects;
- ❑ Marine based enterprises including mariculture; and
- ❑ Low-impact rural and marine resource based industry/commercial/business.

2.3.1 Agriculture Industry

In 2011 Teagasc¹⁰, the Agriculture and Food Development Authority, reports that the average farm size in the Laois/Kildare/Meath/Louth/Dublin Advisory Region was 47.6 hectares, up from 33 hectares in 1990. This change is recognised as being both a reflection of the decline in numbers of small farm holdings, and also of the consolidation and intensification of overall farming activity. However, at the same time, the total area of land being farmed has fallen from 49,212 hectares in 1991 to 37,963 hectares in 2010. This may be partly due to the increased need for development land as a consequence of the growth of Dublin in recent times.

Figure 9 – Family Farms by Farm Holder Age 2010



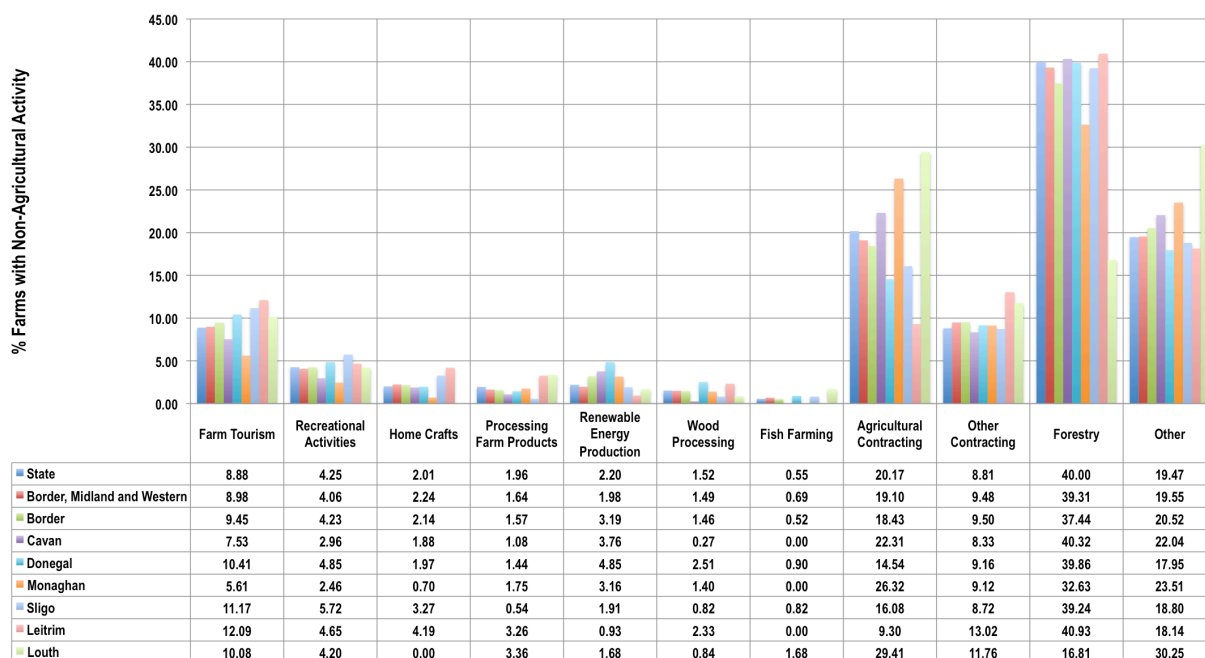
Source: Census of Agriculture 2010

¹⁰ Teagasc: Laois/Kildare/Meath/Louth/Dublin Advisory Region Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020.

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

Co. Louth has a lower percentage of younger farm holders than that of the State, and a higher percentage of farm holders of over 65 years of age.

Figure 10 – Farm Diversification 2011



Source: Census of Agriculture 2010

The 2010 Census of Agriculture indicated a relatively low level of diversification in Co. Louth into home crafts, renewable energy and wood processing.

Anticipated Sectoral Trends 2015-2020

The following is summarised from the *Teagasc: Laois/Kildare/Meath/Louth/Dublin Advisory Region Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020*.

Table 13 – Regional Agriculture Sectoral Trends 2015-2020

Factor	Trend
Dairy Output	Will increase by 40-50% (both spring and winter milk). This increase will occur through a 30% increase in dairy cows and increase in production per cow by 10 – 15%. Age profile will improve, as there is likely to be an increase in new entrants and successors.
Beef Output	Expected to increase by 20% within the next 5 years.
Suckler Farms	Reduce (10-15%) with a corresponding increase in rearing, or trading enterprises. A small number of new entrants into beef are expected (<3%).
Sheep Farming	Expected to remain relatively static with a small number converting to dairying or exiting.
Tillage Farming	Remain static, with a small number changing to dairying (<10%); land availability will be a significant issue over the next 5 years resulting in land price and rental increases. This will result in the need for an increase in collaborative farming and will also drive an expansion in land drainage and improvement.
Environmental Challenge	Low levels of soil fertility on new dairy farms combined with phosphorus fertilisation restrictions on the most intensive holdings will present a serious challenge, as will slurry storage capacities on dairy/beef farms.

Source: Teagasc: Laois/Kildare/Meath/Louth/Dublin Advisory Region Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020.

Horticulture

The National Field Vegetable Census 2009¹¹ confirmed that Co. Louth was generating an average value per hectare for field vegetable production of €20,028, 32% higher than the comparative figure for the State. There were 152.3 hectares of field vegetables in Co. Louth in 2008. This represented 3% of the national production capacity.

Table 14 - Field Vegetable Production 2008

	Number of Growers	Hectares	Total Farm Gate Value (€m)	Average Value per Hectare
State	212	4,590	€69.7	€15,191
Co. Louth	11	152.3	€3.1	€20,028

Source: National Field Vegetable Census 2009

2.3.2 Foreign Direct Investment

The IDA Ireland Strategy 'Winning: Foreign Direct Investment 2015-2019' sets a target of winning between 61 and 66 investments for the Border region in the five year plan period. This represents a significant increase on the 47 investments secured in the previous period.

Dundalk has successfully attracted significant foreign direct investment, including PayPal, eBay, IFS, Vestas, SMT Fund Services, and Prometric. The Louth Economic Forum '10 Point Plan' for Foreign Direct Investment targets the following FDI sectors: -

1. Bio-Pharmaceuticals (Dundalk Science and Technology Park);
2. Global Business Services including Financial Services; and
3. High-Value Manufacturing (Clean Tech, Engineering, ICT, Med Tech, Food and Pharma).

2.3.3 Coastal Communities

The Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) Strategy for Small and Fishing Dependent Communities in Counties Louth, Meath and Dublin¹² covers the coastal fishing dependent communities of the area, stretching from Omeath to Howth. The strategy, shown in a detailed appendix, prioritises seafood products for new markets, The North East Coastal Trail, training and diversification for fishing communities, and enhancing Harbour, Pier and Coastal infrastructure.

Marine Industries - The coastline of County Louth stretches from the County Down border, through Carlingford Lough, Dundalk Bay and as far south as the Boyne Estuary outside Drogheda. The coastline is of high intrinsic and special amenity value and is home to a variety of natural habitats. Termonfeckin Strand, Clogherhead, Port and Templetown are superb beaches that have considerable tourism potential. The latter three beaches were awarded Blue Flag status in 2014. The coastline also contains economically significant sites that include the ports at Drogheda, Greenore, Dundalk and Clogherhead.

Marine Conservation Areas - Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA) designations cover much of the coastline. The distribution is widespread along the southern shore of Carlingford Lough and throughout Dundalk Bay. On the one hand, these designations compound the challenges faced by marine sector primary producers around the Cooley Peninsula but, on the other, they offer protection for the long-term viability of small-scale inshore fisheries there.

Marine Tourism - The BIM Strategy concluded that there were low levels of employment in the tourism sector in the FLAG region and the statistics would suggest that the region underperforms in tourism, perhaps because of being under the 'shadow' of Dublin and by-passed by transportation infrastructure. This also suggests that marine tourism development needs to

¹¹ Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine, and Bord Bia

¹² North East Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG).

be specialised and distinctive as the area is unlikely to be able to grow based on its landscape and current tourism service and attractions profile.

2.3.3 Industry

With respect to manufacturing industry, the Border Regional Authority Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 note that there has been a significant decline in manufacturing employment in the Border Region, driven mainly by the collapse of the clothing and textile industry, however, there has been nascent growth in international services activities across the Border Region.

The Dundalk Gateway region covers Dundalk Town and north Co. Louth. The Dundalk Gateway Report¹³ notes that there were 7.14 new firms established for every 1,000 in 2011 employees, a level of new firm formation in keeping with the average new firm formation figures for all Gateways of 7.29 firms per 1,000 employees. A higher number of new firms were established in the urban core of Dundalk, than in the surrounding catchment area in both the years of 2006 and 2011.

The report records 119,012 services¹⁴ nationally in 2012 of which the Dundalk Gateway supported 1.5% (1,727 services). With the Gateway region showing just 1.3% of the national population, this demonstrates a positive trend for Dundalk.

The presence of the Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) is a significant influence within the county and has helped increase the number of people with third level education – an important factor in assisting economic growth. However at 26% of the labour force it is substantially less than the 31% average of other Gateways. Dundalk has the third lowest third level attainment of all the Gateways.

2.3.4 Construction Industry

In Co. Louth there has been a significant dependence on locally traded and non-traded activities for employment and output growth (for example Construction, Retail and the Public Sector). In 2013, Forfás¹⁵ noted that as the sector was operating at a sub-optimal level it was imperative that it returns to a more sustainable pattern of activity. *Construction 2020: A Strategy for a Renewed Construction Sector* (May 2014) was designed to address the issues identified by Forfás through a series of strategic measures.

Housing Sector

In the twelve months to the end of 2013, The Construction Industry Federation (CIF)¹⁶ reported that 80 new builds began in Co. Louth, compared to 162 for the twelve months to the end of 2012.

Commercial Sector

Construction 2020: A Strategy for a Renewed Construction Sector notes that the availability of a good supply of commercial premises is a key requirement for economic progress. Lack of sufficient supply has the potential to damage competitiveness, drive up rents, and could persuade internationally mobile companies to locate in other countries.

¹³ *Gateways Hubs Development Index 2012 - A Review of Socio-Economic Performance.*

¹⁴ *This includes all service providers including the following broad categories: Construction, Hotel and Services, Transportation, Storage and Communication, Financial Intermediation, Real Estate Activities, Public Administration, Education, Health and Social Work, and Other Community, Social and Personal Activities.*

¹⁵ *Ireland's Construction Sector: Outlook And Strategic Plan To 2015 (Forfás)*

¹⁶ *CIF: Housing Statistics Bulletin.*

2.3.5 Retail Industry

The Dundalk Gateway Report notes that the number of retail units per 100 households is higher than the Gateway average. Furthermore, the Gateway is adhering to the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012, placing retail developments in city and town centres.

Shopping patterns in the Border Region can be influenced by currency and taxation fluctuations between the Euro and Sterling and these can have a disproportionate effect on the local economies on both sides of the border.

2.3.6 Tourism Industry

Louth Economic Forum 10 Point Plan: *Tourism and Heritage Action Plan* identifies six priorities: -

1. To capitalise on County Louth's unique location as the hub for the Boyne Valley, the Cooley Peninsula, the Mourne and Slieve Gullion Region, two of Fáilte Ireland's Top Tourism Development Destinations in the country;
2. To ensure customer service delivery to the highest possible standard at all levels to ensure the desire to return;
3. To increase the number of visitors coming to Louth, to increase their 'dwell time' and thereby to maximise their spend in the county, and increase revenue and sustainable job creation;
4. To 'gain the heritage dividend', through the sustainable use of heritage to attract tourists to Louth and surrounding areas;
5. To make Louth an Age Friendly Destination; *and*
6. To strengthen cross border co-operation in tourism development.

2.4 Key Services and Programmes

Economic, social, cultural and environmental service provision is of direct relevance to the effective delivery of the LDS. It is important that co-ordination and complementarity with existing services and structures is maximised to reduce any danger of service-level duplication.

Statutory organisations and the community and voluntary sector are delivering key services. These include Louth LEO, Skillnets, Microfinance Ireland, LMETB, Louth Volunteer Centre, Louth Local Sports Partnership, youth services, Fáilte Ireland and many other area-based and sectoral interest groups. Relevant programmes and supports include the Back-to-Work Enterprise Allowance (BTWEA), Rural Transport Programme (RTP), Community Services Programme (CSP), Rural Social Scheme (RSS), and the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP).

2.4.1 Economic Service Provision

The capacity of the agriculture industry is increasing, and farm sizes will also increase. Though there has been a decline in commercial fishing, niche marine-based activity remains a latent opportunity.

In educational terms, the county lags behind in terms of producing third-level graduates. Rural villages and small towns have seen significant economic and social decline.

New tourism products are being developed, but more are required. The creation of REDZ to support Phase 2 of the Mill Enterprise Hub, Drogheda, creates the opportunity to strategically support Louth LEO in encouraging micro-enterprise activity. There is a need for financial and technical support for start-up and existing businesses in IT, traded services, small-scale pharmaceutical, high-end light engineering, knowledge based businesses, including eco

(green tech) businesses, commercial food businesses, and high-end industrial and agri-services in rural areas and rural villages.

In addition to the statutory providers, economic services and programmes are provided by organisations including: -

- ❑ Ardee Business Park and Training Centre;
- ❑ DkIT Regional Development Centre;
- ❑ Drogheda and District Chamber of Commerce;
- ❑ Dundalk Chamber of Commerce; *and*
- ❑ Oriel Hub Enterprise Centre

2.4.2 Social Service Provision

There are issues of unemployment among craft and construction workers, and youth unemployment remains higher than the national average. The quality and diversity of community infrastructure has improved substantially, however, many areas still require investment and reinvestment. A number of social enterprises and community organisations provide much needed services but have inadequate sources of independent income needed to create operating reserves. Youth service providers include Dundalk Youth Centre, Coxes Youth and Community Project, Craobh Rua Youth Project, and Boomerang.

2.4.3 Cultural Service Providers

Heritage and culture are important sectors for job creation. Provision of arts-based activity in rural areas, particularly to engage with young people, is inadequate. In relation to tourism, recognition of the importance of the Brú na Bóinne complex as a tourism product ties in with the need for the Ancient East initiative to market Ancient Ireland, Early Christian Ireland, Medieval Ireland and Anglo Ireland.

In addition to the statutory providers, cultural services and programmes are provided by organisations such as: -

Carlingford Heritage Centre	An Táin Arts Centre
Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann	Highlanes Gallery, Drogheda
Drogheda Museum Millmount and Martello Tower	Louth County Council Libraries
Droichead Arts Centre, Drogheda	

2.4.4 Environment and Conservation Service Providers

There remains the potential of increased greenhouse gas production due to the projected significant increase in the number of livestock to meet planned increases in milk production. This is coupled with increased pressure on the natural environment due to increased changes in lifestyle. The consultation phase demonstrated increased public recognition of environmental and heritage value with significant community interest in the revitalisation of villages, and community level water and energy conservation projects. In addition to the statutory providers, environment and conservation services and programmes are provided by organisations such as: -

Brú na Bóinne	Louth County Council
DAFM	National Parks and Wildlife Service
Teagasc	Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland
EPA	

2.5 Area Needs Analysis

The following analysis draws on the findings of Socio-Economic Profile: County Louth - Local Economic and Community Plan (Louth LCDC), and identifies the key target groups from the perspective of the statistical baseline, the existing service provision, and the outcomes of the supporting consultation process.

2.5.1 Demographic Profile Headlines

Co. Louth has experienced a major and consistent expansion of its population in recent years. In the five years since Census 2006, population growth has occurred in 40 of the 43 Co. Louth EDs.

Key Headline: Co. Louth has relatively high levels of child and youth dependency, with over 36% of the population aged 0-24 years. Given the size and significance of the county's existing population cohorts in the 0-4 and 5-12 age ranges, it is evident that the county's population has not yet peaked, and that there is likely to be a demand for children's and young people's services over the next decade.

Whilst Co. Louth is characterised by a relatively young population at family formation stage, it is also noted that national population projections suggest a high growth rate among those aged 65 years and over. 11% of the county population was aged over 65 years in 2011. This implies an anticipated expansion in care services for older people over the next decade.

The greatest concentrations of those over 65 years of age are to be found in Dundalk Urban No. 1 (21%), and Dundalk Urban N0. 3 (16%). The population of rural Co. Louth is notably older. More than 10% of people living in rural Co. Louth are aged 65 years or older (compared to 7% in urban areas). Over 25% in rural areas are aged 45-65 years (compared to 20% in urban areas).

Population Distribution Patterns

The county's proximity to Dublin and Belfast presents both a number of opportunities and challenges, with the south of the county being within commuting distance of the Greater Dublin Area (GDA).

Approximately 63% of Co. Louth's population lives in urban centres while 37% are defined as living in rural parts of the County, just marginally higher than the State urban/rural ratio.

Co. Louth is the third largest county for urban concentration of its population outside of the cities and Dublin Local Authorities.

Key Headline: For those living in rural areas of Co. Louth, there are already clear challenges around retaining local services, diminished job opportunities for young people, the welfare and care needs of older people in dispersed rural areas, and an increasing concern in relation to the safety and security of those living in rural and isolated communities.

2.5.2 Community Profile Headlines

It is likely that the growing young population in Co. Louth will create additional demands on health and social services for young people, as well as a requirement for an expansion of facilities in the recreation, leisure, arts, and sports sectors. In relation to the latter, an expansion of facilities in Co. Louth over the next six years will be particularly important given prevailing concerns around lifestyle, activity, and obesity issues among young people, and the proven capacity of sport to help young people develop positive behaviours that can have lifelong benefits for their future health.

Key Headline: In 2011 the EDs of Dundalk Urban No. 1 and Dundalk Urban No. 2 were classified as being disadvantaged. In 2011 7,506 people lived within SAPS classified as being *very disadvantaged*. 18,173 people lived within SAPs classified as being *disadvantaged*. Whilst Dundalk Urban No. 1 and Dundalk Urban No. 2 were classified as disadvantaged at ED level, Dundalk Rural contained eight SAPs classified as very disadvantaged. Whilst linked to the recession, there is a challenge as the economy improves to ensure that poverty and deprivation do not become embedded across pockets of Co. Louth.

Rural Locations

The population density is below the threshold of 150 persons per km², as defined by the EU Commission. Consequently, Co. Louth is considered a rural area for the purposes of the Rural Development Programme.

Continuing rural depopulation undermines sustainable rural communities. Whilst economic gravitational pulls draw more and more people into urban centres looking for employment and more ready access to essential services, it is undesirable to leave this process work its way through the population without introducing some policy measures to support those who would prefer to live in smaller rural communities. This could include those working in the agricultural sector, local craft workers, those working in local SMEs and micro-enterprises, and increasingly a growing cohort of creative and knowledge workers who simply need good internet connectivity, rather an urban location, to do their job.

Key Headline: Supporting rural communities will require measures to promote small pockets of population concentration and scale in order to sustain local primary health-care services, primary education, policing, post-offices and other community services.

Urban Locations and Commuting

The tendency for increasing urbanisation creates challenges for communities to develop, create bonds and operate as sustainable communities. This is largely due to the rapid growth that has taken place, which caused some formerly small close-knit areas across the county to expand exceptionally rapidly.

Key Headline: Urban growth and commuting has resulted in people coming to live in Co. Louth with little connectivity to the county, differing expectations and services akin to more rural counties. This causes challenges for both new and older residents.

2.5.3 Economic Profile Headlines

Population growth gives rise to a number of considerations relating to economic development. In a globally linked knowledge economy, people and the skills they possess, represent the leading source of competitive advantage. This human capital is, therefore, a key resource that distinguishes successful business regions from their underperforming counterparts. However, the capacity of these people to participate in and contribute to economic activity is predicated on a significant investment in education and healthcare. These are the principal channels through which people can be positioned to make an active contribution to the local economy. Therefore, a growing population base represents an economic resource that can potentially underpin economic growth.

Not all residents of Co. Louth must necessarily work in the local economy. Many people will naturally find employment and work in the greater Dublin area, or in other employment honey pots. However as residents of the county, the income they earn outside of the county will be spent, in large measure, within Co. Louth. This, in turn, sustains economic buoyancy within the county. Of the 44,232 people recorded as working and living in Co. Louth in 2011, 23% (10,301) travel to work outside of the county.

Key Headline: whilst some people may work in Dublin or elsewhere, they choose to live in Co. Louth. This implies that Co. Louth must continue to present itself as an attractive place to live and raise a family. Co. Louth will thrive if it has a growing population that has the necessary skills to earn an income in the modern economy. That income does not necessarily have to be earned in Co. Louth. It remains important that the support services referenced above are in place for these workers and their families.

Rural Dimension

The maintenance of sustainable rural communities will require a parallel programme of economic development measures in order to support continuing employment and/or self-employment in those communities. These supports must include skills development or skills renewal working through agencies such as Louth LEO and LMETB. To an increasing extent these interventions, if they are to be effective, must be innovative in terms of programme content, design, and delivery.

Key Headlines: A support intervention required to develop the rural economy must be the availability of high-speed fast broadband to all homes and small businesses across the county.

In terms of a renewed policy focus on community and economic development in rural areas, further initiatives could be taken at sectoral level to explore employment opportunities in sectors that have a natural fit with rural areas. This could include business start-ups and job creation in sectors such as agri-business, renewable energy, rural tourism, and rural transport.

2.5.4 Sustainable Transport

Co. Louth households have lower car ownership rates than the State average with 20% of households having no car compared to 18% in the State. Higher levels of 26% and 24% were recorded in Dundalk and Drogheda respectively.

While 40% of the Louth population have a travel time of less than 15 minutes compared to the 34% of the State population, almost half of the Dundalk population (49%) also have travel times of less than 15 minutes.

Only one-third of the Drogheda population have that luxury, while 43% travel between 15-45 minutes. 3% of the Co. Louth population and 4% of people from Drogheda have travel times in excess of 90 minutes compared to 2% of the State's population.

Key Headline: Most transport links in the county are key national arteries providing a connection between Dublin and the rest of the country. The absence of transport services that provide connections across rural communities within the county remains a significant deficit that undermines the sustainability of rural communities in Co. Louth.

Improved public transport and active transport (cycling and walking) can play a significant role in addressing this issue and in making it easier for workers to get to their place of employment. A government target in this regard is a reduction in work-related commuting by car from a current national modal share of 65% to 45% by 2020, and to increase bicycle commuting up to 10%. The achievement of this target in Co. Louth over the next five years represents a significant challenge.

2.5.5 Education

Co. Louth LECP notes that the share of early school leavers should be below 8% (currently 10.6%). Similarly, at least 60% of 30-34 year olds completing third level education (currently 49.4%). 36% of students in Co. Louth leave education before seventeen years of age compared to 30% in the State. Almost two out every hundred (2%) of the Co. Louth population have no formal education compared to the State at 1.4%.

There are clear spatial variations across Co. Louth in relation to educational attainment, with the highest levels mirroring the main urban centres. Poor educational attainment correlates strongly with other social factors (housing, health, employment) and can contribute to persistent social disadvantage.

Key Headline: Strong educational attainment is an essential platform to develop and maintain thriving communities. Communities without jobs are not sustainable. In the knowledge economy, education is the single most important factor in securing employment. Education and employment are, therefore, the essential stepping-stones to sustainable communities. In a knowledge economy, people become the dominant economic asset.

2.5.6 Environment

Local environment, amenities, heritage sites, parks, gardens, landscapes and streetscapes all make a significant contribution to the well-being of the community, visitors and businesses. They provide a sense of identity and cultural well-being, and are a key contributor to the local economy and play an important role in supporting and cultivating a vibrant community and voluntary sector and in underpinning socio-economic development.

Key Headline: The physical environment in which communities live is self-evidently important. All properly functioning communities must identify with their locality, and the people living within those communities will want to experience the unique '*sense of place*' that is associated with a well- functioning and well cared for living environment.

Many local companies have a business focus on delivering financial (profit) results, a sustainable environmental (or ecological) outcomes, together with positive social (community) outcomes. Of particular note is the fact that Co. Louth is endeavouring to support employment in the county by attracting further inward FDI investment and by supporting indigenous SMEs to grow and expand their businesses. The extent to which this strategy will succeed depends on whether the people being offered jobs in these companies believe that Co. Louth is an attractive place to live.

2.5.7 Current Economic Position

The CSO¹⁷ records that in Co. Louth there were 4,464 active businesses in 2012, compared with 4,739 in 2010. This represents a 6% reduction over the period, compared to a 5% reduction nationally, suggesting a slow rate of pick-up following the recession.

The CSO Census of Population 2011 shows considerable levels of sectoral employment in Professional Services and Commerce and Trade. This contrasts with the regional economic significance of the agricultural sector.

Table 15 – Summary Economic Position

Sector	Economic Summary
Agriculture	Co. Louth has relatively large, productive farms focused increasingly on milk production. The trend is for these farms to grow in size. Many farms in the area are now part of group bulk purchasing using main suppliers with just one base supplying a whole region, thus reducing the need for daytime footfall to local villages. Increased productivity and efficiency has led to a greater dependence on regional structures to the expense of local economic activity. The consultation process concluded that this has fuelled, in part, the decline of villages.
Marine Activity	The coastline contains the economically significant ports of Drogheda, Greenore, Dundalk and Clogherhead. The coastline is of high visual and environmental amenity value, affording tourism-related opportunity relative to its current underperformance.

/continued

¹⁷ CSO StatBank Table BRA08

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Sector	Economic Summary
Construction	The Construction Industry was traditionally one of the main sources of off-farm employment. While construction will recover in part, it will never again reach the employment levels attained in the 2000's.
Industry	Regionally there has been significant decline in manufacturing, but a reciprocal growth in international services. DKIT provides an important opportunity, however, the Dundalk Gateway has the third lowest of third-level attainment of all of the Gateways.
Retail	Retail in many small villages is under pressure due to the lack of economic critical mass within the villages and their surrounding hinterlands, with the numbers working on farms declining due to increased scale, and mechanisation. The Dundalk Gateway Report notes that the number of retail units is higher than the Gateway average.
Rural Tourism	Rural tourism in County Louth has seen a reduction in spend between 2008-2013 due to the economic downturn. The level of tourism-related farm-based activities is relatively low, offering an opportunity for the county to broaden its base to encompass activity tourism in all its forms: food tourism, cultural tourism as well as the traditional seaside vacation. Whilst the county sits on the arterial M1 link, it may not be benefitting significantly from this in terms of visitor attraction. The consultative process suggested that opportunity exists to leverage greater economic benefit from the existing attractions through better marketing and presentation.

3 Participative Planning

3.1 Consultation Process

3.1.1 Community Consultation Stage

The community consultation stage for the Louth LDS employed three key methodologies for data collection: -

1. An online survey, accessible from the LLP website, was advertised in the media, and was made available to all members of the public;
2. A series of stakeholder interviews with key activists and workers identified for their technical knowledge, personal experience and professional roles in relation to the LEADER Programme themes; *and*
3. A series of public consultation meetings were held in different parts of the county, each targeting a particular Municipal District.

The key engagement principles that were used in all of the consultation meetings conformed to the requirements of Community-Led Local Development (CLLD), ensuring that the process was participant-driven. In large part this saw the agenda move from the 'centre' (facilitators, experts) to the participants. Self-managing and self-reporting task groups were formed to develop and refine feedback from discussions.

Meetings were designed to be informal and inclusive; the informal engagement ethos allowed diverse groups into the process, and facilitated collective, creative thinking around issues, and, ownership of results. The key informant interviews, focus groups and public meetings were documented and later transcribed into meeting notes.

From the outset it was agreed that the outcomes of the public consultative process would be recorded in such a way that individual contributions would remain anonymous, except where there was an expressed request for the individual or group to be identified. This was agreed so that there would be no impediment to contribution during the breakout workshops, which formed an element of each of the consultation meetings.

Table 16 – Key Public Consultation Meetings

Date	Venue	Focus Area	Consultees	Attendees
2 nd November 2015	Ballymascanlon House Hotel, Dundalk	County-Wide Agricultural Community	Co. Louth IFA Members	40
3 rd November 2015	Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford	Communities of the Cooley Peninsula	Community Meeting #1	30
4 th November 2015	d-Hotel, Drogheda	Communities of South Co. Louth	Community Meeting #2	30
10 th November 2015	Crowne Plaza Hotel, Dundalk	Communities of North Co. Louth	Community Meeting #3	25
11 th November 2015	Grove Hotel, Dunleer	Communities of Mid Co. Louth	Community Meeting #4	35

Appendix 11.3 provides a full profile of the key consultative meetings that informed the development of the LDS. Appendix 11.4 summarises the feedback obtained from the consultation meetings.

3.1.2 Engagement with Hard-to-Reach Groups

To engage with hard-to-reach and more distant groups and individuals in rural areas, four intervention tools were employed: -

1. The Implementer has used its network links with the Local Employment Services (LES) in Drogheda and Dundalk, the Jobclub in Dundalk, the TÚS Programme (with 194 participants based in 42 community projects countywide). In developing the LDS, the Implementer has looked at how best the needs being expressed by participants in these schemes could be assisted without duplicating provision.
2. The Implementer has regular contact with voluntary organisations countywide, and has a comprehensive overview in terms of the needs of these organisations. This knowledge was used in developing the LDS.
3. The above network included engagement with the Tús Participants, including members of soccer clubs, GAA clubs, Age Action Groups, Meals on Wheels, Disability Groups, Social Economy Groups, Social Housing Providers, etc. The implementer's interaction with the members and participants of these organisations informed the LDS process.
4. The Implementer has also consulted with the Intreo/LES Office, and the Youth Employment approach has been developed from this source, taking full cognisance of all the Social Inclusion Initiatives in place throughout the area.

The outcome of this process was that it was evident that the Labour Market Activation strategy through Intreo and Tús, aligned to support training from LMETB was providing successful outcomes, and that it was important not to dilute or detract from their focus and actions. It was also evident that many community and voluntary sector organisations were receiving significant investment in terms of labour from DSP through supports such as Tús, CE, CES, and Internships.

The impact was a requirement that the LDS Strategy was required to be more focused on the needs of the areas and actions that were not receiving direct intervention from the State, and ensuring that the LDS complimented the activities of the State and the community and voluntary sector, whilst avoiding duplication or overlap with both and focusing on Rural Job Creation activities.

3.2 SWOT Analysis

The SWOT¹⁸ analysis reflects the outcomes of the community consultation, focus group meetings, the statutory agency inputs, the performance review of the previous LEADER Programme, the policy environment, and the demographic and socio-economic baselines.

As a core element of the public consultation participants were specifically invited to comment on each of the RDP Themes and Objectives. These responses were then considered by the LDS Working Group against the outcomes of all of the other elements of the information-gathering processes that underpin the development of the LDS.

¹⁸ SWOT: *(Internal) Strengths, (Internal) Weaknesses, (External) Opportunities and (External) Threats*

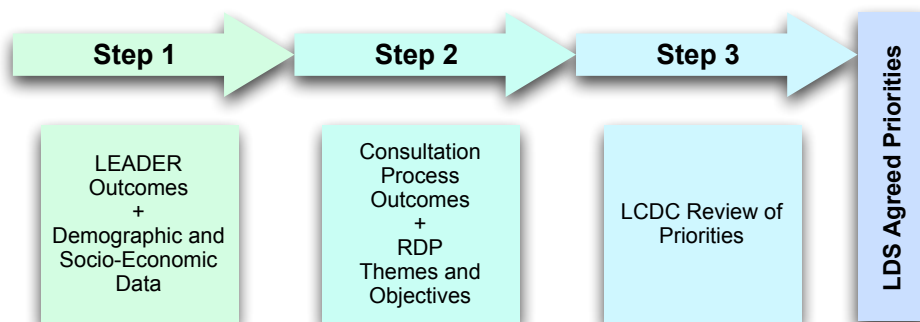
Table 17 – SWOT Analysis

Internal Strengths	Internal Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> High amenity-value coastal scenery and villages. <input type="checkbox"/> High amenity-value natural environment. <input type="checkbox"/> High amenity-value built environment within certain town and villages. <input type="checkbox"/> Quality of life. <input type="checkbox"/> Favourable location on the Dublin-Belfast Eastern Economic Corridor with access to the main international and national markets. <input type="checkbox"/> Strong transport infrastructure, including the M1 Motorway, rail services, port services and proximity to international airports. <input type="checkbox"/> Skilled labour resource - Drogheda and Dundalk have a large and varied skills pool, including substantial commuter populations. <input type="checkbox"/> Positive experience of many rural communities in successfully accessing previous iterations of the LEADER Programme. <input type="checkbox"/> DKIT with a reputation in <i>green</i> industries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Limited capacity to leverage the Dublin-Belfast Corridor since the majority of journeys pass through the county. <input type="checkbox"/> Dominance of two major settlements within a small county. <input type="checkbox"/> No previous experience of the LEADER Programme within Dundalk. <input type="checkbox"/> Community structures are weaker in some areas. <input type="checkbox"/> Third-level educational attainment rates are lower than national averages. <input type="checkbox"/> Relatively low rates of IT penetration – poor broadband quality/service in certain (rural) areas. <input type="checkbox"/> Relatively low rates of farm diversification into visitor-related activities. <input type="checkbox"/> Limited recreational and visitor infrastructure beyond the established honey-pots.
External Opportunities	External Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Proximity to Dublin and Belfast Airports. <input type="checkbox"/> Implementation of <i>Ireland's Ancient East</i> tourism marketing strategy. <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunity to leverage the Dublin-Belfast Corridor for enterprise. <input type="checkbox"/> Markets in close proximity for offerings building on coastal scenery and villages, the natural and built environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Logistic competition in all enterprise sectors from Dublin and Belfast. <input type="checkbox"/> Decline of rural villages. <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawal of services from rural villages and smaller towns. <input type="checkbox"/> Change of lifestyle. <input type="checkbox"/> Change of retail patterns.

3.3 Local Development Strategy Priorities

The development of the LDS priorities was undertaken using a three-step process.

Figure 11 – LDS Priorities Development Process



In developing the LDS the individual needs have been distilled down into strategic actions that can be addressed by the RDP LEADER Programme across the county, taking cognisance of the statistical data relevant to the territory, the operational actions and activities of LMETB, Louth LEO, Fáilte Ireland, EI, DSP, BIM, SICAP, HSE, DkIT and the many organisations involved in enterprise, tourism and social inclusion support.

The outcome of the process identified the following priorities: -

Table 18 – Identified Overarching Priorities

Priority Theme	Characteristic	Priorities
Enterprise	Viable businesses offering local, good quality jobs.	Artisan Food ICT Mariculture Office Space Social Enterprise as a Job Creator Town Centre Regeneration
Tourism	Viable businesses offering local, good quality jobs.	Activity Tourism Business Development Based on sensitive development of heritage, culture and environment Bird Watching Culture – Music, Literature, and Visual Arts Cycling and Walking Marine Based Activities
Village Enhancement		Tidy Towns Village Regeneration
Community Facilities		Community Halls Play Areas Sheltered Housing
Rural Youth		Younger People Ageing Population
Rural Services		Shops in Villages Services Post Offices
Environment		Alternative Energy Biodiversity Awareness Raising
Capacity Building		Community Organisations
Accessibility		Need to Reduce Bureaucracy

Economic Dimension - The process above concluded that it was necessary for the LDS to encourage and sustain economic development in the face of the following key indicators: -

1. Levels of unemployment, particularly amongst younger people;
2. Relatively higher age dependency ratio in the rural population;
3. Diminishing rural village viability;
4. Decreasing critical mass, thus making service delivery uneconomic in rural areas;
5. Specialisation and mechanisation on farms resulting in decreased employment opportunities, especially for casual labour;
6. Significant unrealised niche tourism product development opportunities in rural areas;
7. Opportunity afforded by the presence of DkIT;
8. An indigenous base of ICT, professional services, and traded services business activity with the capacity for further development; *and*
9. An existing volunteer base in many rural areas with the capacity to support new diversified activity.

Social Inclusion Dimension - It was concluded that there is a need to consider selective community infrastructure provision, community capacity building tools, and targeted youth initiatives in order to: -

1. Maximise the focus of the investment and its impact, given that there is a very significant level of investment to address key aspects of social exclusion delivered through DSP, TUSLA, SICAP, DJE, DCYA, HSE, DES, LMETB, and others;

2. Avoid potential for duplication of resources in areas already covered by the organisations and initiatives listed above; *and*
3. Maintain the focus of the LDS such that it does not inadvertently replace the actions and resourcing of mainstream agencies.

Environmental Dimension - Focus on training and building awareness in rural communities on the importance of understanding biodiversity and water quality issues. To underpin community awareness building, it has been further identified that support for exemplar environmental projects on biodiversity, and green energy projects should be considered.

3.3.1 Agreed LDS Themes and Objectives

At the conclusion of the process above, the following themes and objectives have been agreed for Louth LDS.

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

Table 19 – Agreed LDS Themes and Objectives

Themes	Economic Development	Social Inclusion	Rural Environment
Sub-Theme	Rural Tourism	Basic Services	Protection and Sustainable Use of Water Resources
	<p>Activity tourism, and sports tourism product development, maritime activities.</p> <p>Cultural and heritage tourism product development.</p> <p>Eco tourism product development.</p> <p><i>Training provision through LMETB/Fáilte Ireland Marketing - Fáilte Ireland and Louth County Council.</i></p>	<p>Targeted at hard to reach Communities</p> <p>Open Call Process -invite villages to submit bids for support.</p> <p>Tender Process - Governance training for established and new voluntary groups.</p> <p>Tender Process – Training to develop Social Enterprises.</p> <p>Tender Process - Training for communities to support group development and renewal.</p>	<p>Tender Process – Environmental awareness training.</p>
Sub-Theme	Enterprise Development	Youth	Protection and Improvement of Local Biodiversity
	<p>Assist and invest in development of ICT and traded services – businesses based in rural villages.</p> <p>Assist development of rural food enterprises.</p> <p>Investment in digital and new media.</p> <p><i>RDP will not provide soft supports to Micro SME's; this will be the remit of Louth LEO.</i></p>	<p>Tender Process – Training for young rural dwellers of 16-24 years of age.</p> <p>Support for arts and activity-based community initiatives.</p> <p><i>LMETB to support training initiatives for young LTU's.</i></p> <p><i>SICAP to support training for Young LTU's.</i></p> <p><i>DkIT to drive improved 3rd level access and attainment.</i></p>	<p>Tender Process – Training initiative for local communities in practical biodiversity projects and understanding.</p>
Sub-Theme	Rural Towns		Development of Renewable Energy
	<p>Open Call - assist in creation of modern enterprise space.</p> <p>Open Call - assist in the development of rural economic zones. This action will link to the LEO REDZ project and future projects.</p> <p>Tender process - training support to rural communities on creating a local enterprise culture.</p> <p>Tender process - training support to rural communities in strategy development and village plans.</p> <p>Tender process - training for communities to support group development and renewal.</p>		<p>Tender Process – Development of exemplary, rural community based projects</p>
Sub-Theme	Broadband		
	<p>Support DCENR policy.</p> <p>Support appropriate local community innovation.</p> <p><i>LEADER/RDP will not be investing capital funds into broadband provision.</i></p>		

4 LDS Action Plan

The proposals contained in the Co. Louth Local Development Strategy have been constructed to synthesise the years of positive professional experience gained by the members of LAG and its implementing partner Louth LEADER Partnership. This experience has been gained in the development and successful delivery of predecessor LEADER Programmes, and currently in the delivery of SICAP and other significant supports across the county for over 20 years.

This practical knowledge of rural development in Co. Louth has been applied to the identified needs of the local population, and to the new requirements presented by the current challenges. The analysis of the rural development policy arena, the socio-economic and demographic trends, the review of previous programme delivery, and the identified needs harvested by the CLLD participative planning process over the course of 2015 clearly indicates a number of core strategic aims for the Co. Louth LDS over the coming six-year period.

This strategy has been engineered to identify the best approach for achieving these goals. The foundations for this plan build on previous programmes and initiatives and draws heavily from the current trends identified in the socio-economic and demographic analysis, the review of the challenges and successes experienced in the previous programme round, and by those people most in need that did not have the opportunity to benefit.

Co. Louth LAG has agreed ambitious targets with the implementer under the Rural Development Programme across the full range of measures. The programme will seek to positively influence community groups and all rural dwellers in the county. The LAG aims to build stronger communities and reinforce the enterprise culture in the region. Those most in need in society will be targeted within the rural economy, but the company will embrace the understanding that the RDP is open and accessible to all rural dwellers.

4.1 Process for Action Plan Development

The process and assessment of needs identified in Section 2, and summarised in Section 3 provides the basis for the actions outlined below in this section. In developing the plan, the area needs analysis outlined in the previous chapter is segregated into: -

- Economic
- Social Inclusion
- Environment

4.2 RDP Vision, Themes and Sub-Themes

Policy

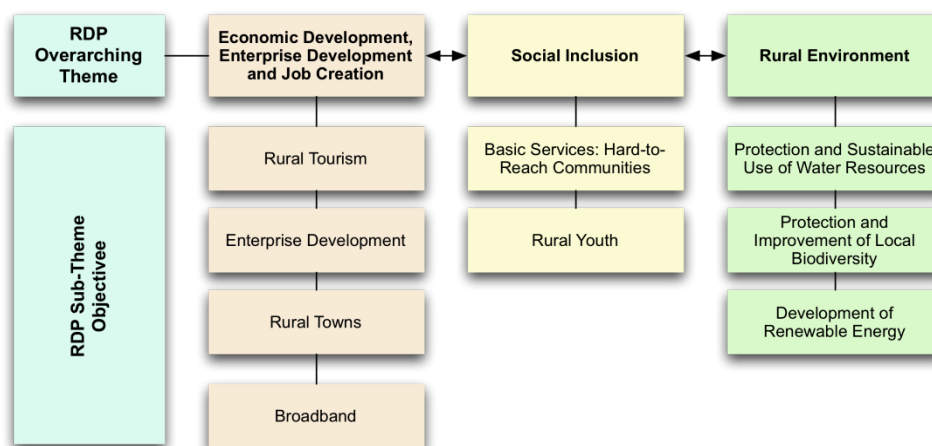
LEADER 2014-2020 calls for a focus on addressing poverty and social exclusion, particularly given the significant economic and social changes that have taken place within the last decade. The Co. Louth LDS will be managed and delivered in a manner that prioritises actions that will have the greatest impact in this regard.

Vision

Our vision for Co. Louth is the creation of a sustainable and vibrant rural economy in harmony with our built and natural environment. It will harness our natural resources and underpinned by learning and development leading to resilient local communities.

4.3 Plan Structure

The Action Plan has been prepared in line with the following programme structure.



Strategies will be shaped to target and support disadvantaged communities and groups in the planning and creation of proposals and in the development and management of projects.

Strategic Priorities will be considered in the context of: -

- ❑ *Capacity and Scale* – Investments that can ‘seed’ development (Quality rather than Quantity);
- ❑ *Innovation* – Creating and transferring best practice;
- ❑ *Leverage* - Attracting capital and resources from multiple sources;
- ❑ *Longevity* – Creating change that will continue beyond the RDP lifetime;
- ❑ *Social Inclusion Impacts* - enabling more inclusive, resilient and vibrant communities; *and*
- ❑ *Sustainability* – Focus on positive social, economic and/or environmental traits

Strategic Planning will take cognisance of the needs, opportunities and potential of the whole of the county.

Co. Louth LDS will promote and enable a ‘Community Led’ and ‘Bottom-Up’ approach through actions of: -

- ❑ The LAG
- ❑ Evaluation Committees
- ❑ The Implementer

The LAG will ensure a balance input of resources across the county, maximising the impact potential of the LEADER 2014-2020 investments through its links with public and private stakeholders, and will encourage inter-regional actions and facilitate the transfer of best practice.

The Evaluation Committee will ensure that community led strategies are supported to reflect their local geo-economic realities in terms of needs, opportunities and potential.

The Implementer will use its significant local knowledge support a platform for communities to prioritise collectively their own Strategic Vision for the period 2014-2020 and the role that LEADER will play in this context.

4.3.1 Louth LDS Roadmap

The following section details the agreed Louth LDS action framework. This provides for a total of ten Local Objectives that are to be realised through a suite of twenty-six Strategic Actions.

Figure 12 – Louth LDS Roadmap



4.4 Action Framework

4.4.1 Theme 1: Economic, Enterprise & Job Creation

Title of Local Objective	LO1: Activity, Adventure, Heritage and Cultural Rural Tourism
LEADER Theme	Economic and Enterprise Development and Job Creation
LEADER Sub-Theme	1.1 Rural Tourism
Rationale for the Objective	<p><i>Aim: To build local business and community offerings in the activity, adventure, heritage and culture visitor sectors, whilst developing Co. Louth as a tourism destination.</i></p> <p>Louth Economic Forum <i>Tourism and Heritage Action Plan</i> notes that Co. Louth occupies a unique position as the hub for the Boyne Valley, the Cooley Peninsula, the Mourne and Slieve Gullion Region, including two of Fáilte Ireland's top Tourism Development Destinations. However, to fully capitalise on this locational advantage it will be necessary to ensure that the quality of visitor offerings, and customer service delivery is of world-class standard.</p> <p>The <i>Tourism and Heritage Action Plan</i> identifies the opportunity to increase the number of visitors coming to Co. Louth, to increase their 'dwell time' and thereby to maximise their spend in the county, and increase revenue and sustainable job creation. However, Co. Louth's location on the arterial M1 corridor also presents a challenge in that the potential market is generally passing through, rather than seeing the county as a destination in its own right.</p> <p>The Action Plan also identifies an opportunity to 'gain the heritage dividend' through the sustainable exploitation of heritage to attract tourists to Co. Louth and in particular, the rural areas beyond the existing honeypots.</p> <p>The BIM FLAG Strategy for the North East concludes that there are relatively low levels of employment in the tourism sector in the coastal region suggesting an under-performance in tourism, through being under the 'shadow' of Dublin, and being effectively by-passed by the transportation infrastructure. Marine tourism development needs to be specialised and distinctive to enable it to grow based on its landscape and current tourism service and attractions profile.</p> <p>From the above it is clear that there is potential for increasing employment and creating cultural, recreational and social opportunities for local people and visitors alike. Food-related tourism is of potential importance to the local economy, particularly in respect of speciality producers, markets and food-related events.</p> <p>Successive LEADER Programmes have created a strong base for tourism development across Co. Louth, and the community consultation process reinforced the understanding of the role that the Programme would have to play in supporting further local development in the sector. Key areas for support highlighted through consultations with local interests include the need for research to support tourism investment proposals, advice and support for start-ups, expertise and support for cooperative tourism marketing and promotion, skills training and networking with industry colleagues and building wider cooperative destination marketing platforms.</p>

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Link to the LECP	<p>The Local Objective references a number of LECP economic objectives including the creation of a Co. Louth <i>Brand</i> to attract and promote business and quality of life (003), and supporting the development of a related tourism and marketing plan (021).</p> <p>Economic Objective 021: Develop a tourism and visitor marketing programme as part of '<i>Brand Louth</i>'.</p> <p>Economic Objective 021: Develop a tourism and visitor marketing programme as part of '<i>Brand Louth</i>'.</p> <p>Economic Objective 022: Support an increased awareness of and knowledge of Co. Louth's heritage and culture.</p> <p>Economic Objective 023: Implement priority rural development and LEADER projects.</p> <p>Community Goal 7: Empower community innovation, entrepreneurship and enterprise to support urban and rural development.</p> <p>Community Goal 8: Value and protect our built heritage and natural environment to enhance the lives of those who live, work and visit in the county.</p>
Financial Allocation	€794,260.69
No. of Strategic Actions	5

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

Code	LO1:SA1
Title of Strategic Action	Visitor Destination Promotion and Marketing
Brief Description of Strategic Action	<p>The profile of Co. Louth is sub-optimal in comparison to surrounding counties and through this action LAG will provide support to projects that establish a more effective approach in developing the promotion the county as a 'Visitor Destination'. Key to the approach will be the establishment of a strong link to the promotion vehicle and brand identification package being developed by Fáilte Ireland to support the 'Ancient East' initiative.</p> <p>The action will support a range of projects that promote the county's potential (and reputation/brand recognition) as a tourist destination through the <u>promotion and marketing of new and existing visitor attractions</u>, as well as protecting the social and cultural assets of the area in order to: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Develop new and sensitively expand existing tourism products and services that utilise the natural assets of the area, including the coastal zone, harbours, rivers, and open countryside. ❑ Develop attractions and events to promote heritage and culture, history and archaeology, genealogy and traditions. ❑ Develop niche tourism offerings, notably eco-tourism, water-based activity, angling and food tourism. This approach will build upon the quality products that already exist in the area, and support marketing initiatives beyond the developed tourism assets. <p>The supported promotional actions will focus on cultural, heritage and adventure tourism, and may be supported by increased quality accommodation provision.</p> <p>In the development of promotion packages it is intended that a number of innovative tools will be used, including new communications technologies and media, and specialist technical assistance to ensure that tourism providers, communities and businesses can collaborate in planning for future tourism opportunities in partnership with tourism agencies and external tourism stakeholders.</p> <p>The coordination function will be delivered with key local partners, Fáilte Ireland. Louth County Council and Louth Tourism Offices.</p>
Link to LECP	Economic Objective 021: Develop a tourism and visitor marketing programme as part of 'Brand Louth'.
Primary Target Group(s)	Tourism groups, tourism providers, community and voluntary groups, angling, walking groups, cycling groups, farmers, hospitality sector, local entrepreneurs, culture, heritage groups and environmental groups.
Geographic Area	The call for proposals will be across Co. Louth.
Organisation who will deliver the action	Louth LEADER Partnership
Collaborating Organisations	Louth County Council, Fáilte Ireland, Coillte, National Trails Office, Inland Fisheries Ireland, Bird Watch Ireland and Tourism Ireland, Chambers of Commerce, Louth LEO, North East FLAG, local tourism organisations, recreation, culture, heritage and environmental groups, PPN Structures and local interests.
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	Q2 2016 - Q4 2018 During the period a mix of rolling calls and targeted sectoral and geographically defined calls for applications will be employed.

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Anticipated Outputs/Indicators and Targets	
Number of projects funded – new	2
Number of projects funded – existing (and when founded)	0
Number of jobs created – new (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)	0
Number of existing jobs sustained (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)	0
Number of each type of initiative funded:	
Activity/Adventure Tourism (angling, walking, cycling)	0
Culture & Heritage Tourism	0
Rural Recreation	0
Eco-Tourism	0
Health & Wellness Tourism	0
Marine & Water-based Tourism	0
Agri-Tourism	0
Cluster/network of Tourism Businesses	0
Promotion of area as “destination”	2
Value of Funding:	
Capital	€0.00
Training	€0.00
Marketing	€10,000.00
Animation	€0.00
Number of Visitors	1,000

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

Code	LO1:SA2
Title of Strategic Action	Culture and Heritage Tourism Product Development
Brief Description of Strategic Action	<p>The strategic action will support co-investment in targeted and innovative tourism product and experience development that capitalises on the natural, cultural and heritage resources of Co. Louth, particularly where these lie beyond the established existing visitor destinations.</p> <p>The main focus of this action is to promote Co. Louth's potential (and reputation/brand recognition) as a tourist destination through expansion of existing, and development of new attractions as well as protecting the social and cultural assets of the area in order to develop attractions and events to promote heritage and culture, history and archaeology, genealogy, military history, Irish language and traditions.</p> <p>The domestic Irish market has been one of the main drivers of tourism business in rural Co. Louth. Investment in local festivals and events are one significant area that can encourage return visits.</p> <p><i>Fáilte Ireland report that 'From an international perspective, figures show that approximately 300,000 overseas holidaymakers attended a festival or cultural event each year and spend on average €900 each while in Ireland. This equates to more than a quarter of a billion Euro of tourism spend.'</i></p> <p>Working with its Partners, Fáilte Ireland and Louth Tourism Offices, Louth LAG will provide support for tourism providers, communities and businesses to take a lead role in collaborative structures to oversee local cultural and heritage festivals and events.</p> <p>The consultation process also identified the potential importance that history should play in the development of new visitor attractions, beyond those already developed. The following examples were noted: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ As part of the ancient kingdom of Oriel, Co. Louth is the setting for the epic Irish mythological tale, the Táin Bó Cúailnge (Cattle Raid of Cooley); ❑ Co. Louth is home to a number of monastic ruins dating from the 5th and 6th centuries, which have generally been well developed as attractions; ❑ The arrival of the Normans, in the 12th century, ushered in a period of great change and upheaval; attracted by the fertile plains of the Boyne, the Anglo-Norman gentry set about subduing the local population and building houses and castles. ❑ The profile of Louth is sub-optima (evidenced by the poor awareness of Louth's leading status in terms of number and quality of 'souterain' sites) in comparison to surrounding counties. <p>Through this action the LAG will provide support to projects that promote and improve access to local historical sites, and so appeal to cultural tourists.</p> <p>From a cultural perspective, the domestic market has been one of the main drivers of tourism business in Co. Louth. A report on cultural tourism by Fáilte Ireland indicates that cultural tourists to Ireland are economically attractive, with income levels in advance of the average for the broader population. Cultural tourists demonstrate higher than average spending while on holiday.</p> <p>Fáilte Ireland has estimated that in 2009, 3.3 million visitors to Ireland engaged in what can be described as heritage/culture tourism and spent an estimated €1.9 billion while in Ireland.</p> <p>In the context of local cultural product development it is noted that in the 12th century, Co. Louth consisted of three sub-kingdoms each subject to separate over-kingdoms: Conaille (Ulaidh); Fir Rois (Airgialla); and, the Fir Arda Ciannachta (Midhe). The whole area became part of the O'Carroll Kingdom of Airgialla (Oriel) early in the 12th century.</p> <p>The community consultation process identified the opportunity to promote the Irish language and culture, particularly the '<i>Oriel Dialect</i>' as one significant area that can encourage return visits.</p>

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Link to LECP	Economic Objective 021: Develop a tourism and visitor marketing programme as part of 'Brand Louth'. Economic Objective 022: Support an increased awareness of and knowledge of Co. Louth's heritage and culture. Economic Objective 023: Implement priority rural development and LEADER projects. Community Goal 8: Value and protect our built heritage and natural environment to enhance the lives of those who live, work and visit in the county.
Primary Target Group(s)	Tourism groups, tourism product providers, community and voluntary groups, angling, walking groups, cycling groups, farmers, hospitality sector, local entrepreneurs, culture and heritage groups and environmental groups.
Geographic Area	The call for proposals will be across Co. Louth, with a particular emphasis on the rural areas.
Organisation who will deliver the action	Louth LEADER Partnership will support community groups and businesses.
Collaborating Organisations	Louth County Council, Fáilte Ireland, Coillte, National Trails Office, Inland Fisheries Ireland, North East FLAG, Bird Watch Ireland and Tourism Ireland, Chambers of Commerce, Louth LEO, local tourism organisations, PPN Structures, and other interested parties.
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	Q3 2016 - Q4 2020 During the delivery period a mix of rolling calls and targeted calls for applications will be employed.
Anticipated Outputs/Indicators and Targets	
Number of projects funded – new	2
Number of projects funded – existing (and when founded)	12
Number of jobs created – new (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)	2
Number of existing jobs sustained (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)	10
Number of each type of initiative funded:	
Activity/Adventure Tourism (angling, walking, cycling)	0
Culture & Heritage Tourism	14
Rural Recreation	0
Eco-Tourism	0
Health & Wellness Tourism	0
Marine & Water-based Tourism	0
Agri-Tourism	0
Cluster/network of Tourism Businesses	0
Promotion of area as "destination" (website development, etc.)	0
Value of Funding:	
Capital	€120,000.00
Training	€0.00
Marketing	€30,000.00
Animation	€0.00
Number of Visitors	3,000

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

Code	LO1:SA3
Title of Strategic Action	Activity and Adventure Tourism Product Development
Brief Description of Strategic Action	<p>Fáilte Ireland reports that: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Overseas visitors engaging in activity tourism in Ireland were worth €1.2 billion in 2011; <input type="checkbox"/> Activity tourism visitors stay longer (10 days) than the average overseas holiday maker (7 days); <i>and</i> <input type="checkbox"/> The spend of activity tourism visitors is 45% higher than the average overseas visitor. <p>Given its strategic location midway between Dublin and Belfast, and its favourable road, rail, air and sea connectivity, it is considered that support should be provided to targeted and innovative tourism product and experience development that capitalises on the potential for activity and adventure tourism product in Co. Louth, particularly where these opportunities lie beyond the established existing visitor destinations.</p> <p>Adventure and activity tourism is supported by the development of trails and cycleways offers where these offer opportunity to provide low impact environmental infrastructure to support new and increased tourism activity in line with the National Trails Strategy. This action will support the development of new and existing facilities to national standards.</p> <p>Because of its relatively small size, Co. Louth was noted throughout the consultations as having a unique opportunity to provide marine and coastal access and facilities.</p> <p>Activity and Adventure Tourism product development will be achieved through the provision of support to create integrated plans to include Capacity Building, Business Planning, Branding, Marketing and Operational Management for the development of Activity Based Visitor Attractions. It will flank the objectives in this sector of the North East FLAG communities to support the creation of new and innovative activities and infrastructure to celebrate the marine and water-based environment. Beyond the coastal margin, the strategic action will support the development of activity and adventure tourism product in locations that are outside of the traditional influence of the tourism honeypots.</p> <p>The creation of small- and medium-scale coastal paths, greenways and loop walks were identified as a particular opportunity during the consultative process, and this strategic action will support their development in line with local environmental and access constraints.</p> <p>The action will also add potential value to the <i>Ancient East</i> initiative, and to this end close liaison will be maintained with Fáilte Ireland.</p>
Link to LECP	<p>Economic Objective 021: Develop a tourism and visitor marketing programme as part of <i>'Brand Louth'</i>.</p> <p>Economic Objective 023: Implement priority rural development and LEADER projects.</p> <p>Community Goal 4: Provide environments and conditions that support healthy, self-directed, fulfilled and purposeful lives.</p> <p>Community Goal 8: Value and protect our built heritage and natural environment to enhance the lives of those who live, work and visit in the county.</p>
Primary Target Group(s)	Tourism groups, tourism product providers, community and voluntary groups, angling, walking groups, cycling groups, farmers, hospitality sector, local entrepreneurs, culture and heritage groups and environmental groups.
Geographic Area	The call for proposals will be across Co. Louth, with a particular emphasis on the rural areas.
Organisation who will deliver the action	Louth LEADER Partnership will support community groups and businesses.
Collaborating Organisations	Louth County Council, Fáilte Ireland, Coillte, National Trails Office, Inland Fisheries Ireland, North East FLAG, Bird Watch Ireland and Tourism Ireland, Chambers of Commerce, Louth LEO, local walking organisations, local sports clubs, local cycling organisations, local tourism organisations, PPN Structures, and other interested parties.

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	Q3 2016 - Q4 2020 During the period a mix of rolling calls and targeted geographically defined calls for quality applications will be employed.
Anticipated Outputs/Indicators and Targets	
Number of projects funded – new	10
Number of projects funded – existing (and when founded)	8
Number of jobs created – new (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)	2
Number of existing jobs sustained (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)	6
Number of each type of initiative funded:	
Activity/Adventure Tourism (angling, walking, cycling)	18
Culture & Heritage Tourism	0
Rural Recreation	0
Eco-Tourism	0
Health & Wellness Tourism	0
Marine & Water-based Tourism	0
Agri-Tourism	0
Cluster/network of Tourism Businesses	0
Promotion of area as “destination” (website development, etc.)	0
Value of Funding:	
Capital	€280,000.00
Training	€0.00
Marketing	€51,704.28
Animation	€0.00
Number of Visitors	3,000

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

Code	LO1:SA4
Title of Strategic Action	Alternative Accommodation Facilities Provision
Brief Description of Strategic Action	<p>This strategic action will facilitate the provision of quality mobile home, camping, glamping and other alternative forms of accommodation facilities to improve the diversity of visitor experience offerings. Presently, there is seen to be dearth of appropriate provision of mobile visitor accommodation, effectively precluding the development of this potential visitor sector.</p> <p>Fáilte Ireland, in their publication 'A New Vision for the Irish Caravan and Camping Sector' report that <i>'there is clearly a defined market for the caravan and camping product and there is a resurgence of interest in camping and outdoor pursuits generally. The domestic market is strong, and anecdotal evidence from operators also indicates that many Eastern Europeans currently settled here are keen campers and this is helping to grow the home market further'</i>. There is evidence of scope to develop some traditional and new caravan and camping products within the sector, particularly along walking routes or in remote scenic areas – one such niche product is high-end Glamping.</p> <p>It is noted that the sector presents challenges relating to environmental sensitivity (particularly in respect of motor homes). However, the consultation process revealed that there is capacity to develop the sector further in Co. Louth, particularly given the relatively good vehicular accessibility afforded by the arterial north-south motorway linkages. Such development will support the creation of: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> New tourism products and services that utilise the natural assets of the area, including the harbours, coast, rivers, open countryside etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Niche tourism offerings, including eco-tourism, water-based, angling and food tourism, building on the quality products that already exist in the area and support initiatives to link speciality producers, restaurants, farm shops and markets.
Link to LECP	<p>Economic Objective 021: Develop a tourism and visitor marketing programme as part of 'Brand Louth'.</p> <p>Economic Objective 023: Implement priority rural development and LEADER projects.</p> <p>Community Goal 8: Value and protect our built heritage and natural environment to enhance the lives of those who live, work and visit in the county.</p>
Primary Target Group(s)	Tourism groups, tourism product providers, community and voluntary groups, farmers, hospitality sector, and local entrepreneurs.
Geographic Area	The call for proposals will be across Co. Louth, with a particular emphasis on the rural areas.
Organisation who will deliver the action	Louth LEADER Partnership will support community groups and businesses.
Collaborating Organisations	Louth County Council, Fáilte Ireland, local camping and caravanning organisations, local tourism organisations, PPN Structures, and other interested parties.
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	<p>Q3 2016 - Q4 2020</p> <p>During the period a mix of rolling calls and geographically defined calls for applications will be employed.</p>

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Anticipated Outputs/Indicators and Targets	
Number of projects funded – new	6
Number of projects funded – existing (and when founded)	4
Number of jobs created – new (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)	4
Number of existing jobs sustained (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)	6
Number of each type of initiative funded:	
Activity/Adventure Tourism (angling, walking, cycling)	0
Culture & Heritage Tourism	0
Rural Recreation	2
Eco-Tourism	4
Health & Wellness Tourism	2
Marine & Water-based Tourism	0
Agri-Tourism	2
Cluster/network of Tourism Businesses	0
Promotion of area as “destination” (website development, etc.)	0
Value of Funding:	
Capital	€200,000.00
Training	€0.00
Marketing	€25,000.00
Animation	€0.00
Number of Visitors	2,000

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

Code	LO1:SA5
Title of Strategic Action	Rural Tourism Capacity Building, Training, Mentoring and Technical Assistance
Brief Description of Strategic Action	<p>This action will focus on engaging with and up-skilling individuals, communities and business to enable rural tourism opportunities to be considered and realised in Co. Louth.</p> <p>Capacity building, training and technical assistance will focus on innovation, new and existing product and experience development, new marketing platforms and skill development to improve effectiveness, efficiency, employability and the visitor experience.</p> <p>A specific need has been identified to improve the quality of local knowledge among workers in tourism related business so as to facilitate meaningful engagement for visitors with the offerings of the county. This element of the action will focus on engaging with and up-skilling individuals, communities and business to enable rural tourism opportunities to be considered and realised in Co. Louth.</p> <p>Capacity building, training and technical assistance will focus on innovation, new and existing product and experience development, new marketing platforms and skill development to improve effectiveness, efficiency, employability and the visitor experience.</p> <p>These measures will ensure that tourism providers, communities and businesses can take a lead role in planning for future tourism opportunities in partnership with tourism agencies and external tourism stakeholders that fully engage with Fáilte Ireland's identified visitor categories; the 'social energisers', 'culturally curious' and the 'great escapers'. Capacity building actions will also aim to encourage the evolution of collaborative structures to oversee local tourism development and marketing.</p>
Link to LECP	<p>Economic Objective 021: Develop a tourism and visitor marketing programme as part of 'Brand Louth'.</p> <p>Economic Objective 022: Support an increased awareness of and knowledge of Co. Louth's heritage and culture.</p> <p>Economic Objective 023: Implement priority rural development and LEADER projects.</p> <p>Community Goal 7: Empower community innovation, entrepreneurship and enterprise to support urban and rural development.</p> <p>Community Goal 8: Value and protect our built heritage and natural environment to enhance the lives of those who live, work and visit in the county.</p>
Primary Target Group(s)	Tourism groups, tourism product providers, community and voluntary groups, angling, walking groups, cycling groups, farmers, hospitality sector, local entrepreneurs, culture and heritage groups and environmental groups, and other interested bodies.
Geographic Area	The call for proposals will apply to all of Co. Louth.
Organisation who will deliver the action	Louth LEADER Partnership
Collaborating Organisations	Louth County Council, Fáilte Ireland, Coillte, National Trails Office, Inland Fisheries Ireland, Bird Watch Ireland, Chambers of Commerce, Louth LEO, North East FLAG communities, tourism organisations and providers, hospitality and retail sectors, recreation, culture, heritage and environmental groups, PPN Structures.
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	<p>Q3 2016 - Q4 2020</p> <p>During the period targeted calls for capacity building, training, mentoring and technical assistance applications will be employed.</p>

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Anticipated Outputs/Indicators and Targets	
Number of projects funded – new	8
Number of projects funded – existing (and when founded)	4
Number of jobs created – new (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)	2
Number of existing jobs sustained (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)	3
Number of each type of initiative funded:	
Activity/Adventure Tourism (angling, walking, cycling)	2
Culture & Heritage Tourism	5
Rural Recreation	0
Eco-Tourism	0
Health & Wellness Tourism	0
Marine & Water-based Tourism	0
Agri-Tourism	0
Cluster/network of Tourism Businesses	1
Promotion of area as “destination” (website development, etc.)	4
Value of Funding:	
Capital	€0.00
Training	€37,565.17
Marketing	€0.00
Animation	€39,991.24
Number of Visitors	0

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

Title of Local Objective	LO2: Support for the Provision of Visitor Services and Infrastructure
LEADER Theme	Economic and Enterprise Development and Job Creation
LEADER Sub-Theme	1.1 Rural Tourism
Rationale for the Objective	<p><i>Aim: To provide targeted support for the provision of visitor services and associated infrastructure.</i></p> <p>The rural tourism industry is seen to be capable of significant further development, and it is acknowledged that the county must be made more attractive to tourists. Co. Louth LAG will assist to reinforce and improve rural tourism products, while recognising the need for an integrated approach across all actions.</p> <p>Both the Implementer and the LAG recognise that rural tourism offers significant opportunities in terms of creating and sustaining employment, in generating revenue and supporting enterprise activity in rural areas.</p> <p>Over the past years Louth LEADER Partnership has worked with the tourism providers and key stakeholders and has made substantial progress in consolidating the local visitor experience in line with Ireland's <i>Ancient East</i> branding.</p> <p>The development and improvement of the county's built and natural resource is essential in profiling the county as a tourism destination. The continuation of product development as well as branding and the potential for a tourism digital marketing platform is recognised. Added value will also provide local people with recreational and quality of life benefits and will build a strong sense of pride of place and local identity.</p> <p>The Local Objective will flank Fáilte Ireland's Tourism Development Investment Strategy 2016-2020, which identifies priorities and mechanisms for investment in tourism over this period.</p> <p>The Local Objective will also take account of investment barriers that exist in rural tourism, notably: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities to build capacity to optimise key market propositions; <input type="checkbox"/> Capitalising on increasing interest from the key visitor markets; <input type="checkbox"/> Access to the landscape; <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities for outdoor activities; <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation in produce development; <input type="checkbox"/> Fixed and mobile media technology; <i>and</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Access to facilities, heritage and cultural attractions, and utilisation of natural resources in rural and coastal areas. <p>The Local Objective will particularly support the crosscutting themes of innovation and environment.</p>
Link to the LECP	<p>Economic Objective 021: Develop a tourism and visitor marketing programme as part of <i>'Brand Louth'</i>.</p> <p>Economic Objective 022: Support an increased awareness of and knowledge of Co. Louth's heritage and culture.</p> <p>Economic Objective 023: Implement priority rural development and LEADER projects.</p> <p>Community Goal 7: Empower community innovation, entrepreneurship and enterprise to support urban and rural development.</p> <p>Community Goal 8: Value and protect our built heritage and natural environment to enhance the lives of those who live, work and visit in the county.</p>
Financial Allocation	€60,000.00
No. of Strategic Actions	2

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

Code	LO2:SA6
Title of Strategic Action	Rural Tourism: Signs and Signposting
Brief Description of Strategic Action	<p>The improvement of signs and signposting within the county was strongly identified during the course of the community consultation process. It is also noted that such improvement will also link directly to the promotion vehicle and brand identification package being developed by Fáilte Ireland to support the 'Ancient East' initiative.</p> <p>This action will support local communities and businesses to provide local signage and signposting to improve the visibility of visitor and heritage attractions. It will particularly support the community provision of local signage and signposting to improve accessibility to attractions and activities.</p> <p>This will also integrate with the prospective improvement of the quality of local knowledge among workers in tourism related business, supporting more meaningful engagement for visitors with the offerings of the county. This will be delivered through flanking strategic action SA5.</p> <p>The approach will focus on key tourism providers, communities and businesses that can play a positive role in encouraging future tourism opportunities in partnership with tourism agencies and external tourism stakeholders. It will be particularly beneficial in encouraging the development of offerings to suite the visitor market segments of 'social energisers', 'culturally curious' and the 'great escapers', as defined by Fáilte Ireland.</p> <p>The strategic action will be delivered in collaboration with Fáilte Ireland and Louth County Council.</p>
Link to LECP	<p>Economic Objective 021: Develop a tourism and visitor marketing programme as part of 'Brand Louth'.</p> <p>Economic Objective 022: Support an increased awareness of and knowledge of Co. Louth's heritage and culture.</p> <p>Economic Objective 023: Implement priority rural development and LEADER projects.</p> <p>Community Goal 7: Empower community innovation, entrepreneurship and enterprise to support urban and rural development.</p> <p>Community Goal 8: Value and protect our built heritage and natural environment to enhance the lives of those who live, work and visit in the county</p>
Primary Target Group(s)	Tourism groups, tourism product providers, community and voluntary groups, angling, walking groups, cycling groups, farmers, North East FLAG communities, hospitality sector, local entrepreneurs, culture and heritage groups and environmental groups, and other interested bodies.
Geographic Area	The call for proposals will apply to all of Co. Louth, with a focus on rural locations linked to visitor attraction development.
Organisation who will deliver the action	Louth LEADER Partnership
Collaborating Organisations	Louth County Council, Fáilte Ireland, Chambers of Commerce, Louth LEO, North East FLAG communities, tourism organisations and providers, hospitality and retail sectors, recreation, culture, heritage and environmental groups, PPN Structures.
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	<p>Q3 2016 - Q4 2019</p> <p>During the period a mix of rolling calls and targeted geographically defined calls for quality applications will be employed.</p>

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Anticipated Outputs/Indicators and Targets	
Number of projects funded – new	3
Number of projects funded – existing (and when founded)	3
Number of jobs created – new (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)	0
Number of existing jobs sustained (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)	0
Number of each type of initiative funded:	
Activity/Adventure Tourism (angling, walking, cycling)	0
Culture & Heritage Tourism	0
Rural Recreation	0
Eco-Tourism	0
Health & Wellness Tourism	0
Marine & Water-based Tourism	0
Agri-Tourism	0
Cluster/network of Tourism Businesses	0
Promotion of area as “destination” (website development, etc.)	6
Value of Funding:	
Capital	€30,000.00
Training	€0.00
Marketing	€0.00
Animation	€0.00
Number of Visitors	600

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

Code	LO2:SA7
Title of Strategic Action	Rural Tourism: New Technologies
Brief Description of Strategic Action	<p>Linking with sectoral training, animation and capacity-building activities this action will support the use of new and changing information technologies to augment and improve the visitor experience.</p> <p>Eurostat reports that the uptake of new information and communication technologies has been a significant driver of changes to both the travel is booked, and the workflow of enterprises in the tourism sector. Tourists from the European Union (EU) make large use of the internet for their trips. In 2014, more than two thirds of air trips and more than half of train trips were booked online. Accommodation was also booked online for more than half of the trips. Fáilte Ireland notes that social media channels offer a great way of promoting product and directing potential customers to a website to enable sales conversion. To be successful on social media, it is necessary to create highly shareable content that users will want to interact with and share with their own networks. Some of the most shareable content on social media today comes in the form of imagery and video. Social media users are hungry for imagery and video that inspires, entertains and engages, and this material underpins many visitor and hospitality offerings.</p> <p>The use of tourism technology will see the increased application of Information and Communications Technology in the local travel, tourism and hospitality industries.</p> <p>Tourism technology can include many processes such as dynamic packaging that provide useful new options for consumers. Traditional examples include a GPS tour guide, and an audioguide, podguide or virtual reality i-tours.</p> <p>The application of new technologies to the hospitality and tourism sectors offers the opportunity to engage with third-level academic institutions to develop cutting-edge applications with which to drive new forms of promotion.</p>
Link to LECP	<p>Economic Objective 015: Advance sustainable business innovation in products, services, organisational behaviours and ways of working.</p> <p>Economic Objective 021: Develop a tourism and visitor marketing programme as part of 'Brand Louth'.</p> <p>Economic Objective 022: Support an increased awareness of and knowledge of Co. Louth's heritage and culture.</p> <p>Economic Objective 023: Implement priority rural development and LEADER projects.</p> <p>Community Goal 7: Empower community innovation, entrepreneurship and enterprise to support urban and rural development.</p> <p>Community Goal 8: Value and protect our built heritage and natural environment to enhance the lives of those who live, work and visit in the county</p>
Primary Target Group(s)	Tourism groups, tourism product providers, community and voluntary groups, angling, walking groups, cycling groups, farmers, North East FLAG communities, hospitality sector, local entrepreneurs, culture and heritage groups and environmental groups, and other interested bodies.
Geographic Area	The call for proposals will apply to all of Co. Louth, with a focus on rural visitor attraction development.
Organisation who will deliver the action	Louth LEADER Partnership
Collaborating Organisations	Louth County Council, Fáilte Ireland, Chambers of Commerce, Louth LEO, North East FLAG communities, DkIT, Loughs Agency, IFA, tourism organisations and providers, hospitality and retail sectors, recreation, culture, heritage and environmental groups, PPN Structures.
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	<p>Q1 2018 - Q4 2020</p> <p>During the period targeted calls for quality applications will be periodically issued.</p>

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Anticipated Outputs/Indicators and Targets	
Number of projects funded – new	2
Number of projects funded – existing (and when founded)	0
Number of jobs created – new (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)	2
Number of existing jobs sustained (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)	0
Number of each type of initiative funded:	
Activity/Adventure Tourism (angling, walking, cycling)	0
Culture & Heritage Tourism	0
Rural Recreation	0
Eco-Tourism	0
Health & Wellness Tourism	0
Marine & Water-based Tourism	0
Agri-Tourism	0
Cluster/network of Tourism Businesses	0
Promotion of area as “destination” (website development, etc.)	2
Value of Funding:	
Capital	€30,000.00
Training	€0.00
Marketing	€0.00
Animation	€0.00
Number of Visitors	400

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

Title of Local Objective	LO3: Development and Strengthening of Rural Enterprise
LEADER Theme	Economic and Enterprise Development and Job Creation
LEADER Sub-Theme	1.2 Enterprise
Rationale for the Objective	<p><i>Aim: To support the development of rural enterprise and strengthen entrepreneurial capacity to sustain and grow business through increased employment opportunities.</i></p> <p>Co. Louth is strategically located on the Dublin to Belfast economic corridor, and has strong links to Northern Ireland. Co. Louth enjoys a very favourable location along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor, with close proximity to Dublin and the related advantages of easy access to Dublin Airport, 3rd /4th level institutions, and domestic and export markets. This location, combined with high-quality infrastructure (road and rail), accessibility to ports and airports (north and south), high speed broadband, a skilled and educated workforce, means that the county is well placed to continue to grow in both population and economic terms into the future.</p> <p>Co. Louth is well served by rail services along the key Dublin-Belfast rail line, and three commercial seaports are located along Co. Louth's coastline, including Drogheda, Dundalk and Greenore ports.</p> <p>The county has a significant population that has expanded at a faster rate than across State, whilst Drogheda and Dundalk are the largest towns and are also among the fastest expanding towns in Ireland.</p> <p>In terms of educational attainment and 3rd level qualifications Co. Louth has comparative strengths in Computing and in Engineering, Manufacturing, and Construction disciplines.</p> <p>Sectoral Economic Activity Employment within Co. Louth is primarily focused in Commerce (31.1%), Education, Health and Social Work (22.3%), and Manufacturing Industries (17.9%).</p> <p>Co. Louth has a tradition as a hub of manufacturing industry. Drogheda, Dundalk, Ardee and Dunleer were all centres where 'factory work' was concentrated in the past. However, deeply rural areas in Co. Louth have been characterised by a reliance on traditional industries such as agriculture, construction and low-level manufacturing. Many of these industries have contracted in recent years and rural areas now need to embrace the opportunity to diversify economically in order to flourish.</p> <p>It is of strategic importance to maximise indigenous rural enterprise growth and encourage sustainable employment, particularly in those areas most distanced from the existing centres of employment growth across the area. There is considerable scope for economic diversification in rural areas of Co. Louth, including artisan and organic food production, farmers markets, social enterprises, construction and manufacturing and the creative industries such as craft, design and specialist processes as well as innovative green enterprises.</p> <p>Smaller niche enterprises will be encouraged to explore supply options to the large international companies operating across the region.</p> <p>ICT has the potential to provide rural areas with equal access to domestic and international markets through e-commerce, enabling enterprise growth, allowing expansion of local employment and reducing outward labour migration.</p> <p>Economic and social development is becoming increasingly reliant on digital access. Potential opportunities to allow cluster development of small enterprise, sharing facilities and services will be further explored in targeted areas in Co. Louth to stimulate small business growth in those areas that have stagnated in terms of their economic diversification and growth.</p>

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Link to the LSCP	<p>Economic Objective 002: Play active supporting and facilitator role alongside government agencies to implement the regional Action Plan for Jobs.</p> <p>Economic Objective 004: Work collectively with interregional agencies to promote cross-border and transboundary business and investment opportunities.</p> <p>Economic Objective 007: Replicate the Dundalk 2020 approach in Drogheda and Ardee.</p> <p>Economic Objective 010: Establish an Education, Training and Business Task Group with an implementation and monitoring working group.</p> <p>Economic Objective 015: Advance sustainable business innovation in products, services, organisational behaviour and ways of working.</p> <p>Economic Objective 016: Lead age-friendly business development, creating new models of flexible value and enterprise.</p> <p>Economic Objective 018: Resource, support and promote existence and capabilities of LEO, CECs and expert mentoring panel.</p> <p>Community Goal 1: Enable wellbeing and quality of life to support safe, resilient, independent and engaged communities.</p> <p>Community Goal 3: Create equality of opportunity for those experiencing poverty, isolation and social exclusion.</p> <p>Community Goal 4: Provide environments and conditions that support healthy, self-directed, fulfilled and purposeful lives.</p> <p>Community Goal 7: Empower community innovation, entrepreneurship and enterprise to support urban and rural development.</p>
Financial Allocation	€854,260.69
No. of Strategic Actions	4

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

Code	LO3:SA8
Title of Strategic Action	Support and Development of Rural Micro-Enterprise Sector
Brief Description of Strategic Action	<p>The objective of the strategic action is to support indigenous small-scale rural micro-enterprise, including enterprise space for potential entrepreneurs and industry, green and eco-businesses and new innovative enterprises using ICT. This will stimulate and support enterprise and job creation at local, and community level. By its nature, this is a multi-faceted action with a significant scope of support for rural microenterprises that are otherwise excluded from assistance through other mechanisms.</p> <p>Experience shows that rural microenterprises ensure value addition to rural resources in rural areas engaging largely rural human resources. Aspiring entrepreneurs, existing business and communities will be supported through animation to innovate, develop ideas, identify opportunities and take those first steps towards self-employment, business expansion or community enterprise.</p> <p>Micro-enterprises provide employment opportunities and ensure more equitable distribution of income and better standard of living for rural communities. The development of rural micro-enterprises is one of the most cost-effective ways of creating employment, scattering industries, catalysing research and development, and allowing entrepreneurial talent to prosper.</p> <p>As identified in the socio-economic and demographic profile, Co. Louth is uniquely located on a major European artery between the capital cities of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. This location creates the opportunity to encourage fledgling, indigenous micro-enterprise to access the largest population single centres on the island of Ireland. The strategic action will foster an increased collaborative, networked and linked approach to regional and local enterprise development and job creation. It will enable the establishment of networks and clusters of indigenous micro-enterprises based on proven local entrepreneurial strengths and opportunities. Within this is the establishment of partnership activities where innovative start-ups can be established in a supportive network before graduating to other support mechanisms or self-sufficiency.</p> <p>Working with key strategic partners, including Louth LEO, the strategic action will promote a progression pathway for companies, including social economy enterprises, as they start, develop and scale. The scope will include sector specific support for small-scale capital, marketing and product development will encourage balanced growth to take advantage of strategic location beside major markets.</p> <p>The Strategic Action will encourage economic diversification in rural areas of Co. Louth to include a range of different activities at micro-enterprise level, including artisan and organic food production, farmers markets, social enterprises, and the creative industries such as craft, design and specialist processes as well as innovative green enterprises that aim to reduce the carbon footprint of the county, and alleviate climate change effects.</p> <p>Additionally, niche enterprises will be encouraged to explore supply options to the clusters of large international companies operating in the region.</p> <p>ICT has the potential to provide rural areas with equal access to domestic and international markets through e-commerce, enabling enterprise growth, allowing expansion of local employment and reducing outward labour migration. Where appropriate, enterprises that exploit digital technologies within their business model will be supported. Opportunities to allow cluster development of small enterprise, sharing facilities and services will be explored in targeted areas to stimulate small business growth in those areas that have stagnated in terms of their economic diversification and growth.</p>

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Brief Description of Strategic Action <i>continued</i>	<p>Beyond small-scale capital supports, soft supports will include awareness raising, ideas generation, intensive individual and group supports, project development and preparation of project applications. Social enterprise concepts will also be explored. Animation will be an on-going process throughout the delivery of the LDS. It will promote the active involvement of people with local creative potential to ensure maximum participation in rural enterprise regeneration.</p> <p>It has been identified that local community groups have the potential to contribute to enterprise development and job creation through the development of enterprise hubs, enterprise centres and enterprise space, networks, clusters and other alliances and by encouraging and facilitating an entrepreneurial culture.</p> <p>Co. Louth recognises both the resource limitations of the LEADER Programme and the important role developed by the Implementing partner over the years as facilitators and negotiators of rural enterprise development. Animation activity will therefore also focus on furthering links with other agencies, particularly Louth LEO, and private investors.</p> <p><i>Note that the creative industries, agriculture, marine, food and beverage sectors are supported by individual strategic actions.</i></p>
Link to LECP	<p>Economic Objective 002: Play active supporting and facilitator role alongside government agencies to implement the regional Action Plan for Jobs.</p> <p>Economic Objective 015: Advance sustainable business innovation in products, services, organisational behaviour and ways of working.</p> <p>Economic Objective 016: Lead age-friendly business development, creating new models of flexible value and enterprise.</p> <p>Community Goal 3: Create equality of opportunity for those experiencing poverty, isolation and social exclusion.</p> <p>Community Goal 4: Provide environments and conditions that support healthy, self-directed, fulfilled and purposeful lives.</p> <p>Community Goal 7: Empower community innovation, entrepreneurship and enterprise to support urban and rural development.</p>
Primary Target Group(s)	Aspiring entrepreneurs, business start-ups and existing business owners across a range of sectors, farmers, ethnic minorities, local community groups, women, young people, Chambers of Commerce, and Business Associations.
Geographic Area	The call for proposals will be across Co. Louth.
Organisation who will deliver the action	Louth LEADER Partnership.
Collaborating Organisations	Louth LEO, Chambers of Commerce and other business associations, DkIT, Microfinance Ireland, Louth County Council, Enterprise Ireland, NAMA, LMETB, Teagasc, Bord Bia, PPN Structures and other interested groups. Members of the Chambers of Commerce may be a target group. The Chambers of Commerce in its representational capacity may be a collaborative organisation and may also be a collaborative organisation in delivering a project(s) under the action.
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	Q2 2016 to Q2 2020 During the period an open call for quality applications will be maintained.
Anticipated Outputs/Indicators and Targets	
Start ups funded	10
Existing enterprises funded	9
Number of jobs created – new (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)	8
Number of existing jobs sustained (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)	12

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Number of enterprises funded in each sector:	
Agricultural Diversification	0
Food & Beverage	0
Marine Diversification	0
Creative Industry	0
Social Enterprise	6
Hospitality	5
ICT	5
Value of Funding:	
Capital	€344,417.31
Training	€15,000.00
Marketing	€25,000.00
Animation	€0.00

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

Code	LO3:SA9
Title of Strategic Action	Support and Development of Agriculture and Marine Sector Diversification
Brief Description of Strategic Action	<p>In 2011 Teagasc noted that the average farm size in the region was 47.6 hectares, up from 33 hectares in 1990. This represented a decline in numbers of small farm holdings, and also of the consolidation and intensification of overall farming activity. Simultaneously the area of land being farmed fell from 49,212 hectares in 1991 to 37,963 hectares in 2010, partly due to the increased need for development land as a consequence of the growth of Dublin.</p> <p>For coastal communities the BIM <i>Strategy for Small and Fishing Dependent Communities in Counties Louth, Meath and Dublin</i> prioritises the development of seafood products for new markets, The North East Coastal Trail, training and diversification for fishing communities, and enhancing Harbour, Pier and Coastal infrastructure.</p> <p>The small rural towns and villages, which are the core of rural social and economic activity, have played an important role in maintaining the rural fabric of the county. The rural hinterland is an important recreational and productive area and provides a way of life that is a unique part of the county's heritage. This is fragile and will require support to address the challenges now facing these communities including the gaps in service provision. Thus, there is a requirement to identify innovative initiatives to sustainably support the stressed agricultural and fishing-based communities.</p> <p>A particularly stressed yet key component of rural life is the farm or fishing family. Changes in industrial practices and operational scale have produced particular challenges.</p> <p>The strategic action aims to address viability issues for farm and fishing families and the declining number of enterprises by directly supporting on- and off-farm and fishing diversification, with the objective being to maintain viable families in the county.</p> <p>Diversification in traditional industrial environments requires Training, Animation and Capacity building initiatives to facilitate alternative enterprise development and sustainability.</p> <p>This action will focus on engaging with and up-skilling individuals, communities and business to enable diversification opportunities to be considered and realised in Co. Louth. The action will address viability issues for farming and fishing families and the declining number of sectoral enterprises by directly supporting diversification with the objective being to develop new social farming opportunities in the county.</p> <p>Capacity building, training and technical assistance will focus on innovation, new and existing product and experience development, new marketing platforms and skill development to improve effectiveness, efficiency, and employability in a rural context.</p> <p>These measures will ensure that rural dwellers, communities and businesses can take a lead role in planning for future opportunities in partnership with the appropriate agencies and external stakeholders. Through this action support will be provided at each stage of the process to sectoral enterprises with a focus on assisting diversification into indigenous small-scale rural micro-enterprise, including enterprise space for potential entrepreneurs and industry, green and eco-businesses and new innovative enterprises using ICT. This will stimulate and support enterprise and job creation at local, and community level.</p> <p>Micro-enterprises provide employment opportunities and ensure more equitable distribution of income and better standard of living for rural communities.</p>

/continued

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

/continued

Link to LECP	<p>Economic Objective 002: Play active supporting and facilitator role alongside government agencies to implement the regional Action Plan for Jobs.</p> <p>Economic Objective 015: Advance sustainable business innovation in products, services, organisational behaviour and ways of working.</p> <p>Economic Objective 016: Lead age-friendly business development, creating new models of flexible value and enterprise.</p> <p>Community Goal 3: Create equality of opportunity for those experiencing poverty, isolation and social exclusion.</p> <p>Community Goal 4: Provide environments and conditions that support healthy, self-directed, fulfilled and purposeful lives.</p> <p>Community Goal 7: Empower community innovation, entrepreneurship and enterprise to support urban and rural development.</p>	
Primary Target Group(s)	Farming and fishing families seeking to diversify.	
Geographic Area	The call for proposals will be across rural and coastal Co. Louth.	
Organisation who will deliver the action	Louth LEADER Partnership.	
Collaborating Organisations	Louth LEO, Microfinance Ireland, Louth County Council, LMETB, Teagasc, Bord Bia, BIM, North East FLAG, PPN Structures and other interested groups.	
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	<p>Q1 2017 to Q4 2020</p> <p>During the period a mix of rolling calls and geographically defined calls for applications will be employed.</p>	
Anticipated Outputs/Indicators and Targets		
Start ups funded		6
Existing enterprises funded		5
Number of jobs created – new (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)		2
Number of existing jobs sustained (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)		6
Number of enterprises funded in each sector:		
Agricultural Diversification		9
Food & Beverage		0
Marine Diversification		2
Creative Industry		0
Social Enterprise		0
Hospitality		0
ICT		0
Value of Funding:		
Capital		€258,363.42
Training		€15,000.00
Marketing		€0.00
Animation		€0.00

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

Code	LO3:SA10
Title of Strategic Action	Support and Development of the Food and Beverage Sector
Brief Description of Strategic Action	<p>It is important to maximise indigenous rural enterprise growth and encourage sustainable employment particularly in the food and beverage sector, as has been identified in previous programming periods and recent LDS consultation events.</p> <p>Teagasc report that the production of speciality food in Ireland accounts for approx. €500m pa from a base of 300 producers. Of these almost 50 are farmhouse cheese producers compared to Holland which is the size of Munster and has over 100 cheese producers or indeed New Zealand with over 2,000 speciality food producers. From this it is estimated that the market is far from saturated.</p> <p>The growth of farmer's markets in Ireland over the past decade has been quite extraordinary and with the assistance of local enterprise boards and leader groups this now result's in a turnover in excess of €10m pa., and reflects the diversity of products, our changing lifestyles and agricultural environment.</p> <p>Co. Louth is strategically located on the M1 corridor, equidistant from the major markets of Dublin and Belfast.</p> <p>The strategic action will support projects that focus on the following: -</p> <p><u>Artisan Food</u> is a growing niche market and there is a significant return to be realised in Co. Louth from support for small-scale capital, marketing and product development to address opportunities to take advantage of strategic location beside major markets.</p> <p><u>Artisan Beverage</u> is a growing niche market and there is a return to be realised from support for small-scale capital, marketing and product development to address opportunities to take advantage of strategic location beside major markets. Bord Bia notes that the Artisan Beverage Market is now an established feature at <i>Bloom</i> and is extremely popular with visitors to the show. Current market trends support the development of a strategy with a continuing focus towards authenticity and localism with consumers looking for quality, heritage and differentiation. The work under way by the industry and Bord Bia supports these trends.</p> <p><u>Food and Beverage Networks</u> represent an effective, efficient and cost saving support mechanism for collective marketing and branding micro-food and beverage business and promotion of Co. Louth as a County offering quality produce. A need has been identified to improve the quality of local knowledge among the food and beverage sectors. This strategic action will focus on engaging with business to enable the development of network activity in Co. Louth. The networks will focus on innovation, new and existing product and experience development, new marketing platforms and skill development to improve effectiveness, efficiency, employability and sustainability.</p> <p>These measures will ensure that sectoral businesses can take a lead role in planning for future business opportunities in partnership with other stakeholders and markets.</p> <p>To underpin all of the above, an overarching need has been identified to improve the quality of sector specific knowledge among workers in the micro food-business so as to facilitate meaningful engagement within the industry. This action will provide training and support materials to sector workers. Support will focus on innovation, new and existing product and experience development, new marketing platforms and skill development to improve effectiveness, efficiency, employability and sustainability.</p> <p>These measures will ensure that sectoral businesses can take a lead role in planning for future business opportunities in partnership with other stakeholders and markets.</p>

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Link to LECP	Economic Objective 002: Play active supporting and facilitator role alongside government agencies to implement the regional Action Plan for Jobs. Economic Objective 015: Advance sustainable business innovation in products, services, organisational behaviour and ways of working. Community Goal 4: Provide environments and conditions that support healthy, self-directed, fulfilled and purposeful lives. Community Goal 7: Empower community innovation, entrepreneurship and enterprise to support urban and rural development.
Primary Target Group(s)	Sectoral entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs.
Geographic Area	The call for proposals will be across Co. Louth.
Organisation who will deliver the action	Louth LEADER Partnership.
Collaborating Organisations	Louth LEO, Microfinance Ireland, Louth County Council, Fáilte Ireland, LMETB, Teagasc, Bord Bia, BIM, North East FLAG, PPN Structures and other interested groups.
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	Q2 2016 to Q4 2020 During the period a mix of rolling calls and geographically defined calls for applications will be employed.
Anticipated Outputs/Indicators and Targets	
Start ups funded	3
Existing enterprises funded	1
Number of jobs created – new (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)	0
Number of existing jobs sustained (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)	0
Number of enterprises funded in each sector:	
Agricultural Diversification	0
Food & Beverage	4
Marine Diversification	0
Creative Industry	0
Social Enterprise	0
Hospitality	0
ICT	0
Value of Funding:	
Capital	€0.00
Training	€15,000.00
Marketing	€0.00
Animation	€10,627.82

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

Code	LO3:SA11
Title of Strategic Action	Support and Development of the Creative Industries Sector
Brief Description of Strategic Action	<p>Local research has identified that the creative industry is an important employment generator and can help raise tourism potential. Support for small-scale capital, marketing and product development will address opportunity to start and grow businesses to take advantage of strategic location beside major markets.</p> <p>This strategic action will support businesses and communities to further their ability to design and develop the local arts and crafts based creative industries sector. Members of organisations will vary in their capabilities, and on going tailored capacity building activities and investment in training, mentoring and technical assistance is necessary to achieve effective and sustainable results in the sector.</p> <p>Community supported activity in rural areas can have significant benefits which are evident from community-run initiatives. As well as servicing basic needs in villages, traditional community-supported creative industries can also assist in the promotion of the area, giving producers easier access to the market and keeping money circulating in the local economy and supporting local jobs. Animation, capacity building and capital investment will be available in order to kick start local initiatives, improve facilities and help to make rural towns and villages attractive places to live.</p> <p>Beyond the traditional creative industries sector, this strategic action will integrate with DkITs business support programme targeted at digital content creators across the six border counties of the Republic of Ireland, most of Northern Ireland and the west of Scotland.</p> <p><i>Honeycomb – Creative Works</i> is a €4.2m trans-regional programme that aims to maximise the economic potential of the growing digital content sector. Honeycomb is funded by the EU's INTERREG IVA Programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body.</p> <p>Louth LAG recognises that the digital content sector is one of the fastest changing and constantly evolving sectors. In light of the potential opportunities for growth, this strategic action will address the economic, educational, social and cultural needs of digital content creators to ensure that the economic environment is sufficiently supported to allow both the sector to flourish, but also to develop in a cross-border and cross-regional manner, thereby enabling it to become an innovative and enabling platform for other sectors.</p> <p>The strategic action references the Action Plan for Jobs 2016, which notes the Government's ambition for Ireland to become a digital economy '<i>hot-spot</i>' in Europe, leading in the adoption and application of advanced ICT across the enterprise economy. It will also directly support the further development of the film and audio-visual sector, assisting in the achievement of the Action Plan for Jobs target of at least 15-20 Irish feature films and the development of opportunities for 5-10 creative co-production feature films.</p> <p>The support provided will range across film and broadcast media, animation, games development, music technologies and interactive media, including the rapidly advancing virtual reality technologies. Networks represent an effective, efficient and cost saving support mechanism for creative industries, and the strategic action supports initiatives that improve the quality of local knowledge among the creative industry sector. This element will focus on engaging with businesses to enable the development of network activity in Co. Louth that focus on innovation, new and existing product and experience development, new marketing platforms and skill development to improve effectiveness, efficiency, employability and sustainability.</p>

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Link to LECP	<p>Economic Objective 002: Play active supporting and facilitator role alongside government agencies to implement the regional Action Plan for Jobs.</p> <p>Economic Objective 005: Position Louth as Ireland's foremost Smart Green County promoting a sustainable energy and circular economy future.</p> <p>Economic Objective 006: Develop leadership and competency in Smart Energy Technologies.</p> <p>Economic Objective 015: Advance sustainable business innovation in products, services, organisational behaviour and ways of working.</p> <p>Economic Objective 016: Lead age-friendly business development, creating new models of flexible value and enterprise.</p> <p>Community Goal 3: Create equality of opportunity for those experiencing poverty, isolation and social exclusion.</p> <p>Community Goal 4: Provide environments and conditions that support healthy, self-directed, fulfilled and purposeful lives.</p> <p>Community Goal 7: Empower community innovation, entrepreneurship and enterprise to support urban and rural development.</p>
Primary Target Group(s)	Sectoral entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs, including social entrepreneurs.
Geographic Area	The call for proposals will be across Co. Louth.
Organisation who will deliver the action	Louth LEADER Partnership.
Collaborating Organisations	Louth LEO, Microfinance Ireland, Louth County Council, LMETB, DkIT, PPN Structures and other interested groups.
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	Q2 2016 to Q4 2020 During the period a mix of rolling calls and geographically defined calls for applications will be employed.
Anticipated Outputs/Indicators and Targets	
Start ups funded	5
Existing enterprises funded	11
Number of jobs created – new (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)	6
Number of existing jobs sustained (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)	19
Number of enterprises funded in each sector:	
Agricultural Diversification	0
Food & Beverage	0
Marine Diversification	0
Creative Industry	16
Social Enterprise	0
Hospitality	0
ICT	0
Value of Funding:	
Capital	€120,000.00
Training	€10,000.00
Marketing	€35,852.14
Animation	€5,000.00

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

Title of Local Objective	LO4: Improvement of Rural Towns and Villages
LEADER Theme	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation
LEADER Sub-Theme	Rural Towns
Rationale for the Objective	<p><i>Aim: To support the improvement of the commercial, human, social, environment and built character of rural towns and villages.</i></p> <p>Smaller towns and villages across Co. Louth have generally been negatively impacted to a greater extent by the economic downturn than larger settlements, as evidenced from the Teagasc Rural Towns Index report, which highlights higher increases in unemployment rates, greater decreases in employment levels and increased levels of business closure. Castletown, Ardee and Ballymascanlon are ranked respectively 279, 259 and 181 out of 302.</p> <p>The Rural Towns objective is required to support towns and villages to become more attractive to residents and visitors as both consumers and investors, thereby encouraging a growth in local employment and quality-of-life.</p> <p>Feedback from consultations highlights that each town and village faces challenges that are specific to each in terms of their vibrancy and viability, in terms of opportunity and capacity. There are varying solutions based on utilisation of local human, environmental and capital resources. Many require long-term structural change to attract new residents, enhance skills, create infrastructure to attract new entrepreneurs and services. Key to all of this is the level of 'pride of place' that is visible in the public realm spaces within towns and villages. The strategic action notes the need for collaboration between the local community and Louth County Council to achieve the most effective local outcomes in this regard.</p> <p>Next to the GAA, <i>Tidy Towns</i> is the biggest community organisation in the country and Louth's 24 groups comprise of 450 volunteers who give around 450,000 hours on an annual basis. Partnership with local community groups and the voluntary sector with local government is an integral element of improving and enhancing local environments. The strength of the Tidy Towns Together Network impact positively in every corner of Co. Louth. The Local Agenda 21 Environmental Partnership Fund also continues to be availed by local groups.</p> <p>Apart from its involvement in community life, the contribution of initiatives like Tidy Towns cannot be underestimated in its contribution to a perception of safety for citizens and businesses. This was reiterated during the LECP consultation process and also during the Public Participation Network consultation. Tidy Towns Together also noted in a submission to the LECP that it would be important that any rural development programme should prioritise village enhancement works to include funding for development of public parks, heritage parks, biodiversity gardens, sculptures, paving projects decorative lighting standards and playgrounds. The Community Safety Strategy survey conducted in 2014 identified good community spirit, attractive well maintained spaces, programmes like Tidy Towns, facilities for young people and a Garda presence as critical factors to increasing local communities sense of safety. Well-designed and efficiently maintained local environments lead to self-esteem and pride of place in local communities and they encourage volunteerism at local level together with enhanced feelings of personal safety.</p> <p>The consultations highlighted the need for strategic actions to focus on support to develop strong local structures, optimising available on-street retail, trade, commercial and living spaces, increase entrepreneurial activity, adding value to existing business' and supply chains, expanding local services and trade activity to reduce spending leakages outside the community and development of new social and leisure activities as areas for support.</p>

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Link to the LECP	<p>Economic Objective 009: Improve county sustainability indices as part of Brand Louth.</p> <p>Economic Objective 019: Promote the growth of the retail sector.</p> <p>Economic Objective 021: Develop a tourism and visitor marketing programme as part of Brand Louth.</p> <p>Economic Objective 022: Support an increased awareness and knowledge of Louth's heritage and culture.</p> <p>Economic Objective 023: Implement priority rural development and LEADER projects.</p> <p>Economic Objective 024: Support the delivery of appropriate well planned and managed supporting infrastructure.</p> <p>Community Goal 1: Enable wellbeing and quality of life to support safe, resilient, independent and engaged communities.</p> <p>Community Goal 3: Create equality of opportunity for those experiencing poverty, isolation and social exclusion.</p> <p>Community Goal 7: Empower community innovation, entrepreneurship and enterprise to support urban and rural development.</p> <p>Community Goal 8: Value and protect our built heritage and natural environment to enhance the lives of those who live, work and visit in the county.</p>
Financial Allocation	€610,186.20
No. of Strategic Actions	2

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

Code	LO4:SA12
Title of Strategic Action	Support and Development of <i>Tidy Towns</i> initiatives
Brief Description of Strategic Action	<p>The Tidy Towns Network has a well-developed infrastructure and facilitates community and visitor engagement with the built and natural heritage. Co. Louth LECP notes that the county is one of only four in Ireland to hold four gold medals in the <i>Tidy Towns</i> competition, and has represented Ireland on three occasions in the European Entente Florale competition.</p> <p>The natural and built fabric of rural towns and villages require constant upkeep and improvement. It facilitates secondary employment opportunities and benefits if it is undertaken in a planned, consultative way.</p> <p>The strategic action is designed to increase the participation of residents and businesses in rural towns, and villages in planning the future of their area. A community led local development approach will be utilised whereby <u>communities will be supported to establish <i>Tidy Towns</i> forums to facilitate the co-ordination of local approaches to challenges and opportunities. This will involve small-scale supports for local infrastructure enhancement.</u></p> <p>Experience shows that activity is more sustainable when communities come together to develop a plan for their area, take a lead role in making their plans in partnership with agencies, and have an inclusive community structure to oversee implementation of actions and monitoring of their plan.</p> <p>Significant pre-development work is required in order to ensure that members of the target groups together with broad based groups are supported to participate in the process. This includes meeting specific groups and individuals, and outlining the process and its value.</p> <p>The Tidy Towns process increases a sense of community through working together and of achieving clear results, optimises available resources through communities understanding and knowing their priorities, and harnesses energy in an area enabling positive solutions to emerge at a speedier pace.</p>
Link to LECP	<p>Economic Objective 019: Promote the growth of the retail sector.</p> <p>Economic Objective 021: Develop a tourism and visitor marketing programme as part of Brand Louth.</p> <p>Economic Objective 022: Support an increased awareness and knowledge of Louth's heritage and culture.</p> <p>Economic Objective 023: Implement priority rural development and LEADER projects.</p> <p>Economic Objective 024: Support the delivery of appropriate well planned and managed supporting infrastructure.</p> <p>Community Goal 1: Enable wellbeing and quality of life to support safe, resilient, independent and engaged communities.</p> <p>Community Goal 3: Create equality of opportunity for those experiencing poverty, isolation and social exclusion.</p> <p>Community Goal 7: Empower community innovation, entrepreneurship and enterprise to support urban and rural development.</p> <p>Community Goal 8: Value and protect our built heritage and natural environment to enhance the lives of those who live, work and visit in the county.</p>
Primary Target Group(s)	<p>This action will focus on the towns, the residents that live there and businesses that operate there. People living in disadvantaged areas, rural towns, villages, coastal communities, people living in remote and less accessible areas, unemployed and underemployed, women, and NEETs.</p> <p>Organisations including Community Councils, Business Associations, Chambers, Traders, Tourism groups, sports and recreation and local business / employers.</p>
Geographic Area	<p>The action will support rural towns and villages that wish to introduce or innovate within the Tidy Towns initiative. A particular focus will be placed on those towns that scored poorly in the Teagasc Rural Towns Index.</p>
Organisation who will deliver the action	Louth LEADER Partnership

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Collaborating Organisations	Louth County Council, Louth LEO, Chambers, Community Organisations, Traders Associations, Tidy Towns, ETB, HSE, Sports Partnership, Fáilte Ireland and Youth Organisations, PPN Structures.	
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	Q2 2016 - Q4 2020. During the period defined calls for applications will be invited.	
Anticipated Outputs/Indicators and Targets		
Number of projects funded		35
Population in towns receiving funding		120,000
Number of projects funded by type:		
Streetscape enhancement		0
Tidy Towns		35
Maintenance/Restoration/Upgrading of built environment in town		0
Development of recreation spaces		0
Development of markets		0
Development of festivals		0
Value of Funding:		
Capital		€250,000.00
Training		€0.00
Marketing		€0.00
Animation		€50,000.00
Number of jobs created – new (FT/ PT/ seasonal)		0
Number of existing jobs supported (FT/ PT/ seasonal)		10

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

Code	LO4:SA13
Title of Strategic Action	Amenity and Leisure Facilities Enhancement
Brief Description of Strategic Action	<p>Feedback from consultations highlights that many towns and villages face challenges that are specific to each in terms of their vibrancy and viability, in terms of opportunity and capacity. There are varying solutions based on utilisation of local human, environmental and capital resources. For some, short-term job creation is required, while others require long-term structural change to attract new residents, enhance skills, create infrastructure to attract new entrepreneurs and services.</p> <p>This strategic action focuses on the visual impact of rural towns and villages, and notes that this has a huge bearing on the quality of life of citizens as well as their sense of place. It promotes positive visitor experiences. Support for this initiative can help generate employment and encourage population retention among the working age population.</p> <p>Within the town and village envelope the visual attractiveness is important in encouraging tourists, enterprise and a sense of pride for locals. The heritage fabric of rural towns and villages require constant upkeep and improvement. It facilitates employment opportunities and benefits if it is undertaken in a planned, consultative way.</p> <p>This strategic action will support communities to <u>develop and deliver projects that improve the heritage fabric of local settlements</u>. In turn this will improve the appearance, services, trade, environment, facilities and infrastructure in line with the Local Development Strategy.</p> <p>It is envisaged that this will provide a catalyst for further practical action within the community to strengthen the economic base of local towns and villages across the county. This will include improvements to the public realm and recreational space, which is an important amenity for health and wellbeing. In rural towns and villages safe facilities improve access for all community members and are an attraction for visitors. It facilitates employment opportunities and benefits if it is undertaken in a planned, consultative way.</p> <p>This action will support local initiatives that improve amenities and leisure facilities and make rural towns and villages attractive places to live.</p> <p>The strategic action will also integrate with SA10 to support the development of regulated farmers' markets. The growth of farmer's markets in Ireland over the past decade has been quite extraordinary, and with the assistance of LEO's and LEADER groups this now result's in a turnover in excess of €10m pa., and reflects the diversity of products, changing lifestyles and agricultural environment. Investment in local festivals and Farmers/Country Markets allied to towns and villages is a priority for niche food and beverage industry, and supports local employment and enterprise.</p>

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Link to LECP	<p>Economic Objective 019: Promote the growth of the retail sector.</p> <p>Economic Objective 021: Develop a tourism and visitor marketing programme as part of Brand Louth.</p> <p>Economic Objective 022: Support an increased awareness and knowledge of Louth's heritage and culture.</p> <p>Economic Objective 023: Implement priority rural development and LEADER projects.</p> <p>Economic Objective 024: Support the delivery of appropriate well planned and managed supporting infrastructure.</p> <p>Community Goal 1: Enable wellbeing and quality of life to support safe, resilient, independent and engaged communities.</p> <p>Community Goal 3: Create equality of opportunity for those experiencing poverty, isolation and social exclusion.</p> <p>Community Goal 7: Empower community innovation, entrepreneurship and enterprise to support urban and rural development.</p> <p>Community Goal 8: Value and protect our built heritage and natural environment to enhance the lives of those who live, work and visit in the county.</p>
Primary Target Group(s)	This action will focus on the towns, the residents that live there and businesses that operate there. Organisations including Community Councils, Business Associations, Chambers, Traders, Tourism groups, sports and recreation and local business / employers.
Geographic Area	The action will support rural towns and villages to improve their presentation and environmental capital. A particular focus will be placed on those towns that scored poorly in the Teagasc Rural Towns Index.
Organisation who will deliver the action	Louth LEADER Partnership
Collaborating Organisations	Louth County Council, Louth LEO, Chambers, Community Organisations, Traders Associations, Tidy Towns, ETB, HSE, Sports Partnership, Fáilte Ireland and Youth Organisations, PPN Structures.
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	<p>Q2 2016 - Q4 2020.</p> <p>During the period a mix of rolling calls and geographically defined calls for applications will be employed.</p>
Anticipated Outputs/Indicators and Targets	
Number of projects funded	20
Population in towns receiving funding	25,000
Number of projects funded by type:	
Streetscape enhancement	4
Tidy Towns	0
Maintenance/Restoration/Upgrading of built environment in town	4
Development of recreation spaces	3
Development of markets	3
Development of festivals	6
Value of Funding:	
Capital	€250,186.20
Training	€15,000.00
Marketing	€15,000.00
Animation	€30,000.00
Number of jobs created – new (FT/ PT/ seasonal)	3
Number of existing jobs supported (FT/ PT/ seasonal)	7

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

Title of Local Objective	LO5: Support for Rural Broadband Development Initiatives
LEADER Theme	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation
LEADER Sub-Theme	Broadband
Rationale for the Objective	<p>Aim: To provide support for the optimisation of the social, economic and employment benefits from broadband use.</p> <p>The Dundalk Gateway Report notes that in 2011, 62% of households had private broadband access. The overall average IT connectivity across Gateways nationally was 64% in 2011; by comparison, the EU average for all 27 Member States in 2011 was 67%.</p> <p>The IT connectivity indicator results for Dundalk Gateway reveal that despite significant increases, it has the third lowest proportion of any of the Gateways, and is below the average for household take-up (a result which is also reinforced in perception survey results).</p> <p>Poor broadband access is a restrictive factor in attracting new business to the region and, while this indicator is a measure of take-up as opposed to availability and quality, it is important that the Gateway provide quality broadband (for regional competitiveness in attracting new business). Further improvements are necessary, and the recently launched National Broadband Plan for Ireland, which sets out targets to achieve broadband download speeds of 70Mbps with a minimum of 40Mbps generally available and 30Mbps available in harder to reach rural areas, will support further advancement in this area.</p> <p>High-speed broadband is a necessity for modern living and working to enable people live, work and do business, yet this transformative infrastructure, with the capacity to change what people do and the way they do it, is not available in parts of rural Co. Louth. As a result remote rural communities are missing out on innovation and growth. Animating and supporting community, business and individuals to drive the broadband agenda locally will generate growth by increasing skills and access to education, social and economic opportunities and reducing the limitations of peripheral rural locations.</p> <p>Consultations have highlighted that poor service levels frustrate both residents and businesses, ranging from a lack of service availability to intermittent and inconsistent basic broadband and insufficient speeds. High speed broadband is one of the deficits inhibiting growth of business' operating in the rural area, and discourages others from locating in remote and less accessible areas, while also inhibits residents from accessing education, social and entertainment opportunities. Many essential services such as banks and post offices have closed in rural areas, which makes Internet banking essential but currently beyond the reach of many. Additionally, the development of creative industries in rural locations will often be wholly dependent on quality broadband infrastructure.</p> <p>The strategic actions will be cognisant of the National Broadband Plan and will aim to ensure that remote communities across Co. Louth have capacity to actively lead locally, how and when the infrastructure gaps are filled, and to increase the capacity to optimise high speed broadband.</p>

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Link to the LECP	<p>Economic Objective 002: Play active supporting and facilitator role alongside government agencies to implement the regional action Plan for Jobs.</p> <p>Economic Objective 009: Improve county sustainability indices as part of Brand Louth.</p> <p>Economic Objective 015: Advance sustainable business innovation in products, services, organisational behaviour and ways of working.</p> <p>Economic Objective 019: Promote the growth of the retail sector.</p> <p>Economic Objective 021: Develop a tourism and visitor marketing programme as part of Brand Louth.</p> <p>Economic Objective 023: Implement priority rural development and LEADER projects.</p> <p>Economic Objective 024: Support the delivery of appropriate well planned and managed supporting infrastructure.</p> <p>Community Goal 1: Enable wellbeing and quality of life to support safe, resilient, independent and engaged communities.</p> <p>Community Goal 2: Ensure that everyone can access and participate in education, skills development and life long learning.</p> <p>Community Goal 3: Create equality of opportunity for those experiencing poverty, isolation and social exclusion.</p> <p>Community Goal 7: Empower community innovation, entrepreneurship and enterprise to support urban and rural development.</p>
Financial Allocation	€122,037.23
No. of Strategic Actions	2

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

Code	LO5:SA14
Title of Strategic Action	Broadband Skills Development
Brief Description of Strategic Action	<p>This strategic action will focus on engaging with and upskilling individuals, communities and business to enable opportunities to be realised from increased access to high speed broadband.</p> <p><u>Capacity building, training and technical assistance</u> will focus on skill development such as digital literacy; business processes; communications; e-commerce and social media to create a heightened environment for IT enabled economic and social activity.</p> <p><u>Pre-development work</u> will be undertaken to ensure that target groups with low internet usage and access, together with the broad based groups are supported to participate in the process.</p> <p>The process acknowledges the role of the broadband providers, the National Broadband Plan and other players that impact on broadband provision and use, but will place the user at the core to enable improved solutions to provision and use.</p>
Link to LECP	<p>Economic Objective 002: Play active supporting and facilitator role alongside government agencies to implement the regional action Plan for Jobs.</p> <p>Economic Objective 009: Improve county sustainability indices as part of Brand Louth.</p> <p>Economic Objective 015: Advance sustainable business innovation in products, services, organisational behaviour and ways of working.</p> <p>Economic Objective 019: Promote the growth of the retail sector.</p> <p>Economic Objective 021: Develop a tourism and visitor marketing programme as part of Brand Louth.</p> <p>Economic Objective 023: Implement priority rural development and LEADER projects.</p> <p>Economic Objective 024: Support the delivery of appropriate well planned and managed supporting infrastructure.</p> <p>Community Goal 1: Enable wellbeing and quality of life to support safe, resilient, independent and engaged communities.</p> <p>Community Goal 2: Ensure that everyone can access and participate in education, skills development and life long learning.</p> <p>Community Goal 3: Create equality of opportunity for those experiencing poverty, isolation and social exclusion.</p> <p>Community Goal 7: Empower community innovation, entrepreneurship and enterprise to support urban and rural development.</p>
Primary Target Group(s)	Community groups, business groups and networks, people living in remote and less accessible areas, unemployed and underemployed people, fishermen and farmers on small holdings, women; children, lone parents, people with a disability, older people, people living alone, and NEETs.
Geographic Area	Co. Louth LAG will support improvements in access to high quality broadband services across the county, and particularly in rural areas.
Organisation who will deliver the action	Louth LEADER Partnership
Collaborating Organisations	Local Community Organisations, Local business organisations and networks, Louth LEO, Chambers, Business Associations, Broadband Providers and Louth County Council, PPN Structures.
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	<p>Q2 2016 - Q4 2020</p> <p>During the period a mix of rolling calls and targeted calls for applications will be employed.</p>

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

Anticipated Outputs/Indicators and Targets	
Number of small scale equipment projects funded	0
Population benefiting from enhanced broadband as a result of equipment funding	56
Number of capacity building/training/information projects funded	10
Number of individuals participating in capacity building/training/information activities in relation to broadband	56
Number of new jobs created (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)	0
Number of existing jobs sustained (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)	10
Number (and value) of funding under the following headings:	
Capital	€0.00
Training	€40,000.00
Marketing	€0.00
Animation	€30,000.00

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

Code	LO5:SA15
Title of Strategic Action	Capital Support
Brief Description of Strategic Action	<p>This strategic action is complementary to Broadband Skills Development. This strategic action will support communities to develop, construct and pilot cooperative based approaches to access, and utilise affordable next generation broadband, infrastructure to increase the connectedness of business and households, reduce costs and increase economic, educational and social participation, while reducing the carbon footprint of rural employees.</p> <p>Indicative actions will include: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Support for feasibility studies. <input type="checkbox"/> Development of formal partnerships between agencies with interest in increasing access to quality broadband. <input type="checkbox"/> Support local groups and business to explore and develop innovative models to optimise the economic and social outcomes. <input type="checkbox"/> Support for small-scale innovative equipment projects with a focus on rural job creation.
Link to LECF	<p>Economic Objective 002: Play active supporting and facilitator role alongside government agencies to implement the regional action Plan for Jobs.</p> <p>Economic Objective 009: Improve county sustainability indices as part of Brand Louth.</p> <p>Economic Objective 015: Advance sustainable business innovation in products, services, organisational behaviour and ways of working.</p> <p>Economic Objective 019: Promote the growth of the retail sector.</p> <p>Economic Objective 021: Develop a tourism and visitor marketing programme as part of Brand Louth.</p> <p>Economic Objective 023: Implement priority rural development and LEADER projects.</p> <p>Economic Objective 024: Support the delivery of appropriate well planned and managed supporting infrastructure.</p> <p>Community Goal 1: Enable wellbeing and quality of life to support safe, resilient, independent and engaged communities.</p> <p>Community Goal 2: Ensure that everyone can access and participate in education, skills development and life long learning.</p> <p>Community Goal 3: Create equality of opportunity for those experiencing poverty, isolation and social exclusion.</p> <p>Community Goal 7: Empower community innovation, entrepreneurship and enterprise to support urban and rural development.</p>
Primary Target Group(s)	Community groups, prospective rural entrepreneurs, people living in disadvantaged areas, people living in remote and less accessible areas, unemployed and underemployed people, fishermen and farmers on small holdings, women; children, lone parents, people with a disability, older people, people living alone, and NEETs.
Geographic Area	Louth LAG will support improvements in access to high quality broadband services across the county.
Organisation who will deliver the action	Louth LEADER Partnership
Collaborating Organisations	Local Community and Business Associations, Louth LEO, Chambers, Broadband Providers, and Louth County Council, PPN Structures.
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	<p>Q2 2016 - Q4 2020</p> <p>During the period a mix of rolling calls and targeted calls for applications will be employed.</p>

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Anticipated Outputs/Indicators and Targets	
Number of small scale equipment projects funded	10
Population benefiting from enhanced broadband as a result of equipment funding	5,000
Number of capacity building/training/information projects funded	0
Number of individuals participating in capacity building/training/information activities in relation to broadband	0
Number of new jobs created (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)	2
Number of existing jobs sustained (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)	4
Number (and value) of funding under the following headings:	
Capital	€52,037.23
Training	€0.00
Marketing	€0.00
Animation	€0.00

4.4.2 Theme 2: Social Inclusion

Title of Local Objective	LO6: Support for the Promotion of Social Inclusion in Rural Areas
LEADER Theme	Social Inclusion
LEADER Sub-Theme	Basic Services Targeted at Hard-to-Reach Communities
Rationale for the Objective	<p><i>Aim: To provide support for the maintenance and improvement of quality-of-life, through the promotion of social inclusion and the development of local facilities and thereby making rural areas a better place in which to live and work.</i></p> <p>Europe 2020 has highlighted 'Fighting poverty and social exclusion' as one of its main five targets. The participation of people experiencing poverty is now acknowledged as a catalyst for inclusion strategies (Europe 2020).</p> <p>Co. Louth LAG will ensure the involvement of disadvantaged communities in the design and delivery of its strategies through its own structures and processes, and through linkages with the State and community services currently working with disadvantaged and hard-to-reach communities. This will be achieved through the encouragement of 'joined-up' initiatives involving a strong and committed partnership with the Local Authority (Louth County Council) and the LCDC.</p> <p>Inclusive capacity building, inherent to the delivery of LEADER using Community Led Local Development methodologies, will be common to all strategic actions. In this regard, Louth LEADER Partnership has a long-established track record of successfully addressing Social Inclusion through CLLD principles, and these have underpinned the LEADER approach since its inception in 1991, and across all subsequent iterations.</p> <p>Co. Louth LAG has focussed its suite of actions on supporting inclusion, equality of opportunity and rural community development through its collective experience and local knowledge. This also references the experience of participative planning, consultation and action delivery, and an inherent understanding of the region's resources and development potential,</p> <p>In rural areas across Co. Louth, relatively low population density, high levels of out migration, distance from urban centres and commuting to work, school or college (accessibility), higher cost of living, decline in agriculture and traditional industries, all tend to result in fewer employment options and comparatively lower service provision when compared to urban areas. In near-urban areas where there has been population expansion, service provision has not necessarily increased in tandem with the population needs. Considerably higher levels of relative disadvantage exist in the key towns. Thus, resilient and vibrant rural communities are required to deliver targeted interventions to improve the quality-of-life and foster a more balanced form of local development throughout Co. Louth.</p> <p>Whilst a range of community assets has been mapped in Co. Louth, there are still hard-to-reach communities, and areas where LEADER support is required to support social inclusion through investment in community services and infrastructure. This mechanism will serve to improve access to services lost or which did not previously exist and increase representation / participation / structures / governance amongst rural communities.</p>

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

<p>Link to the LECP</p>	<p>Economic Objective 023: Implement priority rural development and LEADER projects.</p> <p>Community Goal 1: Enable wellbeing and quality of life to support safe, resilient, independent and engaged communities.</p> <p>Community Goal 2: Ensure that everyone can access and participate in education, skills development and life long learning.</p> <p>Community Goal 3: Create equality of opportunity for those experiencing poverty, isolation and social exclusion.</p> <p>Community Goal 4: Provide environments and conditions that support healthy, self-directed, fulfilled and purposeful lives.</p> <p>Community Goal 5: Nurture and develop our children and young people from early childhood to young adulthood.</p> <p>Community Goal 6: Embrace and foster the rich contribution our older people make to our communities.</p> <p>Community Goal 7: Empower community innovation, entrepreneurship and enterprise to support urban and rural development.</p> <p>Community Goal 8: Value and protect our built heritage and natural environment to enhance the lives of those who live, work and visit in the county.</p>
<p>Financial Allocation</p>	<p>€762,732.75</p>
<p>No. of Strategic Actions</p>	<p>2</p>

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

Code	LO6:SA16
Title of Strategic Action	Community Facilities
Brief Description of Strategic Action	<p>The community consultation process strongly indicates the need for greater facilities for all members of the community that will encourage, activity, meetings and become a social hub for rural dwellers.</p> <p>The Strategic Action will support target groups, individuals and communities to develop innovation-driven <u>services and infrastructure projects</u>, informed via local engagement and participative planning, an approach that has proven capable of delivering improved quality-of-life outcomes and reduce poverty.</p> <p>The provision of improved community facilities will mobilise target groups, individuals and communities to provide enhanced services and infrastructure, informed via local engagement and participative planning, an approach that has proven to deliver improved quality-of-life outcomes and reduce poverty.</p> <p>Investment in community infrastructure has been shown to lead to opportunities to animate community groups through one-to-one supports, community meetings, media and awareness raising publications in preparation for training, mentoring, technical support and capital projects in their respective communities.</p>
Link to LECP	<p>Economic Objective 023: Implement priority rural development and LEADER projects.</p> <p>Community Goal 1: Enable wellbeing and quality of life to support safe, resilient, independent and engaged communities.</p> <p>Community Goal 2: Ensure that everyone can access and participate in education, skills development and life long learning.</p> <p>Community Goal 3: Create equality of opportunity for those experiencing poverty, isolation and social exclusion.</p> <p>Community Goal 4: Provide environments and conditions that support healthy, self-directed, fulfilled and purposeful lives.</p> <p>Community Goal 5: Nurture and develop our children and young people from early childhood to young adulthood.</p> <p>Community Goal 6: Embrace and foster the rich contribution our older people make to our communities.</p> <p>Community Goal 7: Empower community innovation, entrepreneurship and enterprise to support urban and rural development.</p> <p>Community Goal 8: Value and protect our built heritage and natural environment to enhance the lives of those who live, work and visit in the county.</p>
Primary Target Group(s)	<p>Hard-to-reach communities, including older people, people living alone, unemployed and underemployed people, farmers and fishermen, young people, women, children, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, people living in less accessible areas. Organisations including community councils, resident's associations, tidy towns groups, social, heritage, cultural and artistic groups and sporting organisations.</p>
Geographic Area	<p>The LAG will prioritise the development of basic services which will involve and/or benefit the most disadvantaged / hard-to-reach groups and communities across Co. Louth.</p>
Organisation who will deliver the action	<p>Louth Leader Partnership will support community groups by working with promoters to prepare quality proposals for consideration by the LAG, and will provide appropriate monitoring and support once a project has been approved.</p>
Collaborating Organisations	<p>A range of community and voluntary groups in the area (including issue based, heritage, cultural, artistic, sports), Louth LCDC, LLP, Louth County Council, Community Groups and other interested parties, PPN Structures and relevant State Services.</p>
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	<p>Q1 2016 to Q4 2020</p> <p>During the period a mix of rolling calls and targeted calls for applications will be employed.</p>

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Anticipated Outputs/Indicators and Targets	
Number of services funded – new	3
Number of services funded – existing (and when founded)	15
Number of jobs created – new (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)	3
Number of existing jobs sustained (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)	6
Number of projects funded per type of service:	
Transport	0
Education	0
Health	0
Social Amenities	6
Recreational/Physical Amenities	12
Retail/Financial Services	0
Personal support Services	0
Bereavement/Suicide-prevention Services	0
Nature of services provided	
To provide a service that isn't there	6
To enhance access to a service that is not in the locality (through transport)	0
To enhance participation/ outcomes of a service (through tailored supports for marginalised groups)	12
Number of projects funded that have the following as primary or secondary target groups:	
Older people	5
People with a disability	3
Children	6
Young people	1
Travellers	0
Migrants/New communities	0
Unemployed people	0
People living alone	3
Numbers of people availing of the services provided (by type of service):	
Transport	0
Education	0
Health	0
Social Amenities	48
Recreational/Physical Amenities	4,200
Retail/Financial Services	0
Personal Support Services	0
Bereavement/Suicide Prevention Services	0
Value of Funding:	
Capital	€390,000.00
Training	€20,232.75
Marketing	€0.00
Animation	€0.00

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

Code	LO6:SA17
Title of Strategic Action	Community Capacity Building, Training, Mentoring and Technical Assistance
Brief Description of Strategic Action	<p>The LEADER Programme has throughout its decades of delivery in Co. Louth supported rural communities to increase, devise and deliver new and improved services and infrastructure.</p> <p>Whilst financial support is important, the consultation process identified the continuing requirement to build the capacity and health (physical, social and mental) of the rural population to make best use of new investment and existing resources.</p> <p>Community consultation, local knowledge, experience and area profiling has informed the key community capacity building needs in the Co. Louth LDS, notably: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ There are major gaps in terms of access to appropriate services and facilities. ❑ There are issues in the management and maintenance of basic services and challenges to the volunteer base supporting many of these services. <p>The strategic action will provide tailored supports for marginalised rural communities to enhance participation, local engagement and improve outcomes from services and infrastructure via <u>capacity-building, training, mentoring and technical support</u>. This approach will help to address isolation as being a significant barrier to positive health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Experience shows that the provision of soft support for community capacity building, training, mentoring and technical assistance will empower hard-to-reach communities and enable them to enhance social connectedness by enabling those at risk of social exclusion access to resources, services and lifelong learning.</p>
Link to LECP	<p>Economic Objective 023: Implement priority rural development and LEADER projects.</p> <p>Community Goal 1: Enable wellbeing and quality of life to support safe, resilient, independent and engaged communities.</p> <p>Community Goal 2: Ensure that everyone can access and participate in education, skills development and life long learning.</p> <p>Community Goal 3: Create equality of opportunity for those experiencing poverty, isolation and social exclusion.</p> <p>Community Goal 4: Provide environments and conditions that support healthy, self-directed, fulfilled and purposeful lives.</p> <p>Community Goal 5: Nurture and develop our children and young people from early childhood to young adulthood.</p> <p>Community Goal 6: Embrace and foster the rich contribution our older people make to our communities.</p> <p>Community Goal 7: Empower community innovation, entrepreneurship and enterprise to support urban and rural development.</p> <p>Community Goal 8: Value and protect our built heritage and natural environment to enhance the lives of those who live, work and visit in the county.</p>
Primary Target Group(s)	<p>Hard-to-reach communities including older people, people living alone, unemployed and underemployed people, farmers and fishermen, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, young people, women, children, people living in less accessible areas.</p> <p>Organisations including community councils, associations, Tidy Towns groups, social, heritage, cultural and artistic groups and sporting organisations</p>
Geographic Area	<p>The LAG will prioritise the development of basic services which will involve and/or benefit the most disadvantaged / hard-to-reach groups and communities across Co. Louth.</p>

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Organisation who will deliver the action	Louth LEADER Partnership.	
Collaborating Organisations	A range of community and voluntary groups in each area (e.g. issue based, heritage, cultural, artistic, sports), Age Action Ireland, Foróige, Muintir an Tíre, Louth County Council, farmers, farm organisations, Clan Credo, Community Finance Ireland, PPN Structures and relevant State Services.	
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	Q3 2016 to Q4 2020 During the period a mix of rolling calls and targeted calls for applications will be employed.	
Anticipated Outputs/Indicators and Targets		
Number of services funded – new		18
Number of services funded – existing (and when founded)		21
Number of jobs created – new (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)		6
Number of existing jobs sustained (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)		12
Number of projects funded per type of service:		
Transport		0
Education		2
Health		0
Social Amenities		0
Recreational/Physical Amenities		0
Retail/Financial Services		0
Personal support Services		32
Bereavement/Suicide-prevention Services		5
Nature of services provided		
To provide a service that isn't there		20
To enhance access to a service that is not in the locality (through transport)		2
To enhance participation/ outcomes of a service (through tailored supports for marginalised groups)		17
Number of projects funded that have the following as primary or secondary target groups:		
Older people		3
People with a disability		7
Children		0
Young people		2
Travellers		2
Migrants/New communities		3
Unemployed people		10
People living alone		12
Numbers of people availing of the services provided (by type of service):		
Transport		0
Education		16
Health		0
Social Amenities		0
Recreational/Physical Amenities		0
Retail/Financial Services		0
Personal Support Services		236
Bereavement/Suicide Prevention Services		40

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Value of Funding:	
Capital	€135,000
Training	€157,500
Marketing	€5,000
Animation	€55,000

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

Title of Local Objective	LO7: Improving the Capacity of Rural Young People
LEADER Theme	Social Inclusion
LEADER Sub-Theme	Rural Youth
Rationale for the Objective	<p><i>Aim: To improve the capacity of young people, youth and community organisations across Co. Louth through processes of engagement, and participation at local community, social, environment and economic development levels.</i></p> <p>The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020 “<i>Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures</i>” recognises that ‘<i>Investment in children and young people is a social responsibility and it makes good economic sense, but it needs to be guided by a medium to long term perspective. Investment in children and young people is akin to a capital investment from which significant return flows</i>’.</p> <p>Co. Louth LAG is aware of the importance of designing a social infrastructure that conforms to the contemporary needs of rural young people and that has buy-in from the local community and that is delivered through strong local partnerships between public, private and voluntary sectors. This involves the development of the social infrastructure of rural areas to provide important opportunities for young people to realise their potential, including the provision of youth clubs/cafés, improved access to ICT, sports/recreation activities, arts based projects and youth development programmes.</p> <p>To ensure the continued effective targeting of young people to fully participate in the social, economic and environmental aspects of the area, Co. Louth LAG recognises the need to encourage greater involvement of young people to develop their abilities and skills, to think for themselves, to make things happen and to contribute to their own communities.</p> <p>Co. Louth LAG also recognises that young people are integral to preserving the heritage and culture of the area for future generations. The provision of training and mentoring will be vital to creating positive opportunities for young people to engage with youth entrepreneurship.</p> <p>Many communities have already undertaken work to develop facilities and amenities; however, from the public consultation process it is evident that there is further unmet need. The provision of such facilities and services helps to address the challenges that young people face, supporting the provision of health and educational services and creating positive intergenerational actions and linkages. Youth Services, Schools, Colleges and groups such as Macra Na Feirme (and others) will be central to the design and delivery of these strategies in Co. Louth.</p> <p>To ensure that the needs and opportunities of rural youth are fully addressed and catered for, a two-strand methodology that specifically targets rural youth will be utilised focussing on rural youth facilities and youth entrepreneurship. Working with the LMETB and Louth LEO, the latter strand will support the promotion of youth economic and social entrepreneurship as a pathway for young people to develop economic opportunities in rural areas.</p>
Link to the LECP	<p>Economic Objective 023: Implement priority rural development and LEADER projects.</p> <p>Community Goal 1: Enable wellbeing and quality of life to support safe, resilient, independent and engaged communities.</p> <p>Community Goal 3: Create equality of opportunity for those experiencing poverty, isolation and social exclusion.</p> <p>Community Goal 5: Nurture and develop our children and young people from early childhood to young adulthood.</p> <p>Community Goal 7: Empower community innovation, entrepreneurship and enterprise to support urban and rural development.</p>
Financial Allocation	€762,732.75
No. of Strategic Actions	3

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

Code	LO7:SA18
Title of Strategic Action	Youth Animation and Facilities
Brief Description of Strategic Action	<p>The community consultation process strongly indicates the need to continue providing physical facilities for young people in rural areas. This action will support the provision of new and improved facilities.</p> <p>Young people and their organisations will be engaged through a number of different mediums including: local community meetings, newsletter articles, social media and other multimedia sources, awareness raising, intensive and personalised individual and group supports, project development and preparation of project applications, assistance with overcoming bureaucratic difficulties.</p> <p>These supports will aim to mobilise young people to generate and/or participate in the design and implementation of innovative activity across all LEADER themes, and provide a catalyst for identifying and completing youth based projects that improves their quality-of-life through contributing to the development of their local areas.</p> <p>Using existing and new networks, animation will be an on-going strategic component of the LDS to increase the participation of young people in all sectors and organisations of the rural community across Co. Louth. Where required, the animation will be particularly focussed on initiatives to promote and encourage youth entrepreneurship and employability. This latter element will be specifically supported by strategic action SA19.</p> <p>Linkage and collaborations with Macra na Feirme, youth services across the county and through youth initiatives supported by State Bodies and Louth County Council will be a key element of the engagement process. It is anticipated that this will result in the development of new and enhanced youth facilities across the county.</p> <p>The consultation process identified a number of instances where the provision of local meeting room space and quality facilities would be required to support youth pre-development work. Subject to conditions, support for this provision will be provided through time-limited calls, with a particular focus on servicing the needs of hard-to-reach young people through their support organisations.</p>
Link to LECP	<p>Economic Objective 023: Implement priority rural development and LEADER projects.</p> <p>Community Goal 1: Enable wellbeing and quality of life to support safe, resilient, independent and engaged communities.</p> <p>Community Goal 3: Create equality of opportunity for those experiencing poverty, isolation and social exclusion.</p> <p>Community Goal 5: Nurture and develop our children and young people from early childhood to young adulthood.</p> <p>Community Goal 7: Empower community innovation, entrepreneurship and enterprise to support urban and rural development.</p>
Primary Target Group(s)	Rural Youth aged 15-35, and community groups.
Geographic Area	The call for proposals will be open to communities across Co. Louth.
Organisation who will deliver the action	Louth LEADER Partnership
Collaborating Organisations	Youth Clubs, Community Organisations, Schools, Sporting Organisations, Foróige, Garda Síochána, Macra an Feirme, Chambers of Commerce, Local Authority, LMETB, PPN Structures and DSP.
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	<p>Q2 2016 to Q4 2020.</p> <p>During the period targeted calls for applications will be issued.</p>

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Anticipated Outputs/Indicators and Targets	
Number of projects funded	8
Number of projects funded by type of initiative:	
Youth Clubs/Cafes	8
Youth Entrepreneurship	0
Sport/Recreation	0
Arts	0
Youth Development	0
Nature of services provided:	
To provide a service that isn't there	2
To enhance access to a service that is not in the locality (through transport)	0
To enhance participation/ outcomes of a service through tailored support to young people in disadvantaged areas to encourage their participation in particular activities/ enhance outcomes in key areas (employment training for example)	6
Number of young people directly participating:	
Youth Clubs/Cafés	200
Youth Entrepreneurship	0
Sport/Recreation	0
Arts	0
Youth Development	0
Value of Funding:	
Capital	€150,000.00
Training	€20,000.00
Marketing	€10,000.00
Animation	€20,000.00

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

Code	LO7:SA19
Title of Strategic Action	Rural Youth Entrepreneurship Supports
Brief Description of Strategic Action	<p>Youth unemployment remains a significant issue both at national level and in the county. In rural locations the socio-economic profile shows that quality local employment opportunity for young people is generally highly curtailed.</p> <p>Co. Louth LAG will support community groups that wish to create a limited number of <u>employment opportunities for young people</u>. Working with LMETB and Louth LEO, this will include support for expertise and specialised training to strengthen the capacities of new and existing youth and community groups working with young people with the target of creating innovative employment and self-employment options. Guidance, advice and technical support is imperative to overcoming the capacity barriers that young people find (identified during consultations) when they become involved in organisations and the development of projects. Additionally, specific skills training will be piloted to address the changing needs of the labour market for NEET young people (15-24 years), and those in the 24-35 year old age category.</p> <p>Rural Youth Entrepreneurship Programmes targeted at 25-35 years will be supported to include workshops, networking events and interactive online tools. By way of soft support, the strategic action will provide <u>for training, animation and capacity-building initiatives to encourage growth and sustainability for young entrepreneurs in the micro-enterprise sector</u>. Support will focus on innovation, new and existing product and experience development, new marketing platforms and skill development to improve effectiveness, efficiency, employability and sustainability. This will help to ensure that innovative businesses owned and operated by young entrepreneurs can take a lead role in planning for future business opportunities in partnership with other stakeholders and markets.</p> <p>The purchase of small-scale capital equipment (in conformity with the Operating Rules) will be supported for initiatives that encourage rural youth entrepreneurship.</p> <p>Networks have been shown to be effective in supporting successful businesses. This strategic action will provide support for the creation and promotion of a Louth Rural Youth Entrepreneurship Network, in partnership with other key agencies. The network will focus on innovation, new and existing product and experience development, new marketing platforms and skill development to improve effectiveness, efficiency, employability and sustainability. This will be designed to ensure that young people can take a lead role in planning for future business opportunities in partnership with other stakeholders and markets.</p>
Link to LECP	<p>Economic Objective 002: Play active supporting and facilitator role alongside government agencies to implement the regional Action Plan for Jobs.</p> <p>Economic Objective 016: Lead age-friendly business development, creating new models of flexible value and enterprise.</p> <p>Community Goal 3: Create equality of opportunity for those experiencing poverty, isolation and social exclusion.</p> <p>Community Goal 4: Provide environments and conditions that support healthy, self-directed, fulfilled and purposeful lives.</p> <p>Community Goal 7: Empower community innovation, entrepreneurship and enterprise to support urban and rural development.</p>
Primary Target Group(s)	Rural Youth aged 15-35 and NEETs, and other community organisations working with young people.
Geographic Area	The call for proposals will be open to communities across Co. Louth.
Organisation who will deliver the action	Louth LEADER Partnership

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Collaborating Organisations	LMETB, Louth LEO, Youth Clubs, Community Organisations, Schools, Sporting Organisations, Foróige, An Garda Síochána, Macra an Feirme, Chambers of Commerce, Clan Credo, Community Finance Ireland, Local Authority, PPN Structures and Department of Social Protection (Intreo).
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	Q3 2016 to Q4 2020. During the period targeted calls for applications will be issued.
Anticipated Outputs/Indicators and Targets	
Number of projects funded	30
Number of projects funded by type of initiative:	
Youth Clubs/Cafes	0
Youth Entrepreneurship	30
Sport/Recreation	0
Arts	0
Youth Development	0
Nature of services provided:	
To provide a service that isn't there	25
To enhance access to a service that is not in the locality (through transport)	0
To enhance participation/ outcomes of a service through tailored support to young people in disadvantaged areas to encourage their participation in particular activities/ enhance outcomes in key areas (employment training for example)	5
Number of young people directly participating:	
Youth Clubs/Cafés	0
Youth Entrepreneurship	60
Sport/Recreation	0
Arts	0
Youth Development	0
Value of Funding:	
Capital	€100,000.00
Training	€15,000.00
Marketing	€22,500.00
Animation	€50,000.00

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

Code	LO7:SA20
Title of Strategic Action	Youth Activity, Arts and Recreation Initiatives
Brief Description of Strategic Action	<p>The community consultation process identified the need for well-equipped rural youth facilities for specialised organised activities, such as sports, music, drama, culture, training and youth clubs, as well as more casual activities, such as <i>'hanging out'</i> and alternative youth spaces. These latter activities will be supported under LO8:SA18 - Youth Facilities.</p> <p>This LDS will support the further <u>development of existing, and the establishment of new specialist and multi-purpose community facilities or dedicated space for young people</u> depending on the requirements in different areas. The idea of developing <i>'mixed use'</i> space will be promoted to allow community groups to innovatively share overhead costs whilst also promoting community integration and inter-generational opportunities. Facilities including outdoor and indoor gyms, greenways, blueways, skateboard parks, dance studios and music centres for bands and performing arts may be supported.</p> <p>Co. Louth has a relatively successful youth arts infrastructure and this strategic action will reinforce access to a localised and small-scale arts infrastructure that will help to facilitate balanced rural access to youth arts. However, to realise the sustainable development of the above social infrastructure for young people in rural areas it will be necessary to ensure access to adequate quality ICT services, particularly in respect of many arts-based projects and youth development programmes. There is also potential to explore the development of social enterprise involving young people or to support young entrepreneurs with a business idea once these facilities are in place.</p> <p>As with other strategic actions the <i>'potential'</i> in the context of the above will be dependent on the capacity to leverage the hard and soft supports and resources of others (public and private investors) and capacity of the Co. Louth LAG to encourage collaboration and partnership with these potential investors.</p>
Link to LECP	<p>Economic Objective 023: Implement priority rural development and LEADER projects.</p> <p>Community Goal 1: Enable wellbeing and quality of life to support safe, resilient, independent and engaged communities.</p> <p>Community Goal 3: Create equality of opportunity for those experiencing poverty, isolation and social exclusion.</p> <p>Community Goal 5: Nurture and develop our children and young people from early childhood to young adulthood.</p> <p>Community Goal 7: Empower community innovation, entrepreneurship and enterprise to support urban and rural development.</p>
Primary Target Group(s)	Rural Youth aged 15-35.
Geographic Area	The call for proposals will be open to communities across Co. Louth.
Organisation who will deliver the action	Louth LEADER Partnership
Collaborating Organisations	Youth Clubs, Community Organisations, Schools, Sporting Organisations, Foróige, An Garda Síochána, Macra an Feirme, Chambers of Commerce, Local Authority, Department of Social Protection, Tidy Towns organisations, PPN Structures and others.
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	<p>Q3 2016 to Q4 2020.</p> <p>During the period both an open call and targeted calls for applications will be issued.</p>

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Anticipated Outputs/Indicators and Targets	
Number of projects funded	29
Number of projects funded by type of initiative:	
Youth Clubs/Cafés	0
Youth Entrepreneurship	0
Sport/Recreation	12
Arts	22
Youth Development	5
Nature of services provided:	
To provide a service that isn't there	14
To enhance access to a service that is not in the locality (through transport)	0
To enhance participation/ outcomes of a service through tailored support to young people in disadvantaged areas to encourage their participation in particular activities/ enhance outcomes in key areas (employment training for example)	25
Number of young people directly participating:	
Youth Clubs/Cafés	0
Youth Entrepreneurship	0
Sport/Recreation	130
Arts	160
Youth Development	41
Value of Funding:	
Capital	€245,250.00
Training	€53,732.75
Marketing	€22,500.00
Animation	€53,750.00

4.4.3 Theme 3: Rural Environment

Title of Local Objective	LO8: Use of Rural Water Resources
LEADER Theme	Rural Environment
LEADER Sub-Theme	Protection and Sustainable Use of Water Resources
Rationale for the Objective	<p><i>Aim: To support the protection and sustainable use of freshwater, estuarine and marine water resources.</i></p> <p>The EU Water Framework Directive (EUROPA, 2003) governs water management in Ireland. This requires an holistic approach to the management of water bodies, and the encouragement of interested local organisations in water quality issues.</p> <p>Whilst Co. Louth is the smallest county in the State, it is the second most densely populated county in Ireland, with Drogheda and Dundalk being two of the largest towns in the country. Apart from these two major urban centres, the county also contains a number of substantial towns and villages including Ardee, Dunleer, Clogherhead and Carlingford. This settlement pattern presents a particular challenge on the protection and sustainable use of freshwater, estuarine and marine water resources across the county.</p> <p>Managing the water resource is essential to support life and protect ecosystems.</p> <p>The county's coastline is of high intrinsic and special amenity value and is home to a variety of natural habitats. Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA) designations cover much of the coastline. Termonfeckin Strand, Clogherhead, and Templetown are superb beaches that have considerable tourism potential. The latter three beaches were awarded Blue Flag status in 2015. The coastline also contains economically significant sites that include the ports at Drogheda, Greenore, Dundalk and Clogherhead. The coastal waters off County Louth provide an important resource, supporting and generating employment and recreational activities. But this coastline is susceptible to pressure for development, which has the potential to encroach on sensitive sites and cause pollution.</p> <p>The <i>Irish Coastal Protection Strategy Study</i> (ICPSS) examined the northeast coast from Dublin to Greenore. It identified that coastal flood hazard exists predominantly in or near coastal settlements, and four of the seven coastal settlements lie in County Louth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Drogheda to Laytown; <input type="checkbox"/> Annagassan to Cruisetown; <input type="checkbox"/> Dundalk; <i>and</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Carlingford to Greenore. <p>Water supports the county's rich and unique biodiversity and habitats. The water resources of the area are of regional significance and range from freshwater rivers, transitional water, and the marine. However, the water habitats and resources are under on-going pressure. Sewerage and industry pollution, (including agricultural industry) has the potential to erode water quality in the streams, rivers and coastal waters in parts of the area if not carefully monitored and controlled.</p> <p>Tourist angling provision, freshwater and marine recreational angling, together with commercial fishing are important sectors providing significant local employment.</p> <p>Where appropriate, LO8 will support, rather than duplicate, the agri-environment scheme GLAS (part of the RDP 2014-2020). It will build awareness in the agricultural and fishing communities that assist in promoting actions compatible with protection of the environment, water quality, the landscape and its features, endangered species of flora and fauna and climate change mitigation.</p>

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Link to the LECP	<p>Economic Objective 002: Play active supporting and facilitator role alongside government agencies to implement the regional Action Plan for Jobs.</p> <p>Economic Objective 005: Position Louth as Ireland's foremost Smart Green County promoting a sustainable energy and circular economy future.</p> <p>Economic Objective 006: Develop leadership and competency in Smart Energy Technologies.</p> <p>Economic Objective 015: Advance sustainable business innovation in products, services, organisational behaviour and ways of working.</p> <p>Community Goal 1: Enable wellbeing and quality of life to support safe, resilient, independent and engaged communities.</p> <p>Community Goal 8: Value and protect our built heritage and natural environment to enhance the lives of those who live, work and visit in the county.</p>
Financial Allocation	€183,055.86
No. of Strategic Actions	2

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

Code	LO8:SA21
Title of Strategic Action	Awareness-Building Supports to Enable Individuals and Communities to Develop Demonstration Sustainable Water Management Initiatives
Brief Description of Strategic Action	<p>Article 14 of the Water Framework Directive requires member states to encourage the active involvement of interested parties in water policy. The importance of a CLLD approach is recognised as an important tool to improve decision-making (EEA, 2014) in respect of raising awareness and demand for retro-fitting water harvesting measures e.g. to homes, business premises and community buildings.</p> <p>An outcome of the LDS consultation process noted that many communities, both urban and rural, were seeking a greater understanding of the importance of a range of sustainable water management initiatives. To address this awareness-building will be a key component of the Louth LAGs strategy to increase the participation and engagement of the community across the area in such initiatives.</p> <p>Local communities are key stakeholders as well as consumers of water. They have an important role in the protection and sustainable use of water resources. The engagement of communities together with other key stakeholders such as industry in water conservation and management, could lead to greater sustainable use. <u>Education and awareness activities at community level will be supported</u> to help to facilitate knowledge transfer as well as educating the younger generation in environmental thinking.</p> <p>The ultimate goal of this initiative is to develop and showcase best practice in Water Resource Management.</p> <p>The initiative is targeted at rural communities in Co. Louth, and will involve animation and capacity building at local level, followed by business planning and capital investment where a project is deemed feasible and viable for development.</p> <p>In addition to awareness-building, the strategic action will feed into the <u>development and small-scale capital funding</u> of a limited number of exemplar projects that highlight key practical applications involving the sustainable use of water resources. These projects will be chosen to act as demonstrators for other communities. They will be required to demonstrate the principles of collective action to address the challenges of the practical protection and sustainable use of freshwater, estuarine and marine water resources.</p>
Link to LECP	<p>Economic Objective 005: Position Louth as Ireland's foremost Smart Green County promoting a sustainable energy and circular economy future.</p> <p>Economic Objective 006: Develop leadership and competency in Smart Energy Technologies.</p> <p>Economic Objective 015: Advance sustainable business innovation in products, services, organisational behaviour and ways of working.</p> <p>Community Goal 1: Enable wellbeing and quality of life to support safe, resilient, independent and engaged communities.</p> <p>Community Goal 8: Value and protect our built heritage and natural environment to enhance the lives of those who live, work and visit in the county.</p>
Primary Target Group(s)	Community groups, farmers, fishermen and coastal communities, businesses, environmental groups (new and existing), individuals and tourism interests.
Geographic Area	The call for proposals will be open to communities across rural Co. Louth.
Organisation who will deliver the action	Louth LEADER Partnership
Collaborating Organisations	Farming Organisations, Teagasc, Inland Fisheries Ireland, Louth County Council, EPA, SEAI, Coillte, DkIT, volunteers, BIM, DAFF, DECLG, Irish Water, EPA, National Parks and Wildlife Service, PPN Structures, Louth Environmental Organisations and Interest Groups.

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	Q2 2016 – Q4 2020. During the period both an open call and targeted calls for applications will be issued.	
Anticipated Outputs/Indicators and Targets		
Number of projects funded – new		7
Number of projects funded – existing (and when founded)		5
Number of jobs created – new (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)		1
Number of existing jobs sustained (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)		11
Type of project funded:		
Wind energy		0
Solar power		0
Energy other		0
Education and awareness programmes		4
Impact assessment		4
Local co-ordination initiatives		0
Technical/scientific cooperation		1
Nature conservation initiatives		3
Recycling		0
Value of Funding:		
Capital		€0.00
Training		€35,000.00
Marketing		€0.00
Animation		€68,055.86

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

Code	LO8:SA22
Title of Strategic Action	Sustainable Water Management, Conservation and Recycling Infrastructure Capital Support
Brief Description of Strategic Action	<p>The strategic action will provide small-scale capital support for the development of a <u>limited number of exemplar projects</u> that highlight key practical applications involving the sustainable use of water resources. These projects will be chosen to act as demonstrators for other communities. They will be required to demonstrate the principles of collective action to address the challenges of the practical protection and sustainable use of freshwater, estuarine and marine water resources, thereby contributing to sustainable water management in Co. Louth. Based on the outcomes of the consultation process, and the expressions of interest already received under the LDS, these may include (but not necessarily be limited to) the following: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation of drinking water sources to ensure continued reliable clean supplies including, but not limited to, water saving measures to reduce costs to home, farm or business user; <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation and improvement of the habitats for wildlife and recreation, as well as for enhanced buffer zone effectiveness for water quality enhancement; <input type="checkbox"/> Fitting or retrofitting of rainwater harvesting to community and other buildings for water conservation including the recycling of grey water for buildings and farms; <input type="checkbox"/> Measures to restore degraded river habitat, projects to enhance fishing and ecotourism associated with water including canoe trails, bird watching, natural flood prevention measures such as constructed wetlands; <input type="checkbox"/> Protection and enhancement of the quality of rivers, lakes and streams, groundwater aquifers and coastal waters; <input type="checkbox"/> Protection and improvement of drinking water quality; <i>and</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Riverside recreation projects including coastal areas, angling projects, protection of Natura 2000 sites, fishing stands, styles, car parks, fishing access, boat slips and moorings.
Link to LECP	<p>Economic Objective 005: Position Louth as Ireland’s foremost Smart Green County promoting a sustainable energy and circular economy future.</p> <p>Economic Objective 006: Develop leadership and competency in Smart Energy Technologies.</p> <p>Economic Objective 015: Advance sustainable business innovation in products, services, organisational behaviour and ways of working.</p> <p>Community Goal 1: Enable wellbeing and quality of life to support safe, resilient, independent and engaged communities.</p> <p>Community Goal 8: Value and protect our built heritage and natural environment to enhance the lives of those who live, work and visit in the county.</p>
Primary Target Group(s)	Communities generally, including coastal communities, anglers, tourism operators, farmers and forestry interests.
Geographic Area	The call for proposals will be open to communities across Co. Louth.
Organisation who will deliver the action	Louth LEADER Partnership
Collaborating Organisations	Community Interest Groups, landowners and local farmers, Farming Organisations, Teagasc, Local Authorities, EPA, Coillte, DkIT, LMETB, BIM, FLAG communities, Marine Institute, SEAI, DAFF, DECLG and Louth County Council, Irish Water, and National Parks and Wildlife Service, PPN Structures, Louth Environmental and Conservation Organisations and Interest Groups.
Timeframe of Delivery	<p>Q4 2015 – Q4 2020.</p> <p>During the period both an open call and targeted calls for applications will be issued.</p>

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Anticipated Outputs/Indicators and Targets	
Number of projects funded – new	8
Number of projects funded – existing (and when founded)	0
Number of jobs created – new (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)	2
Number of existing jobs sustained (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)	2
Type of project funded:	
Wind energy	0
Solar power	0
Energy other	0
Education and awareness programmes	0
Impact assessment	0
Local co-ordination initiatives	0
Technical/scientific cooperation	0
Nature conservation initiatives	0
Recycling	8
Number (and Value) of Funding under the following headings:	
Capital	€80,000.00
Training	€0.00
Marketing	€0.00
Animation	€0.00

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

Title of Local Objective	LO9: Improvement of Rural Biodiversity
LEADER Theme	Rural Environment
LEADER Sub-Theme	Protection and Improvement of Local Biodiversity
Rationale for the Objective	<p><i>Aim: To promote community awareness and support for the protection and improvement of biodiversity in rural and coastal areas across Co. Louth.</i></p> <p>Louth County Council's <i>Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2014</i> notes that all of life depends on biodiversity for survival and humans in particular rely on it for food, clean air and water, clothing and building materials, as well as for medicines and places in which to unwind and reconnect with nature. The protection and wise use of the county's natural resources is, therefore, a vital goal in achieving sustainable development.</p> <p>A study undertaken by the Irish Environmental Network in 2012 found that the economic value of biodiversity to Ireland has been calculated at €2.6 billion per annum. The findings of this study were echoed in a study undertaken in Northern Ireland (DoENI, 2007).</p> <p>In both cases it was found that revenue is created by spending from visitors to nature reserves, visitor centres etc., often in areas that previously supported little economic activity. Biodiversity also sustains direct and indirect jobs in consultancy services, agriculture, forestry, countryside management (e.g. wildlife rangers, habitat restoration on designated sites etc.), and in environmental education. These characteristics provide the opportunity to view the Local Objective as a significant crosscutting measure in the LDS, potentially linking all three themes of the Louth LEADER Programme.</p> <p>Co. Louth contains some of the most important places in Ireland for biodiversity, including a variety of protected habitats, such as estuaries and tidal mud flats, and important species such as the otter. In recent times, some species have become extinct in Co. Louth, such as the red grouse and the corncrake. However, Co. Louth remains one of the most important counties for wintering waders, with Dundalk Bay being the most important site in the country.</p> <p>Co. Louth LAG will use the Local Objective to support the vision of Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2014 in respect of its priorities for Co. Louth Habitats and Species.</p> <p>It will help everyone to better understand, appreciate and help the protection of local biodiversity, particularly in those areas and habitats noted as being most under threat. In this regard the Local Objective will focus on filling gaps in knowledge on biodiversity, particularly in key habitats remain under-surveyed including wet and dry heaths, and hedgerows. In addition neglected habitats include quarries, railways, parkland and veteran trees will be considered, in rural, peri-urban and urban landscapes.</p> <p>LO9 will build awareness in the community for the promotion of actions compatible with protection of the environment, water quality, the landscape and its features, endangered species of flora and fauna and climate change mitigation. Actions will be proofed to ensure that they will support the agri-environment scheme GLAS (part of the RDP 2014-2020), thereby eliminating any propensity for duplication.</p> <p>Key partners in delivering aspects of the Local Objective will include Louth County Council through its role in the protection and enhancement of important sites, landscapes and habitats, Co. Louth Heritage Plan and Forum, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Teagasc, the Forest Service, Inland Fisheries Ireland, Coillte, and community and voluntary sector organisations.</p> <p>The outcomes of the Louth LDS consultation process revealed that there is a general dearth of knowledge or understanding of the importance of maintaining and improving biodiversity across the communities of much of the county.</p>

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Link to the LECP	<p>Economic Objective 002: Play active supporting and facilitator role alongside government agencies to implement the regional Action Plan for Jobs.</p> <p>Economic Objective 005: Position Louth as Ireland's foremost Smart Green County promoting a sustainable energy and circular economy future.</p> <p>Economic Objective 006: Develop leadership and competency in Smart Energy Technologies.</p> <p>Economic Objective 015: Advance sustainable business innovation in products, services, organisational behaviour and ways of working.</p> <p>Community Goal 1: Enable wellbeing and quality of life to support safe, resilient, independent and engaged communities.</p> <p>Community Goal 8: Value and protect our built heritage and natural environment to enhance the lives of those who live, work and visit in the county.</p>
Financial Allocation	€183,055.86
No. of Strategic Actions	2

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

Code	LO9:SA23
Title of Strategic Action	Animation of Communities and Individuals: Biodiversity Conservation Education and Awareness Initiative
Brief Description of Strategic Action	<p>Based on the CLLD approach the strategic action is designed to address the need for greater understanding of the relevance of biodiversity expressed generally through the consultation processes and amplified in the <i>Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2014</i>.</p> <p>The strategic action will <u>support appropriate local information initiatives</u>, including (but not limited to) the facilitation of local community meetings, awareness raising campaigns, use of social media, intensive group supports, tailored project development supports, biodiversity information initiatives, community engagement and citizen science activities, workshops, lectures, field trips, and biodiversity days.</p> <p>The consultation outcomes revealed that whilst a certain portion of many local communities are naturally interested in the environment, there remains a large cohort of people who do not see its relevance to their day-to-day lives.</p> <p>This action seeks to address this deficit, to establish a base-line knowledge of biodiversity and its importance through animation. In parallel with this, will be the demystifying of the EU Habitats Directives for local rural and coastal communities, who may view these negatively and as an imposition onto their traditional way of life.</p> <p>Training and capacity building of new and existing groups in areas such as habitat mapping and species identification, bumblebee and butterfly monitoring, incorporating biodiversity into village and area plans could all have positive impacts on people's awareness of biodiversity. Other relevant issues affecting biodiversity, such as water conservation, land management, invasive species, can be tackled through the heightened awareness and peer learning associated with citizen science. Mentoring for focus groups such as the Tidy Towns Network, youth groups and other local interest groups is considered to be extremely important by Louth LAG.</p> <p>Increasing people's knowledge and awareness of locally important biodiversity sites in inland and coastal areas as well as designated SAC's through community training, capacity building, technical support and mentoring may also be undertaken. This could enable communities to become involved to a greater extent in enhancing the biodiversity value of those sites.</p> <p>The approach will support initiatives that practically bring the relevance of biodiversity into the homes of people not normally engaged in nature conservation. Critical in this, will be engagement with people of all ages, including animation activity with the school-going population. This will be achieved through the provision of small-scale support on biodiversity education and awareness activities at community level, and will facilitate knowledge transfer as well as educating the younger generation in local biodiversity.</p>
Link to LCEP	<p>Economic Objective 005: Position Louth as Ireland's foremost Smart Green County promoting a sustainable energy and circular economy future.</p> <p>Economic Objective 006: Develop leadership and competency in Smart Energy Technologies.</p> <p>Community Goal 1: Enable wellbeing and quality of life to support safe, resilient, independent and engaged communities.</p> <p>Community Goal 8: Value and protect our built heritage and natural environment to enhance the lives of those who live, work and visit in the county.</p>
Primary Target Group(s)	Individuals, Landowners, Farmers, Fishermen, Forestry interests, Community Groups, Tidy Towns organisations, and Young People.
Geographic Area	The call for proposals will be open to communities across Co. Louth.

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Organisation who will deliver the action	Louth LEADER Partnership will deliver the action.	
Collaborating Organisations	Coillte, Community Groups, Louth County Council, Farming Organisations, Tidy Towns Groups, Coillte, Teagasc, Science Foundation Ireland, PPN Structures, National Biodiversity Data Centre, Louth LCDC, SEAI, DkIT, Conservation Organisations and other interested parties.	
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	Q4 2016 - Q4 2020. During the period both an open call and targeted calls for applications will be issued.	
Anticipated Outputs/Indicators and Targets		
Number of projects funded – new		9
Number of projects funded – existing (and when founded)		6
Number of jobs created – new (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)		0
Number of existing jobs sustained (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)		14
Type of project funded:		
Wind energy		0
Solar power		0
Energy other		0
Education and awareness programmes		4
Impact assessment		5
Local co-ordination initiatives		0
Technical/scientific cooperation		1
Nature conservation initiatives		5
Recycling		0
Number (and Value) of Funding under the following headings:		
Capital		€0.00
Training		€45,000.00
Marketing		€0.00
Animation		€73,055.86

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

Code	LO9:SA24
Title of Strategic Action	Biodiversity Initiatives Capital Support
Brief Description of Strategic Action	<p>Based on evidence that has been gained in previous iterations of the LEADER Programme by Louth LEADER Partnership, and involvement of Louth County Council in the cross-border SEUPB INTERREG IVA <i>Action for Biodiversity</i> initiative, it has been shown that support of biodiversity activities at community level can help to facilitate the significant enhancement of the local natural environment, thereby increasing the sense of pride of place for local people and visitors.</p> <p>Emerging from the community consultation processes, a range of community based biodiversity projects requiring capital support have been identified to support biodiversity awareness, education and conservation across the area. These include (but are not limited) making parks and amenity spaces more wildlife friendly, creating habitats to increase wildlife in villages and towns, improving the biodiversity of farmland, forestry, hedgerow and road sides, removal of invasive species, small-scale bee keeping and pollination projects, wildflower gardens and linear path nature reserves.</p> <p>Louth LAG will make <u>small-scale grants available for appropriate biodiversity actions</u>, particularly where these emerge from the biodiversity awareness-building activities.</p> <p>The strategic action is premised on an expectation that targeted capital supports can dramatically improve the quality of biodiversity in an area. These supports can include more traditional good practices such as placement of bird nest boxes, coastal sign posted walks, hedgerow management, and wildflower planting. The value of combining biodiversity as a crosscutting, multi-dimensional element, with other environmental objectives is seen as bringing a multiplier effect to nature conservation. In this context it has the capacity to create a win-win scenario, even for people not fully engaged in nature conservation. Examples include rainwater harvesting, planting of arable crop field margins with wild flower to increase not only plant biodiversity but also increased crop production through increased pollination. Retrofitting buildings with a range of nature conservation measures (from bat boxes to bird boxes and feeders to grass roofs) in an integrated fashion can bring nature to everybody's doorstep.</p> <p>A range of community-based biodiversity projects, both urban and rural, requiring capital support have initially been identified to support biodiversity awareness, education and conservation across the county, including (but not limited to) the creation of pollinator corridors along the transport routes, making parks and amenity spaces more pollinator friendly, creating habitats to increase wildlife in villages and towns, improving the biodiversity of farmland, forestry, hedgerow and road sides, removal of invasive species, small-scale bee keeping and pollination projects, and wildflower gardens.</p>
Link to LECP	<p>Economic Objective 005: Position Louth as Ireland's foremost Smart Green County promoting a sustainable energy and circular economy future.</p> <p>Economic Objective 006: Develop leadership and competency in Smart Energy Technologies.</p> <p>Community Goal 1: Enable wellbeing and quality of life to support safe, resilient, independent and engaged communities.</p> <p>Community Goal 8: Value and protect our built heritage and natural environment to enhance the lives of those who live, work and visit in the county.</p>
Primary Target Group(s)	Individuals, Landowners, Farmers, Fishermen, Forestry interests, Community Groups and Young People, Louth LCDC, LMETB, Louth County Council, SEAI, DkIT, Environmental Conservation Organisations and other interested parties.
Geographic Area	The call for proposals will be open to all of Co. Louth.
Organisation who will deliver the action	Louth LEADER Partnership

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Collaborating Organisations	Coillte, Community Groups, Louth County Council, Farm Organisations, Tidy Towns Network, Coillte, Teagasc, Science Foundation Ireland, National Biodiversity Data Centre, PPN Structures and Local Schools.	
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	Q3 2016 – Q4 2020. During the period both an open call and targeted calls for applications will be issued.	
Anticipated Outputs/Indicators and Targets		
Number of projects funded – new		2
Number of projects funded – existing (and when founded)		5
Number of jobs created – new (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)		0
Number of existing jobs sustained (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)		7
Type of project funded:		
Wind energy		0
Solar power		0
Energy other		0
Education and awareness programmes		0
Impact assessment		0
Local co-ordination initiatives		0
Technical/scientific cooperation		0
Nature conservation initiatives		7
Recycling		0
Number (and Value) of Funding under the following headings:		
Capital		€65,000.00
Training		€0.00
Marketing		€0.00
Animation		€0.00

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

Title of Local Objective	LO10: Rural Renewable Energy
LEADER Theme	Rural Environment
LEADER Sub-Theme	Development of Renewable Energy
Rationale for the Objective	<p><i>Aim: To develop renewable energy initiatives that collectively reduce the carbon foot print of the county.</i></p> <p>Louth County Council is not currently one of the eight Local Authorities in Ireland that has become a signatory of the European Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy. Consequently, the county does not have Sustainable Energy Action Plan detailing how it intends to reach its CO₂ reduction target by 2020, and defining the activities and measures set up to achieve the targets, together with time frames and assigned responsibilities. The region does not have an EU Energy and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Observatory.</p> <p>In June 2014 Louth County Council established an Energy Team, as part of a Cross Border, European Affairs and Sustainable Energy Directorate with a focus on establishing the county as an energy leader among Local Authorities in Ireland, and to develop expertise in sustainable energy within the region.</p> <p>Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021 notes that Co. Louth has a clear part to play in the development of renewable energy given its coastal location and therefore, the provision of such alternative energy resources will be considered on suitable sites throughout the County.</p> <p>It is possible that future large-scale wind generation may be located off the Co. Louth coast, representing significant opportunities for economic development in servicing off shore wind farms. The County Development Plan also notes qualified support for Passive Solar Design, Solar Heating, and Photovoltaic (PV) Systems. It is likely that large-scale PV arrays will be developed for Irish conditions in the very near future. Similarly, and subject to conditions, the Plan encourages and supports the development of geothermal energy, wave and tidal energy and bioenergy amongst others in Co. Louth.</p> <p>The range of actions identified though the LDS consultation process and subsequent research focus on reducing carbon emissions through energy reduction initiatives, creating sustainable employment through locally-based energy generation activities and supporting community based energy conservation initiatives, including insulation. Additionally, local initiatives that enhance communities knowledge and aim to reduce the carbon foot print, address fuel poverty through sustainable resource use, increase energy efficiency (insulation and other energy saving measures), thereby reducing fossil fuel consumption in rural homes and SMEs have been highlighted.</p> <p>There is an opportunity to realise commercially sustainable activity through the generation of greater amounts of renewable energy for power, heating and transport fuel, whilst simultaneously decreasing power generation though energy reduction measures.</p> <p>An increased level of community participation in renewable energy projects will ensure that communities benefit from local renewable energy projects. Investment in renewable energy infrastructure projects and capacity building actions will support the cross-cutting objectives of innovation, environment and climate change, raising awareness of, and protecting the environment, reducing Ireland's greenhouse gases, while piloting new ideas and improved technology.</p>

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Link to the LECP	<p>Economic Objective 002: Play active supporting and facilitator role alongside government agencies to implement the regional Action Plan for Jobs.</p> <p>Economic Objective 005: Position Louth as Ireland's foremost Smart Green County promoting a sustainable energy and circular economy future.</p> <p>Economic Objective 006: Develop leadership and competency in Smart Energy Technologies.</p> <p>Economic Objective 015: Advance sustainable business innovation in products, services, organisational behaviour and ways of working.</p> <p>Community Goal 1: Enable wellbeing and quality of life to support safe, resilient, independent and engaged communities.</p> <p>Community Goal 8: Value and protect our built heritage and natural environment to enhance the lives of those who live, work and visit in the county.</p>
Financial Allocation	€244,074.48
No. of Strategic Actions	2

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

Code	LO10:SA25
Title of Strategic Action	Awareness Building for Communities and Individuals: Renewable Energy
Brief Description of Strategic Action	<p>Renewable energy offers sustainable alternatives to a dependency on fossil fuels. It is also a way of reducing harmful greenhouse emissions and opportunities to reduce our reliance on imported fuels. Under the 2009 Renewable Energy Directive, Ireland is committed to produce from renewable sources at least 16% of all energy consumed by 2020. Ireland's third National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP 3) reaffirmed Ireland's commitment to delivering a 20% reduction in energy demand across the whole of the economy by 2020.</p> <p>It follows that community based initiatives will play a key role in realising national and EU environmental targets and a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions through renewable energy infrastructure. However, this requires considerable capacity building and up-skilling among community representatives and local SMEs including key co-ordination and co-operation actions that link key local drivers.</p> <p>The untapped natural resources, including wind, wave, tidal and solar, identified in the area profile, coupled with the interest voiced at the consultation meetings shows there are opportunities for smaller scale and localised renewable energy development projects to support community facilities and enterprises.</p> <p>An increased level of community participation in renewable energy projects will ensure that communities benefit from local renewable energy projects. Investment in renewable energy infrastructure projects and capacity building actions will support the cross-cutting objectives of innovation, environment and climate change, raising awareness of, and protecting the environment, reducing Ireland's greenhouse gases, while piloting new ideas and improved technology. CLLD methodologies will be adopted to encourage participation and engagement of local organisations in the adoption and development of use of renewable energy and in reducing energy demand. This will include <u>facilitation of local community meetings, use social media and other social media, awareness raising, intensive group supports, project development officer support and preparation of project applications.</u></p> <p>These supports will mobilise communities, people living in rural areas, villages and towns and SMEs to engage in the delivery of innovative renewable energy services, networks, research and infrastructure, informed via local engagement, and participative planning.</p> <p>Animation actions will support community development, improved quality of life, protection and improvement of the environment, economic growth and the creation of rural jobs. The awareness-building process will automatically create and support the development of strategic alliances to facilitate best practice models for community engagement.</p>
Link to LCEP	<p>Economic Objective 002: Play active supporting and facilitator role alongside government agencies to implement the regional Action Plan for Jobs.</p> <p>Economic Objective 005: Position Louth as Ireland's foremost Smart Green County promoting a sustainable energy and circular economy future.</p> <p>Economic Objective 006: Develop leadership and competency in Smart Energy Technologies.</p> <p>Economic Objective 015: Advance sustainable business innovation in products, services, organisational behaviour and ways of working.</p> <p>Community Goal 1: Enable wellbeing and quality of life to support safe, resilient, independent and engaged communities.</p> <p>Community Goal 8: Value and protect our built heritage and natural environment to enhance the lives of those who live, work and visit in the county.</p>

/continued

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

/continued

Primary Target Group(s)	All community groups and organisations, SMEs (including agriculture and social enterprise).	
Geographic Area	The call for proposals will be open to all of Co. Louth.	
Organisation who will deliver the action	Louth LEADER Partnership	
Collaborating Organisations	Farming Organisations, SEAI, Teagasc, BIM, Inland Waterways Ireland, Chambers, Louth County Council, Louth LEO, Louth LCDDC, EPA, Coillte, DkIT, DAFF, DECLG, PPN Structures, Environmental Interest Groups, Community Groups and Local Schools.	
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	Q3 2016 - Q4 2020. During the period both an open call and targeted calls for applications will be issued.	
Anticipated Outputs/Indicators and Targets		
Number of projects funded – new		3
Number of projects funded – existing (and when founded)		6
Number of jobs created – new (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)		1
Number of existing jobs sustained (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)		8
Type of project funded:		
Wind energy		0
Solar power		0
Energy other		0
Education and awareness programmes		4
Impact assessment		4
Local co-ordination initiatives		0
Technical/scientific cooperation		1
Nature conservation initiatives		0
Recycling		0
Number (and Value) of Funding under the following headings:		
Capital		€0.00
Training		€20,000.00
Marketing		€0.00
Animation		€68,074.48

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

Code	LO10:SA26
Title of Strategic Action	Renewable Energy Capital Supports
Brief Description of Strategic Action	<p>Renewable energy resource opportunities are abundantly available in the county, however, only a fraction of these have been tapped thus far. These resources offer sustainable alternatives to the current dependency on fossil fuels, as well as a means of reducing harmful greenhouse emissions and opportunities to reduce reliance on imported fuels.</p> <p>This strategic action will <u>support the development of potential small-scale renewable energy conservation projects</u>. These projects will be carefully chosen to act as transferable demonstrators of either technologies or cooperative working arrangements. Thus the strategic action will support renewable energy and energy efficiency projects that can play a vital role in making food, water and energy systems more sustainable. In turn, this will underpin the crosscutting theme of Louth LAG to make the smaller and more vulnerable communities in the county more resilient to potential future economic shocks emanating from energy supply issues.</p> <p>The outcomes of the community consultation process identified a number of participants with an interest in exploring microgeneration for the small-scale generation of heat and electric power to meet their own needs, and as an alternative to grid-connected power, and an aspiration to low-carbon footprints or cost reduction. In this context, the strategic action will enable the co-financing of a small number of technical and feasibility studies, particularly where the application of renewables uses innovative technologies and is not capable of attracting appropriate support from other agencies such as SEAI.</p> <p>The strategic action will particularly focus on a range of technologies and applications compatible with the needs, constraints and characteristics of the county, including (but not limited to) micro-generation using waste, biomass, wood, water and solar and anaerobic digestion, supply chain management and waste reduction measures, greater building efficiencies, tackling fuel poverty and increasing uptake of local energy supply solutions.</p> <p>The consultative process referenced the leading role that DKIT has to play in promoting the adoption of renewable energy technologies across the county, particularly given its iconic wind generator on the Dundalk campus. Similarly, the presence of SEAI in Dundalk was seen to reinforce the opportunities to promote the green credentials of the county.</p> <p>Paradoxically, whilst Co. Louth is currently not a signatory of the EU Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, both the awareness-building and capital funding strategic actions have the capacity to encourage the development of cooperative energy reduction measures in the commercial and public sectors, particularly given the county's profile of employers.</p>
Link to LECP	<p>Economic Objective 002: Play active supporting and facilitator role alongside government agencies to implement the regional Action Plan for Jobs.</p> <p>Economic Objective 005: Position Louth as Ireland's foremost Smart Green County promoting a sustainable energy and circular economy future.</p> <p>Economic Objective 006: Develop leadership and competency in Smart Energy Technologies.</p> <p>Economic Objective 015: Advance sustainable business innovation in products, services, organisational behaviour and ways of working.</p> <p>Community Goal 1: Enable wellbeing and quality of life to support safe, resilient, independent and engaged communities.</p> <p>Community Goal 8: Value and protect our built heritage and natural environment to enhance the lives of those who live, work and visit in the county.</p>
Primary Target Group(s)	All community groups and organisations, and SME's (including agriculture, fishing and social enterprise).
Geographic Area	The call for proposals will be all of Co. Louth.

/continued

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

/continued

Organisation who will deliver the action	Louth LEADER Partnership	
Collaborating Organisations	Farming Organisations, SEAI, Teagasc, BIM, Inland Waterways Ireland, Chambers, Louth County Council, Louth LEO, Louth LCDC, EPA, Coillte, DkIT, DAFF, DECLG, PPN Structures, Environmental Interest Groups, Community Groups and Local Schools.	
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	Q1 2016 – Q4 2020. During the period both an open call and targeted calls for applications will be issued.	
Primary Target Group(s)	All community groups and organisations, SMEs (including agriculture and social enterprise).	
Geographic Area	The call for proposals will be open to all of Co. Louth.	
Organisation who will deliver the action	Louth LEADER Partnership	
Collaborating Organisations	Farming Organisations, SEAI, Teagasc, BIM, Inland Waterways Ireland, Chambers, Louth County Council, Louth LEO, Louth LCDC, EPA, Coillte, DkIT, DAFF, DECLG, PPN Structures, Environmental Interest Groups, Community Groups and Local Schools.	
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	Q3 2016 - Q4 2020. During the period both an open call and targeted calls for applications will be issued.	
Anticipated Outputs/Indicators and Targets		
Number of projects funded – new		2
Number of projects funded – existing (and when founded)		7
Number of jobs created – new (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)		0
Number of existing jobs sustained (FT/ PT/ Seasonal)		7
Type of project funded:		
Wind energy		1
Solar power		1
Energy other		1
Education and awareness programmes		0
Impact assessment		0
Local co-ordination initiatives		0
Technical/scientific cooperation		0
Nature conservation initiatives		0
Recycling		6
Number (and Value) of Funding under the following headings:		
Capital		€156,000.00
Training		€0.00
Marketing		€0.00
Animation		€0.00

4.5 Strategic Action Plan Summary

4.5.1 LEADER Allocation by Theme

Table 20 - LEADER Allocation by Theme

Leader Theme	LEADER Allocation	% Allocation
Theme 1: Economic and Enterprise Development and Job Creation	€2,440,744.81	53.4%
Theme 2: Social Inclusion	€1,525,465.50	33.3%
Theme 3: Rural Environment	€ 610,186.20	13.3%
Total	€4,576,396.51	100%

4.5.2 LEADER Allocation by Sub-Theme

Table 21 - LEADER Allocation by Sub-Theme

LEADER Sub-Theme	LEADER Allocation	% Allocation
1.1 Rural Tourism	€854,260.69	18.7%
1.2 Enterprise Development	€854,260.69	18.7%
1.3 Rural Towns	€610,186.20	13.3%
1.4 Broadband	€122,037.23	2.7%
2.1 Basic Services	€762,732.75	16.6%
2.2 Rural Youth	€762,762.75	16.7%
3.1 Water Resources	€183,055.86	4%
3.2 Local Bio-Diversity	€183,055.86	4%
3.3 Renewable Energy	€244,074.48	5.3%
Total	€4,576,396.51	100%

5 Strategic Integration

5.1 Cross-Cutting Objectives

In the development of Louth LDS the cross-cutting objectives of innovation, the environment and climate were considered. The process of review included: -

- ❑ Review of investments made during the 2009-2013 Programme period;
- ❑ Review of key policies related to rural development;
- ❑ Review of existing service provision within the LDS Area;
- ❑ Consultation process that involved the community, business and statutory bodies;
- ❑ Analysis of the key gaps identified through the process; *and*
- ❑ Development of objectives in the light of existing service provision, and the integrated needs of the rural environment.

5.1.1 Innovation

In developing the LDS, the LAG has taken account of the examples of innovative practice outlined in the *Pobal Guidance Document 2, Section 5, P18*. Louth LDS recognises the importance of flexibility in the piloting of new products, technologies, and markets.

Louth LDS will, through animation and subsequent project calls, target start-ups, existing businesses, and communities that demonstrate the capacity to: -

- ❑ Work in a focused manner to develop their own idea, business or community;
- ❑ Be market focused, address the needs of the individual or community be it in economic or societal terms or both;
- ❑ Ensure that the people will be encouraged to build on their own strengths; *and*
- ❑ Sensitively exploit opportunity for the current and follow on for longer-term gain. This could involve collaborative opportunity.

The LDS has taken consideration of Fáilte Ireland's strategy on *Ireland's Ancient East*, and the focus on Product Development is aligned to both the LECP and Fáilte Ireland Strategy Outline for 2016. The LAG has also taken cognisance of the Fáilte Ireland briefing to potential LAGs. In terms of Capital Funding, if a project is more suitable for Fáilte Ireland Investment, Louth LAG will pass it over.

In terms of Community Facilitation, this will focus on the training of communities to organise, strategise, and implement their own actions.

Whilst the LAG will focus on applicants that demonstrate that they have the characteristics of an innovator, the LAG itself will also focus on innovation in terms of operational and behavioural change in how it conducts its own affairs, and manages the Programme.

5.1.2 Environment

The researched actions proposed have been guided by the EU Commission *'Thematic Strategy on the Sustainable Use of Natural Resources'*.¹⁹

The aim of the strategy is to reduce the rate of the depletion of resources and increases in pollution whilst meeting the economic growth and employment objectives of the Lisbon European Council. All resource-consuming sectors are taken into account with a view to

¹⁹ COM (2005) 670.

improving resource yield, reducing the environmental impact of resource use and replacing excessively polluting resources with alternatives.

The LDS supports the EU Commission requirement through the provision of training for local communities on the key issues of improving bio-diversity, implementing practical water conservation measures, and by investment in strategic renewable energy sources.

5.1.3 Climate Change

In developing the LDS cognisance has been taken of the guidance of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)²⁰: -

Human health benefits of contact with nature and green spaces are well proven and are key to encouraging the active lifestyles needed to prevent issues such as obesity, cardio-vascular disease and type-2 diabetes that are affecting much of our population. For this reason, sustainable communities will require recreational spaces and also areas of wildness. This 'green infrastructure' would be provided via informed planning at LA level, and then actively maintained by local groups and public bodies. Schemes such as LEADER could be used to support this by developing projects to deliver, for example: Infrastructure that enables physical activity; mapping our natural heritage; safe walking in rural roads.

The concept of the Circular Economy has come to prominence recently and is seen as an economic model that puts emphasis on preserving products, components and materials in use for as long as possible. However in a fuller sense, the Circular Economy also addresses and supports concepts such as: -

- *Equity of access to resources;*
- *Valuing ecosystem services;*
- *Wellbeing of human health and the environment; and*
- *Fair social and employment structures.*

From a community perspective, the framework of the circular economy is well aligned with local and community development by emphasising local enterprises that repair and maintain products in place of purchasing new (imported) items. This is entirely aligned with the Action Plan for Jobs ambition "to stimulate the domestic economy and generate employment in locally traded sector".

In a similar vein, local-level tourism initiatives generate employment and wealth in communities – often in areas where other economic activity is subdued. This is again fully in-line with the strong focus within the Action Plan for Jobs on tourism as an engine to stimulate the domestic economy. Specific actions from the action plan that have L&CD relevance include self-guiding tours/trails based cultural and artistic collections; heritage tourism initiatives; a national park trails network; arts venues, festivals, and touring initiatives.

SMEs play a critical role in local economies, particularly in rural areas. Supports must be put in place to help these businesses to thrive (such as via EPA's Green Business programme); and also to foster new businesses – with the support of the Louth LEO central to this.

The objectives and actions of the LDS directly addresses the recommendations made by the EPA in their guidance note.

Louth LAG will prioritise the following: -

- Work with Teagasc and the Farm Bodies to relay expertise on Greenhouse Gas Emissions to Farmers;

²⁰ EPA Submission on Community Development 2015

- ❑ Invest in the sustainable use of natural resources;
- ❑ Development of activity tourism – Fáilte Ireland;
- ❑ Development of artisan and added-value local food product – Bord Bia; *and*
- ❑ Encouragement of locally traded services within rural communities.

5.1.4 Animation of Measures: Cross-Cutting Themes

The above actions will be stimulated through animation of individuals and communities and where relevant by direct referral to the relevant State bodies. Animation will be an ongoing process throughout the programme.

5.1.5 Monitoring of Progress

The LAG Actions outlined above will be populated in the annual action plan. Their completion as actions and investment will be recorded on the IT System.

5.2 Policy Context

The development of Louth LDS was undertaken having regard to the range of key high-level policies and strategic statements ranging across: -

- ❑ International Level;
- ❑ European Level;
- ❑ National Level;
- ❑ Regional Level; *and*
- ❑ Local Level.

Of prime importance amongst these were the existing Border Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022, the Draft Louth County Development Plan 2015-2021, the Medium Term Economic Strategy 2014-2020 (MTES), and the enterprise strategy as set out in *Making it Happen – Growing Enterprise for Ireland*.

5.2.1 International Level

Europe 2020

The European Commission's overarching political strategy, **Europe 2020**, is a ten-year growth and jobs strategy that will support employment, productivity and social cohesion in Europe. The *Strategy for Growth* offers five targets for achievement by 2020: -

1. Increasing the employment rate of the population aged 20-64 to 75%;
2. Investing 3% of gross domestic product in research and development;
3. Reducing carbon emissions by 20% (and by 30% if conditions permit), increasing the share of renewable energies by 20% and increasing energy efficiency by 20%;
4. Reducing the school drop out rate to less than 10% and increasing the proportion of tertiary degrees to 40%; *and*
5. Reducing the number of people threatened by poverty in the EU by 20 million.

Social Protection and Social Inclusion

The two priority Flagship Initiatives, *The Platform against Poverty and Social Inclusion* and the *Agenda for New Skills and Jobs*, supports efforts to reach the targets set to assist at least 20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion and to increase employment of the population aged between 20 – 64 to 75%.

The Social Investment Package (*SIP*) key policy areas include education, quality childcare, healthcare, training, job-search assistance and rehabilitation.

Employment

Europe 2020 notes that European employment, social affairs, and equal opportunities policies contribute to improving people's living conditions with a view to achieving sustainable growth and greater social cohesion. The key points of focus are: -

- ❑ Increasing Labour Market Participation;
- ❑ Developing a Skilled Workforce;
- ❑ Improving Education and Training Systems;
- ❑ Combating Social Exclusion;
- ❑ The Agenda for New Skills and Jobs; *and*
- ❑ Supporting Entrepreneurs and the Self-Employed

Enterprise

Europe 2020 identifies the following key components within its enterprise vision: -

- ❑ Competitiveness;
- ❑ Technology;
- ❑ Small businesses; *and*
- ❑ Harnessing the potential of job rich sectors.

Rural Development

The Europe 2020 Strategy outlines plans to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive economic growth through a variety of goals. In line with EU2020 and the overall CAP objectives, three long-term strategic objectives can be identified for EU rural development policy: -

- ❑ Improving the competitiveness of agriculture;
- ❑ The sustainable management of natural resources and climate action; *and*
- ❑ A balanced territorial development of rural areas.

The economic development of rural areas names three specific areas of intervention: -

1. Facilitating diversification, creation of new small enterprises and job creation;
2. Promoting local development in rural areas; *and*
3. Enhancing accessibility to, and use and quality of ICT in rural areas.

5.2.2 National Policy Level

Medium Term Economic Strategy

The Irish Government, in its Medium Term Economic Strategy 2014 – 2020 (MTES) outlined how it will continue to build the Irish Economy through achieving sustainable economic growth, strong public finances and enduring job creation. Related policies and strategies aim to reduce inequality and improve poverty outcomes with a particular emphasis on child poverty. The Strategy is based on three pillars:

- ❑ Ensuring Debt Sustainability;
- ❑ Financing Growth; *and*
- ❑ Supporting Employment and Living Standards.

National Reform Programme, Ireland 2014

The Government's National Reform Programme (NRP) 2014 identifies seven country-specific recommendations to help improve economic performance in the areas of public finances,

healthcare, labour market, education and training, social inclusion, access to finance, financial sector and legal services.

Action Plan for Jobs 2015

The Action Plan for Jobs is a whole-of-Government initiative established in 2012, under which all Government Departments and Agencies work together to deliver on five strategic ambitions: -

- ❑ To support 100,000 additional jobs by 2016;
- ❑ To get Ireland back to a top-five ranking in international competitiveness;
- ❑ To stimulate the domestic economy and generate employment in locally traded sector;
- ❑ To build an indigenous engine of growth that drives up the export market share of Irish companies;
- ❑ To build world-class clusters in key sectors of opportunity; *and*
- ❑ To achieve full employment of 2.1m people in 2018.

Youth Guarantee

Ireland's *Youth Guarantee* resolves to: -

- ❑ Develop the Intreo activation process for young people;
- ❑ Deliver opportunities to young people through education and training programmes;
- ❑ Earmark a quota of places/opportunities on employment schemes for young people;
- ❑ Vary the eligibility conditions for access to schemes in favour of young people;
- ❑ Expand the number of opportunities for young people; *and*
- ❑ Introduce new options for young unemployed people.

FET Strategy 2014-2019

SOLAS, the Further Education and Training Authority, produced its first strategy document which will be implemented at a local level through Louth and Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB). Five high-level goals are identified within the strategy: -

- ❑ **Skills for the Economy** addressing current and future needs of learners, jobseekers, employers and employees;
- ❑ **Active Inclusion** of people of all abilities in society with special reference to literacy and numeracy;
- ❑ **Quality provision** of education and training programmes meeting national and international quality standards;
- ❑ **Integrated Planning and Funding** based on objective analysis of needs and evidence of social and economic impact; *and*
- ❑ **Standing of FET**, ensuring a valued learning path leading to agreed employment, career, developmental, personal and social options.

Children and Young People

In April 2014 a new Children and Young People's Policy Framework *Better Outcomes: Brighter Futures* was published outlining 160 commitments, ranging from: -

- ❑ Focusing on early interventions and quality services to promote best outcomes for children;
- ❑ Working better together to protect young people who are marginalised or at risk;
- ❑ Setting a target of lifting 70,000 children out of poverty by 2020;
- ❑ Improving childhood health and wellbeing in line with the goals of '*Health Ireland*';

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

- ❑ Enhancing job opportunities for young people – building on the ‘Action Plan for Jobs’ and ‘Youth Guarantee’; and
- ❑ Delivering better supports for families and parenting.

The Strategy prioritises key crosscutting transformational goals that require concerted and co-ordinated actions to ensure the realisation of respective outcomes: -

- ❑ Supporting parents;
- ❑ Earlier intervention and prevention;
- ❑ Listening to and involving children and young people;
- ❑ Ensuring quality services;
- ❑ Strengthening transitions; and
- ❑ Collaboration and co-ordination across government.

Rural Development

In recognition of the severe impact of the downturn in the economy on rural Ireland, the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Ireland (CEDRA) was established in October 2012. CEDRA’s task was to identify strategic initiatives that would ensure rural areas contribute to sustainable national economic growth and development into the future. The process confirmed that *‘there is an abundance of natural, physical, human and capital resources including dormant assets in many rural communities that could be leveraged to support national economic growth and the development of these communities’*.

Climate Change

In developing the LDS cognisance has been taken of the guidance of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in relation to climate change and sustainable development.

5.2.3 Regional Policy Level

The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region 2010-2022 recognise the importance of building on the indigenous strengths of the rural areas in order to achieve balanced regional growth and provide a long-term strategic framework for the sustainable development of the region, up to 2022.

In terms of agriculture and rural development, new approaches towards agri-tourism, organic farming and eco-tourism may provide the way forward for many farmers in the region, who are facing a decline in income and seeking opportunities for off-farm supplementation.

6 Networking and Co-operation

6.1 Networking

The LDS has been developed in close collaboration with all of the strategic partners to ensure a cohesive and coordinated approach to the diverse needs of the area. All partners in this strategy believe in co-operation and working together for the common good of the people of the area. Co-operation started at the commencement of the planning process for this strategy and will continue through the implementation phase.

The public-private community partnership structure of the Louth LAG, and the Board of Implementer bring together key local actors across the pillars of Community, State Agencies, Social Partners and Local Government. This structure will ensure a shared understanding of the issues affecting Louth and will aid the identification and agreement of appropriate initiatives to address these issues.

The experience of managing a wide range of European and Government funded Programmes including SICAP, TÚS, and the Rural Social Scheme has given rise to a deep understanding of issues at local level as well as a wide range of formal and informal networks. The Implementer can demonstrate a positive legacy of co-operation and co-ordination with other public bodies and community and voluntary sector organisations at local, regional and national level. Louth LAG values membership of all such networks, and will continue to engage with these, and develop new links with others into the future.

6.2 Networking Structures

The development of the Louth Public Participation Network (PPN) is seen as central to local community consultation and engagement. Louth LCDC also has parallel mechanisms of engagement and consultation through direct animation with individual groups and communities such as the IFA, Macra na Feirme, FLAG, groups of place and groups of special interest. The latter category includes those suffering geographic isolation, lack of basic services and those who are hard to hear and hard to reach.

The PPN members on Louth LCDC will facilitate two-way information sharing. The will rotate every three years, and other community and voluntary sector organisations not involved in the PPN will be invited to quarterly meetings in each of the Municipal Districts to receive updates on the implementation of the LEADER Programme, and provide feedback on the LDS.

The PPN works closely with the Council in this regard and a very positive working relationship has developed to date. This positive working relationship is key to underpinning a successful LAG led from the bottom-up. The links between the PPN, the LAG, and the Implementer is a key strength and demonstrates a bottom-up approach, thereby keeping in line with community-led ethos of LEADER.

The LAG will participate in sectoral meetings with the County Council, Fáilte Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, the LEO, BIM/FLAG, SICAP, DSP, Teagasc and DkIT to promote and foster a focus on the needs of the rural territory, and the improvement in the quality of life of its citizens.

The LAG, its financial partner Louth County Council and the Implementer, have well-developed links with all of the main State and Semi-State bodies and business representative groupings in the region. In addition, formal arrangements have been put in place to maximise the impact of the programme budget and to leverage additional supports, as follows: -

- The partnership with Louth LEO will include a new way of working and will help to ensure integration of approach and coordination of activity. This unique opportunity will ensure that promoters will have the opportunity of benefitting from a strong partnership approach will help to achieve a single point of contact for promoters, and will support the fact that the LEO is a *'first stop shop'* for enterprise supports.
- The allocation of various Council, and other funding initiatives and programmes will be well placed to achieve synergies with the LAG through a coordinated and collaborative approach to calls for proposals and allocation of funding.

6.2.1 Regional Networking

At regional level the LAG will engage with the adjacent counties in the region, including Down, Armagh, Monaghan, Cavan and Meath. Examples here could be the development of inter-territorial walks and routes with the objective of sensitively exploiting opportunities presented by the estuaries and natural amenities.

6.2.2 Mechanisms

Community Area Fora: Communities typically engage in networking in two ways - on a geographic basis and a thematic basis. At a geographic level the organisation positively facilitates communication between **Community Groups and Organisations:** These networks provide a forum for networking and the exchange information, to be informed about funding opportunities and to examine models of best practice within their local areas. The Implementer and LAG will facilitate these community networks.

Thematic Networks: Working on a thematic basis, various specific interest themes are identified and relevant groups and organisations brought together to share experiences and develop collaborative actions. It is planned that these and other thematic networks would continue to be supported and developed over the course of the LEADER Programme 2014-2020.

6.2.3 Policy Influence

The LAG and Implementer participate in a range of networks that give rise to opportunities to contribute to and influence policy across sectors and topics.

Table 22 - Local Policy Influencing Structures

Policy Structures	Scope
Louth Public Participation Network	The recently established Louth Public Participation Network - the successor to the former Community and Voluntary Forum - will form a new part of the Community Infrastructure at County Level by providing a structured forum to engage with registered community and voluntary Groups, social inclusion groups, and environmental organisations across the county.
Louth Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)	The LCDC, through its representatives from various state agencies and community and voluntary sector organisations and engagement with Local Government, has the opportunity to influence national policy by engaging in rural development policy creation through policy submissions and interdepartmental working groups. The Implementing Partner sits on the LCDC. The LCDC is involved in developing community, social inclusion and rural development policies for their respective areas and there is an ideal opportunity to achieve synergies of approach and leveraging best practice.
County Childcare Committee	Delivers early childhood care and education programmes which support children and families.

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Policy Structures	Scope
Social Inclusion and Community SPC Economic Development SPC	The SPCs prepare the groundwork for policies, which will then be decided upon by County Council.
Louth LEO	The Local Enterprise Office works with the business community of the county and the enterprise partners to support and nurture economic development.
Louth County Joint Policing Committee	The JPC is responsible for the development, implementation and oversight of a 6 Year strategic policing plan for the county. The JPC comprises representatives from the area and has developed close linkages with the LCDC. This bottom-up policy development approach will be key to supporting the successful delivery of LEADER 2015-2020.

Table 23 - National Policy Influencing Structures

Policy Structures	Scope
The National Rural Network	The NRN provides support for networking over the course of the LEADER Programme. It will provide structured networking events including seminars, thematic workshops, online fora. The LAG will engage proactively, participating in such events and contributing where appropriate.
Irish Local Development Network	ILDN is a national network made up of and representing Local Development Companies throughout Ireland. The ILDN has played an important role in facilitating networking between LAGs at both a Regional and National level while also facilitating international exchanges, in co-operation with the European Network for Rural Development. The ILDN Regional structure has provided a network for the exchange of knowledge and information within the region.
Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs	The DAHRRGA will facilitate a number of events involving the Local Action Groups over the course of the Programme, focusing on particular themes and administrative aspects of the Programme. The LAG and the Implementers will participate in future events as appropriate.
Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 Monitoring Committee	Monitoring Committee for the implementation of the RDP 2014-2020

Table 24 - European Policy Influencing Structures

Policy Structures	Scope
Irish regions Office, Brussels	<p>The Irish Regions Office (IRO) was established with the support of the DECLG as a Brussels based resource for the Irish members of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) and their regional authorities. The activities of the office have since been expanded through a collaboration of the Association of the Irish Regions (AIR) and local authority Chief Executives to provide a wider range of services to Irish local and regional authorities. The establishment of the IRO is recognition of the growing impact of EU policies at the sub-national level.</p> <p>With almost three quarters of EU legislation now implemented at local or regional level, a priority of the IRO is to assist Irish sub-national authorities in influencing the development of this legislation before having to implement it. The IRO also helps to maintain sub-national government's awareness of developments within the EU generally, highlighting issues of relevance, assisting participation in the policy making process and identifying relevant funding opportunities.</p> <p>The IRO is perfectly positioned to act as a link between the EU institutions and the local and regional levels and to give its sub-national partners a tangible presence at the centre of EU affairs. Louth County Council as financial partner has direct access to this facility.</p>
European Rural Development Network (ENRD)	The ENRD was established to facilitate networking in parallel with the Programming period. The LAG will engage with networking activities at this level on a needs basis where opportunities exist to gain a deeper understanding of the opportunities and trends at European and international level.

/continued

/continued

Policy Structures	Scope
ELARD: European LEADER Association of Rural Development	ELARD is an international non-profit making association set up to improve the quality of life in rural areas and to maintain their population through sustainable, integrated local development. ELARD is a Network of 1,075 LAGS from 23 countries and is based in Brussels. The LAG will collaborate with the appropriate activities of ELARD.
European Rural Parliament	The Rural Parliament sets agendas for policy makers at a European level on issues affecting rural communities. The LAG will work positively to support the activity of the European Rural Parliament

6.3 Co-operation

Louth LAG will work in close partnership and cooperation with Louth Local Enterprise Office. This has been formally recognised in a Cooperation Agreement between the bodies that has been designed to eliminate any prospect of duplication of effort or funding. This is a key benefit of the LCDDC led LAG as experience in the past LEADER Programme has shown the need for improved synergies and cooperation across LAG and LEO for enterprise supports under the LEADER programme.

Co-operation projects are viewed as an important aspect of the LEADER methodology. In preparing the LDS it is intended that the Louth LAG will develop proposals for a range of co-operation projects over the lifetime of the programme. Drawing on the experience of administering previous programmes and the socio economic profile of the sub-region there are a number of potential Co-operation proposals being explored.

Inter-territorial Project Partners: In delivering previous LEADER Programmes, the Implementer has been involved in a selective range of inter-territorial projects involving Partners throughout Ireland. These projects are designed around specific initiatives or sectors, involving local project promoters from the county interacting with counterparts in similar situations elsewhere across the country. This networking proves an invaluable resource.

Transnational Project Partners: Similar to the Inter-territorial projects, over the past 20 years there has been a wide range of Transnational projects undertaken by the Implementer building up a range of connections and contacts throughout Europe and beyond giving rise to formal and informal networking opportunities.

6.3.1 LAG

The Louth LAG offers a unique proposition for the immediate benefit of fostering very close and pro-active working relationships, coordination, and integration across multiple community and economic stakeholders – both public and private. This serves to underpin a robust joined-up approach to policy development and implementation of Community Led Local Development in the area. In addition, the LAG intends to fully participate in LEADER network structures in Ireland. It will also co-operate with the neighbouring LCDDCs to enhance this co-operation potential.

The LAG recognises the value and benefits that can accrue from the dissemination of learning and information, as well as the sharing of good practice. At a local level, the strategy proposes a close and constructive working relationship with the Implementer, and detailed discussions have commenced in this regard.

The LAG can demonstrate considerable experience in working with other agencies in the delivery of initiatives, including: -

- Working with the Louth Public Participation Network in identifying possible projects and prioritisation of needs and actions for inclusion in the Strategy

- Implementation of aspects of the successive Action Plans for Jobs;

The LAG, through the activities of the County Council, has also been instrumental in a number of significant initiatives that have the capacity to flank the LEADER Programme. It has access to the broadest possible breadth and depth of expertise and resources, including governance, performance management, and value for money supports.

Transnational Co-operation

Louth County Council has developed relationship with all of the Local Authorities in the North of Ireland. The shared objective in developing these relationships is to exploit opportunities in the areas of Economic Development, Education and Culture for our mutual benefit. Louth County Council's objective in developing the relationship is to raise awareness about the attractiveness of the county as a location to work, live and visit, to position the county to benefit from investment into Ireland, increase export opportunities for local companies, promote the area as a tourist destination and to foster educational and cultural ties.

Potential Projects

The social, environmental and economic characteristics of the county are in many cases mutually shared between the LAG and many potential co-operation partners at cross border level, nationally and internationally. Attributes and challenges commonly held between regions offer particular opportunities to stimulate and support sustainable and innovative rural development through promotion, collaboration and learning. Potential opportunities for co-operation are currently arising across the LEADER sub-themes. The nature of such initiatives is reflected in the action plan and encompasses, for example, the following broad areas including promoting, protecting and increasing accessibility to natural, maritime, built and cultural heritage, through a range of measures such as: -

- Recreational trail development;
- Harnessing the Ancient East;
- Maritime festivals;
- Cultural and historical linkages; *and*
- Development of recreation pursuits such as walking, cycling, sailing, mountain biking, surfing, rowing, kayaking, and fishing.

7 Monitoring and Review

The monitoring, review and evaluation processes to be implemented for the County Louth LDS will conform to Section 19 of the *Draft LEADER Operating Rules Rural Development Programme Ireland 2014-2020: Version 1.6: 29th March 2016*, which details the Monitoring Framework for the Programme.

County Louth LAG references the World Bank²¹ definitions for monitoring, review and evaluation in the context of the implementation of the LDS. Monitoring aims primarily to provide the Programme management (County Louth LAG and Implementer) and other main stakeholders of early indications of progress, or lack thereof, in the achievement of results.

The monitoring framework for LEADER necessarily references the LDS Framework, and is centred on the three LEADER themes and respective sub-themes. The Annual Implementation Plan establishes the practical actions and activities that will be undertaken.

In terms of the monitoring of the LDS, each of the local objectives is linked to one of the nine overall LEADER sub-themes. Local projects will, in turn, be linked to one of the local objectives.

County Louth LAG will conform to the requirements of the Operating Rules in that LEADER projects will have common performance indicators associated with each sub-theme. These indicators will be chosen to facilitate the monitoring and measuring of the programme effectiveness.

Programme monitoring will undertaken at both project level and at County Louth LAG level.

7.1 Project Level Monitoring

Reporting on the progress and outputs of the LEADER programme will be facilitated by a defined set of information that will be captured on every funded project. This will be designed to allow ready access to information with which to provide analysis and respond to queries.

The County Louth LDS monitoring data for sub-themes, local objectives and performance indicators will be entered on the prospective LEADER System. County Louth LAG will report on outputs and outcomes of projects in the context of these objectives and performance indicators. At project level the information will be captured at the following key stages: -

7.1.1 Application Stage

The Implementer, will inform all Programme applicants of the requirements for the collection of key performance indicators. It is anticipated that the majority of the basic project information will be captured on the LEADER ICT System at the point of application.

7.1.2 LAG Assessment of Application

The Implementer, will return information when assessing applications, linking the proposed project to the appropriate LDS objectives and, when associating it with one of the overarching LEADER sub-themes. The outcome of this process will be to associate the project with the appropriate set of indicators for the project.

7.1.3 Reporting on Outputs and Outcomes

During the course of implementation, projects will routinely provide information on the results delivered as measured by the appropriate indicators. Qualitative information will also be captured, whereby progress, achievements and the learning associated will be briefly

²¹ *World Bank Social Development Department.*

summarised. County Louth LAG, through the Implementer, will ensure that LEADER projects comply with the prescribed reporting requirements. County Louth LAG will also provide a quality check on the accuracy, consistency and realism of the data collected. This will be validated through a process of random checks.

It is understood that the Department will collate the performance data reported by funded projects, and will provide analysis on the progress, outputs and outcomes achieved. This reporting process will be used as a management tool by County Louth LAG to ensure that the deliverables are being achieved, and that any corrective processes are devised and initiated in the face of variances.

Timeframe

The reporting timeframes (on outputs) will be dependent upon the project type. In most cases, reporting will take place at the final payment stage.

County Louth LAG will only issue the final payment when all of the required data has been entered on the prospective LEADER System. Information related to some outputs may not be available immediately upon completion of the project. In these cases County Louth LAG will enter the outputs from these projects on the LEADER ICT System no later than 12 months from the date of final payment.

7.2 Annual Planning and Reporting

County Louth LAG will submit a short Annual Report to the Department by the end of February each year, commencing in 2017. The Annual Report will include: -

- An outline of the previous year's achievements relative to the priority actions identified, including: -
 - Information on the organisational structure, operations and decision-making within County Louth LAG;
 - Issues or challenges encountered in implementation during the preceding year;
 - Particular successes worthy of highlight;
 - Progress achieved in contributing to LEADER's cross cutting objectives;
 - The priority actions for the year in which the report is produced;
- Three Project Case Studies covering three different sub-themes, to include the following information: -
 - Promoter background and description;
 - Project or business description;
 - Products or facilities or services delivered;
 - Financial Information (previous funding or other sources of funding);
 - Employment (current and potential);
 - Performance indicator data;
 - Compatibility with the LDS, the LEADER themes, and the cross-cutting objectives; *and*
 - Benefit to the community.

County Louth LAG will complete the Annual Report of the template to be provided through the prospective LEADER ICT System.

It is understood that the Department will: -

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

- ❑ Review the Annual Report and engage with County Louth LAG, as appropriate;
- ❑ Summarise any patterns, trends or key issues emerging from the Annual Reports; *and*
- ❑ Make data from the Annual Reports available to contribute to an overall framework for evaluating LEADER performance generally, and the performance of County Louth LAG specifically.

County Louth LAG will contribute to any other reviews or evaluations as required by the Department, including the provision of expenditure estimates in advance of each financial year.

7.3 LEADER Monitoring Framework

The following LEADER Monitoring Framework has been developed by the Department and will be fully implemented by the County Louth LAG to measure the effectiveness of the delivery of the County Louth LDS. The LEADER Monitoring Framework is organised by LEADER Programme Sub-Theme.

7.3.1 Monitoring Framework Theme 1

Table 25 – Theme 1.1 Monitoring Framework

Theme, Sub-Theme and Strategic Action	Indicator (as appropriate)	Measurement (as appropriate)
1: Enterprise Development, Economic Development and Job Creation 1.1: Rural Tourism SA1.1: SA1.2: SA1.3:	Number of projects funded	New
	Number of projects funded	Existing (and when founded)
	Number of jobs created	New: FT/ PT/ Seasonal
	Number of existing jobs sustained	FT/ PT/ Seasonal
	Activity/Adventure Tourism (angling, walking, cycling)	Number of initiatives funded
	Culture and Heritage Tourism	Number of initiatives funded
	Rural Recreation	Number of initiatives funded
	Eco-Tourism	Number of initiatives funded
	Health and Wellness Tourism	Number of initiatives funded
	Marine and Water-based Tourism	Number of initiatives funded
	Agri-Tourism	Number of initiatives funded
	Cluster/network of Tourism Businesses	Number of initiatives funded
	Promotion of area as <i>'destination'</i> (website development, etc.)	Number of initiatives funded
	Capital	Number (and value) of funding
	Training	Number (and value) of funding
	Marketing	Number (and value) of funding
	Animation	Number (and value) of funding
Number of Visitors	Number	

Table 26 – Theme 1.2 Monitoring Framework

Theme, Sub-Theme and Strategic Action	Indicator (as appropriate)	Measurement (as appropriate)
1: Enterprise Development, Economic Development and Job Creation 1.2: Enterprise Development SA2.1: SA2.2: SA2.3:	Number of enterprises funded	Start ups
	Number of enterprises funded	Existing (and when founded)
	Number of jobs created	New: FT/ PT/ Seasonal
	Number of existing jobs sustained	FT/ PT/ Seasonal
	Agricultural Diversification	Number of enterprises funded
	Food and Beverage	Number of enterprises funded
	Marine Diversification	Number of enterprises funded
	Creative Industry	Number of enterprises funded
	Social Enterprise	Number of enterprises funded
	Hospitality	Number of enterprises funded
	ICT	Number of enterprises funded
	Capital	Number (and value) of funding
	Training	Number (and value) of funding
	Marketing	Number (and value) of funding
	Animation	Number (and value) of funding

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

Table 27 – Theme 1.3 Monitoring Framework

Theme, Sub-Theme and Strategic Action	Indicator (as appropriate)	Measurement (as appropriate)
1: Enterprise Development, Economic Development and Job Creation 1.3: Rural Towns SA3.1: SA3.2: SA3.3:	Number of projects funded	Number
	Population in towns receiving funding	CSO Census Number
	Streetscape enhancement	Number of projects funded
	Tidy Towns	Number of projects funded
	Maintenance, Restoration and/or Upgrading of built environment in town	Number of projects funded
	Development of recreation spaces	Number of projects funded
	Development of markets	Number of projects funded
	Development of festivals	Number of projects funded
	Capital	Number (and value) of funding
	Training	Number (and value) of funding
	Marketing	Number (and value) of funding
	Animation	Number (and value) of funding
	Number of jobs created	New: FT/ PT/ seasonal
	Number of existing jobs supported	FT/ PT/ seasonal

Table 28 – Theme 1.4 Monitoring Framework

Theme, Sub-Theme and Strategic Action	Indicator (as appropriate)	Measurement (as appropriate)
1: Enterprise Development, Economic Development and Job Creation 1.4: Broadband SA4.1: SA4.2: SA4.3:	Number of small scale equipment projects funded	Number
	Population benefiting from enhanced broadband as a result of equipment funding	Number
	Number of capacity building/training/information projects funded	Number
	Number of individuals participating in capacity building/training/information activities in relation to broadband	Number
	Number of new jobs created	FT/ PT/ Seasonal
	Number of existing jobs sustained	FT/ PT/ Seasonal

7.3.2 Monitoring Framework Theme 2

Table 29 – Theme 2.1 Monitoring Framework

Theme, Sub-Theme and Strategic Action	Indicator (as appropriate)	Measurement (as appropriate)
2: Social Inclusion 2.1: Provision of Basic Services targeted at Hard to Reach Communities SA5.1: SA5.2: SA5.3:	Number of services funded	New
	Number of services funded	Existing (and when funded)
	Number of jobs created	New: FT/ PT/ Seasonal
	Number of existing jobs sustained	FT/ PT/ Seasonal
	Transport	Number of projects funded
	Education	Number of projects funded
	Health	Number of projects funded
	Social Amenities	Number of projects funded
	Recreational/Physical Amenities	Number of projects funded
	Retail/Financial Services	Number of projects funded
	Personal support Services	Number of projects funded
	Bereavement/Suicide-prevention Services	Number of projects funded
	To provide a service that isn't there	Nature of services provided
	To enhance access to a service that is not in the locality (through transport)	Nature of services provided
	To enhance participation/ outcomes of a service through tailored supports for marginalised groups	Nature of services provided
	Older people (as primary or secondary target groups)	Number of projects funded
	People with a disability (as primary or secondary target groups)	Number of projects funded
	Children (as primary or secondary target groups)	Number of projects funded
	Young people (as primary or secondary target groups)	Number of projects funded
	Travellers (as primary or secondary target groups)	Number of projects funded
	Migrants/New communities (as primary or secondary target groups)	Number of projects funded
	Unemployed people (as primary or secondary target groups)	Number of projects funded
	People living alone (as primary or secondary target groups)	Number of projects funded
	Capital	Numbers of people availing of the services provided (by type of service)
	Training	
	Marketing	
	Animation	Number (and value) of funding

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

Table 30 – Theme 2.2 Monitoring Framework

Theme, Sub-Theme and Strategic Action	Indicator (as appropriate)	Measurement (as appropriate)
2: Social Inclusion 2.2: Rural Youth SA6.1: SA6.2: SA6.3:	Youth Clubs/Cafes	Number of projects funded
	Youth Entrepreneurship	Number of projects funded
	Sport/Recreation	Number of projects funded
	Arts	Number of projects funded
	To provide a service that isn't there	Nature of services provided
	To enhance access to a service that is not in the locality (through transport)	Nature of services provided
	To enhance participation/ outcomes of a service (through tailored support to young people in disadvantaged areas to encourage their participation in particular activities/ enhance outcomes in key areas (employment training for example)	Nature of services provided
	Number of young people directly participating	Number
	Capital	Number (and value) of funding
	Training	Number (and value) of funding
	Marketing	Number (and value) of funding
	Animation	Number (and value) of funding

7.3.3 Monitoring Framework Theme 3

Table 31 – Theme 3.1 – 3.3 Monitoring Framework

Theme, Sub-Theme and Strategic Action	Indicator (as appropriate)	Measurement (as appropriate)
3: Rural Environment 3.1: Protection and Sustainable Use of Water Resources SA7.1: SA7.2: SA7.3: 3.2: Protection and Improvement of Local Biodiversity SA8.1: SA8.2: SA8.3: 3.3: Development of Renewable Energy SA9.1: SA9.2: SA9.3:	Number of projects funded	New Projects
	Number of projects funded	Existing and when founded
	Number of jobs created	New: FT/ PT/ Seasonal
	Number of existing jobs sustained	FT/ PT/ Seasonal
	Wind energy	Type of project funded
	Solar power	Type of project funded
	Energy other	Type of project funded
	Education and awareness programmes	Type of project funded
	Impact assessment	Type of project funded
	Local co-ordination initiatives	Type of project funded
	Technical/ scientific cooperation	Type of project funded
	Nature conservation initiatives	Type of project funded
	Recycling	Type of project funded
	Capital	Number (and value) of funding
	Training	Number (and value) of funding
	Marketing	Number (and value) of funding
	Animation	Number (and value) of funding

7.4 Monitoring and Review Process

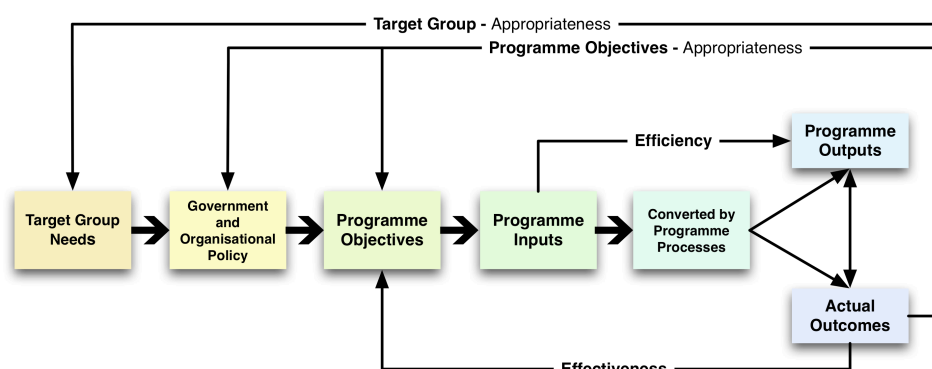
The County Louth LAG will monitor and review the programme in line with the guidelines set out in the Operational Rules. The monitoring of the operation of the LDS will involve three simultaneous actions: -

1. All the fields on the LEADER ICT system will be completed by the relevant project officer responsible for the implementation of the project in real time. The Implementer's CEO and Administrator will review this process monthly. The LAG will have access to the system to review independently and will be given bi-monthly updates.
2. On annual basis, the relevant project officer will complete a number of detailed case studies on selected funded projects. The completed studies will be reviewed by two of either of the following: CEO, Administrator or Financial Controller of the Implementer for accuracy before submission to County Louth LAG for final approval.

7.5 Evaluation

County Louth LAG recognises that effective evaluation is the systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, programme, or policy, and its design, implementation and results. To be of value, the evaluation tool must provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of the LAG, its stakeholders, and the LEADER Programme beneficiaries.

Figure 13 – County Louth LAG Evaluation Model



County Louth LAG’s objectives for the evaluation of the LDS are: -

1. Early Cycle 1 – 2 years; to check early strategy implementation to ascertain if the strategy needs to be changed to reflect changed circumstances; *and*
2. End of Cycle 4 -5 years; to learn lessons for the next programme formulation.

7.6 Audit and Inspections

As per the Commission Regulation (EC) No’s 809/2014, 640/2014 and 907/2014, DECLG will conduct on the spot controls on County Louth LAG and its project beneficiaries to check that the operational and administrative control procedures are in place, and will also check aid applications and the payment of aid to beneficiaries.

It is anticipated that DECLG will also carry out a programme of audits on County Louth LAG activities over the lifetime of the Programme. County Louth LAG will be pleased to co-operate fully with DECLG in this regard.

It is further understood that Departmental inspection visits will concentrate on, but may not be confined to, establishing that County Louth LAG: -

- Complies with EU regulations and national legislation as appropriate;
- Is properly constituted and operates in accordance with governance guidelines;
- Assesses and approves projects with due regard to the approved business and financial plans and in accordance with EU/national regulatory requirements and governance guidelines;
- Allocates funds to projects with due regard to these plans and in accordance with EU and national regulatory requirements;
- Monitors progress with regard to implementing the LDS, and any modification of the financial plan required as a result of changes to the LDS;
- Authorises and records payments and properly documents its activities;

- Reports to the Department as the delegated Paying Agency responsible for the Programme; *and*
- Complies with all regulatory requirements.

It is also understood that the Comptroller and Auditor General, the Programme's Certifying Body, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, the European Commission or the European Court of Auditors may also carry out inspections or audits. County Louth LAG will maintain all of its Programme files and records in a fit state to facilitate such inspections and audits.

7.7 Data Protection

As the Implementer is processing all the files, subject to the SLA with County Louth LAG, the Implementer will act as the Data Controllers on behalf of the LAG. The Implementer will adopt additional data control procedures as requested by the LAG, and the designated officers of the LAG will have full access to all RDP Data. The Programme Administrator and Financial Partner will be responsible for Data Control.

As Data Controller on behalf of the County Louth LAG, the Implementer will: -

- Obtain and process the information fairly;
- Keep it only for one or more specified and lawful purposes;
- Process it only in ways compatible with the purposes for which it was supplied;
- Keep it safe and secure;
- Keep it accurate and up-to-date;
- Ensure that it is adequate, relevant and not excessive;
- Retain it no longer than is necessary for the specified purpose or purposes; *and*
- Give a copy of his/her personal data to any individual, on request.

8 Financial Plan

See Appendix 11.5 for the full LDS Financial Plan.

The financial plan provides a forecast of expenditure for the implementation of the LDS objectives for 2015-2020. This has been developed in line with the maximum indicative budget available for the sub-regional area.

In line with the regulatory framework, the total administration and animation costs do not exceed 25% of the total budget cost. This will enable support to be prioritised towards local project promoters,

The Financial Plan (2015-2020) has been developed and is presented on the template provided by Pobal.

9 Additional Information

9.1 LEADER Programme Outcomes 2007-13

A summary of the headline outcomes for the LEADER Programme 2007-2013 is shown below.

Table 32 – Headline Outcomes LEADER 2007-2013

Headline	Outcome
Completed Projects	203
Project Spend	€5.3m
Jobs Created	77
Jobs Sustained	460
Enterprises supported	136
People Trained	861
Towns/Villages benefitting from Tidy Towns enhancements	23
New Playgrounds	7
New and Upgraded Community Centres	14
Festivals supported	15

Source: Louth LEADER Partnership

10 Form of Declaration

The signed Declaration and Disclaimer template is included as an appendix.

Signed copy of the minutes of the meeting at which all LAG members agreed to the content and submission of the LDS and Action Plan are also appended.

11 Appendices

11.1 Appendix: Governance Model

11.1.1 Louth LEADER Partnership

The Implementer, will deliver the majority of project and animation related actions associated with the implementation of the LDS. Actions related to the financial and administration aspects of the strategy implementation will be undertaken by Louth County Council, operating as the Lead Financial Partner.

The contract for the implementation of the strategy will be held by Louth LCDC, which will sign the contract with DECLG. The LAG will have a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Louth County Council and LLP for the carrying out of their respective roles.

11.1.2 Principles of the Partnership Approach

The arrangements will operate on the following basis: -

- ❑ Louth LEADER Partnership will discharge its role under a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Louth LCDC;
- ❑ Louth LEADER Partnership’s role will run for the duration of the LEADER programming period, subject to continued compliance with the requirements of the Managing Authority and as per the Service Level Agreement with Louth LCDC;
- ❑ The implementing role will be assigned to Louth LEADER Partnership for all project implementation elements of the programme. There will be no fragmentation of the programme delivery role among other Louth LCDC partners; *and*
- ❑ A fully electronic, on-line reporting and record maintenance system will support the administration of the programme, reducing the administrative burden on the lead implementation partner and lead financial partner.

11.1.3 LAG Decision-Making Processes

Louth LCDC is a committee of the County Council. However, unlike the Corporate Policy Group (CPG) and Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs), Louth LCDC is independent from the Louth County Council in the performance of its functions. This independence is provided for explicitly in sections 49A(2) and 128B(8) of the 2001 Act, which sets out the functions of the Louth LCDC.

Table 33 – Governance Standards: LAG

Policies and Procedures	The LAG operates under, and is fully compliant with, the policies and procedures of the Local Authority. Where any variance exists with the LEADER rules and regulations, the latter will take precedence.
LEADER Rules and Regulations	The LAG will adhere to the rules and regulations of the LEADER Programme, as required by DAFM, and DECLG. Each LAG member will be required to familiarise themselves with the rules and regulations of the LEADER Programme and to be aware of Departmental Circulars.

/continued

/continued

Conflict of Interest	<p>Each LAG member must declare any potential conflicts of interest to the Committee. Subsequently, they must absent themselves from the element of any meeting at which conflicted subjects are dealt with.</p> <p>Where the Local Authority is co-financing a project, then all LA Executive and Elected Members must absent themselves from the element of the meeting at which discussion is undertaken and subsequent decisions are reached.</p> <p>The CEO of LLP is a member of the LAG. It follows, therefore, that he/she will observe the conflict of interest rules where the contract between LLP and the LAG is being discussed, and also where any LLP internal projects are being discussed.</p> <p>Details of all conflicts of interest will be fully recorded in the minutes of each LAG meeting.</p>
Governance Code	<p>The LAG will observe the guidelines set out by the <i>Governance Code</i>²². This details the roles, duties and responsibilities of all those who sit on boards and management committees of CVC organisations.</p>

11.1.4 Implementer Decision-Making Processes

Table 34 – Governance Standards: Implementer

Company Policies and Procedures: LLP provides staff and Board Members with detailed guidance to ensure a structured, balanced, transparent and focussed operation.	
Employee Policies	LLP implements policies and procedures that provide equality of opportunity, protect the health, safety and dignity of employees, and promote respect for others in the workplace.
RDP Procedures Manual	This manual has been compiled to assist the staff and Board to operate the RDP in an efficient and transparent manner for the benefit of all applicants. It details the segregation of duties that exist between the CEO, Administrator, Project Officers, Board and Committees.
Company Safety, Health and Welfare Statement	The statement has been prepared and updated in accordance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. It sets out the various responsibilities of management, employees and subcontractors, and the arrangements made for the implementation of safety. It also offers guidance on hazards, risk assessments and control measures.
Fraud and Corruption	This documents LLP's policy towards detected or suspected acts of fraud or corruption. The policies relate to Directors, Board and Committee members, employees or other persons as designated by the Board/CEO.
Director's Handbook	This assists the Directors and Committee members by providing direction from admission on to the Board to retirement. Each new director is also given an induction pack, which acts as a detailed guide to LLP, its structure, policies and procedures.
Committee Handbook	Provides a general overview of the composition of Committees, their roles and duties, as well as the manner and means by which all meetings are to be operated to ensure business is carried out in an efficient and productive manner.

11.1.5 LAG Governing Document

Under Section 36 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014, Louth County Council has established a Local Community Development Committee (Louth LCDC) and may establish more than one such committee if the Minister approves. The aim of Louth LCDC is to develop, co-ordinate and implement a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development.

11.1.6 Roles and Responsibilities: LAG Members

Role of Louth LCDC as LAG: Louth LCDC has been established as a partnership of public and private socio-economic interests, community members (representing community and voluntary, social inclusion and civil society interests). Louth LCDC comprises of the key local development agencies, including the City and County Council, local development companies and State Agencies, and can demonstrate the capacity, expertise and experience to develop and implement effective cross-sectoral strategies.

²² *The Code of Good Practice for Community, Voluntary and Charitable (CVC) Organisations in Ireland*

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

Louth LCDC will be the LAG, and will have the following key responsibilities: -

1. Establish strategic direction and agree the LDS priorities;
2. Allocate tasks amongst the LAG partners for the prospective LDS, including that of Lead Financial Partner (Louth County Council), and Implementer (Louth LEADER Partnership).
3. Approve calls for proposals in accordance with the priorities and objectives set out in the LDS using agreed procedures to ensure transparency of decision-making processes;
4. Monitor and review performance of the Implementer in conformity to an agreed SLA;
5. Monitor and review the performance of the Lead Financial Partner; *and*
6. Monitor and review progress of the LDS, and agree corrective action, as required.
7. Approve projects.

Role of Lead Implementer: The Implementer will work with LAG partners to: -

1. Prepare the *Expression of Interest* under the initial LDS application process; *and*
2. Lead the preparation of the LDS.

The Implementer has the technical capacity to undertake, and will be responsible for: -

1. Develop and issue calls for proposals, and manage the call for proposals processes;
2. Manage the open-call project application processes;
3. Implement, manage and coordinate animation activity;
4. Develop funding proposals with project promoters;
5. Develop and implement local development company-led projects;
6. Receive and process funding applications;
7. Prepare and collate documentation for Article 48 Checks;
8. Undertake formal evaluation of projects by an Evaluation Committee;
9. Prepare and issue contracts with project promoters on behalf of the LAG;
10. Report quarterly on activity to the LAG; *and*
11. Implement back-office file management, audit compliance and administration related to the above actions.

Role of Louth County Council: Louth County Council will be the lead Financial Partner of the LAG, and will undertake the administrative tasks associated with this role, including: -

1. Provision of administration and animation funding to the Implementation partner;
2. Making payments to promoters on behalf of the LAG;
3. If the Article 48 checks are delegated by the DECLG to Louth LCDC, carry out the Article 48 check; *and*
4. Requesting quarterly drawdown of monies from DECLG.

11.1.7 Operational Procedures

Section 1.4 of this document provides a detailed summary of operational procedures that are to be adopted for the implementation of the LDS.

11.1.8 Job Descriptions

Implementer Programme Manager

The Implementer Programme Manager is responsible for: -

1. Reporting to the CEO;
2. Seek out and assist projects relevant to the RDP and the Area Action Plan;
3. Working with CEO on preparing all open calls for proposals;
4. Checking project eligibility criterion, recording and monitoring its process progress;
5. Ensuring that the project applicant is fully aware of the requirements of the programme;
6. Undertaking the necessary site visits and verification checks;
7. Completing the Project Summary Report for the Evaluation Committee;
8. Attending and presenting the project to the Evaluation Committee;
9. If the Project is successful, following up and bring the project to completion or payment stage;
10. Maintaining all Project files;
11. Implementing a 30% validity check to ensure and compliance with the RDP Rules. This may involve a final site visit report, which will be completed and signed by the CEO; *and*
12. Using the RDP Electronic Data System, and adhere to the rules and regulations of the LEADER Programme at all times.

Implementer Administrator

The Implementer Administrator is responsible for: -

1. Reporting to the CEO;
2. Recording all Board, RD and Evaluation Meetings to Departmental standards;
3. Maintaining all databases recording expressions of interest, applications, and payments;
4. Keeping the Evaluation Committee, and Louth LCDC informed on the level of funds allocated, paid out, and remaining to be allocated;
5. Following Louth LCDC decision, preparing the Letter of Offer, including all conditions, and passing for approval to the CEO for review, and to the Chief Officer of Louth LCDC for final approval;
6. Updating all staff, Evaluation Committee and Board members on circulars and Departmental decisions;
7. Maintaining relevant websites with relevant data on the RDP, including paid projects;
8. Undertaking 10% audit of all projects to ensure signage compliance;
9. Completion of Department returns, including Board Approval notifications;
10. Use of the RDP Electronic System and adhere to the rules and regulations of the RD Programme at all times.

Project Officer

The Implementer Project Officer is responsible for: -

1. Reporting to the Programme Manager;
2. Seek out and assist projects relevant to the RDP and the Area Action Plan;
3. Working with Programme Manager on preparing all open calls for proposals;
4. Checking project eligibility criterion, recording and monitoring its process progress;
5. Ensuring that the project applicant is fully aware of the requirements of the programme;
6. Undertaking the necessary site visits and verification checks;

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

7. Completing the Project Summary Report for the Evaluation Committee;
8. Attending and presenting the project to the Evaluation Committee;
9. If the Project is successful, following up and bring the project to completion/payment stage;
10. Maintaining all Project files;
11. Implementing a 30% validity check to ensure and compliance with the RDP Rules. This may involve a final site visit report, which will be completed and signed by the Programme Manager.
12. Use of the RDP Electronic Data System, and adhere to the rules and regulations of the RD Programme at all times.

Administrator

The Implementer Administrator is responsible for: -

1. Reporting to the Programme Manager
2. Recording all Board, RD and Evaluation Meetings to Departmental standards;
3. Maintaining all databases recording expressions of interest, applications, and payments;
4. Keeping the Evaluation Committee, and Louth LCDC informed on the level of funds allocated, paid out, and remaining to be allocated;
5. Following Louth LCDC decision, preparing the Letter of Offer, including all conditions, and passing for approval to the Programme Manager for review;
6. Updating all staff, Evaluation Committee and Board members on circulars and Departmental decisions;
7. Maintaining relevant websites with relevant data on the RDP, including paid projects;
8. Undertaking 10% audit of all projects to ensure signage compliance;
9. Completion of Department returns, including Board Approval notifications;
10. Use of the RDP Electronic System and adhere to the rules and regulations of the RD Programme at all times.

11.1.9 Staff Training and Skilling

Using the outcomes of regular staff reviews, relevant professional training will be identified, and appropriate training will be sourced.

11.1.10 Professional Experience and Remuneration

Table 35 - Professional Experience and Remuneration

Chief Executive Officer	Mary Ann McGlynn	Mary-Ann was CEO of Drogheda Partnership for 15 years until 2009. When Louth LEADER Partnership was formed in 2009, she was appointed as the Social Inclusion Manager. In 2014 she took over as CEO of the company. She has vast experience working with Community Groups in the County.
Programme Manager	Mary O'Neill	Mary has 10 years experience working with the LEADER Programme in Co. Louth. She was Project Officer for five years, and is currently the Programme Manager since 2010. She is a qualified accountant and has worked in private practice for over 15 years gaining experience in the area of business and auditing. She has provided valuable assistance to community groups and businesses by guiding them through the LEADER application process.

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Project Officer	Tony McCready	<p>Tony has a Diploma in Business and Finance, a Degree in Accountancy, and a Diploma in Rural Development.</p> <p>He has worked for over 11 years on the LEADER Programme, six of these as Financial Controller and five years as Project Officer.</p>
Financial Administrator	Phyllis Lowth	<p>Phyllis has worked with Louth LEADER Partnership for the past 18 years, twelve of those years in the Social Inclusion Programmes and the last six years in the LEADER programme doing the accounts and payroll.</p> <p>Apart from the wealth of knowledge acquired on these programmes during her employment she has the following qualifications that add to the position: ACCA Accounting Technician, Teachers Diploma in IT, IPASS Diploma as a Payroll and HR Technician, a Certificate in Business Studies, ECDL and advanced ECDL in Excel and Word.</p>
Clerical Officer	Mavis Kelly	<p>Mavis has handled administrative tasks and ensures the smooth running of the office. She has provided over 14 year's secretarial back-up to the RDP Manager including RSS/TÚS Working Group and Project Evaluation Committee.</p> <p>Since 2004 Mavis manages the Rural Social Scheme on a day to day basis. It was initiated in 2004 and is delivered and managed by Louth Leader Partnership.</p> <p>She has overall responsibility for the administration of the Walk Scheme in County Louth.</p>

11.2 Appendix: LDS Boundary Area

The LDS covers all of Co. Louth. The CSO Census 2011 records the population of the county as 122,897 persons²³. Co. Louth is the smallest county by area 826 km² in the State. It is the 19th largest in terms of population. It is the smallest of the twelve counties by size in Leinster, and the 6th largest by population. The overall population of Co. Louth and its hinterland is set to grow to almost 140,000 by 2020.

Co. Louth is the second most densely populated county in Ireland behind Dublin, and the fourth on the island of Ireland.

Table 36 - Electoral Areas and Divisions

Electoral Area	Electoral Divisions
Ardee	Ardee Rural, Ardee Urban, Castlebellingham, Clogher, Clonkeen, Collon, Darver, Dromin, Dromiskin, Drumcar, Dunleer, Dysart, Killanny, Louth, Mansfieldstown, Stabannan and Tallanstown.
Drogheda	Fair Gate, Monasterboice, Mullary, St. Lawrence Gate, St. Mary's (part), St. Peter's, Termonfeckin and West Gate.
Dundalk - Carlingford	The parts of the Castletown and Dundalk Rural electoral divisions north of the R178 (Carrickmacross Road), the parts of Dundalk No. 1 Urban, Dundalk No. 3 Urban and Dundalk No. 4 Urban electoral divisions not contained in the local electoral area of Dundalk-South; Ballymascanlan, Carlingford, Drummullagh, Dundalk No. 2 Urban, Faughart, Greenore, Jenkinstown, Rathcor and Ravensdale.
Dundalk – South	The parts of the Castletown and Dundalk Rural electoral divisions south of the R178 (Carrickmacross Road), the parts of Dundalk No. 1 Urban, Dundalk No. 3 Urban and Dundalk No. 4 Urban electoral divisions south of a line drawn as follows: Commencing at the boundary between the electoral divisions of Dundalk No. 1 Urban and Dundalk No. 3 Urban at the Carrickmacross Road Bridge and St. Dominick's Place and proceeding to the junction of St. Dominick's Place with the roundabout at the Crescent; then proceeding in a clockwise direction around and excluding the said roundabout to its junction with Anne Street; then proceeding in a north-easterly direction along Anne Street to its junction with Park Street; then proceeding in a north easterly direction along Park Street to its junction with Francis Street; then proceeding in a north-easterly direction along Francis Street and Roden Place to the junction of Roden Place with Jocelyn Street; then proceeding in an easterly direction along Jocelyn Street, Seatown Place and along the road connecting Seatown Place to Barrack Street to reach the junction of said road with the Dundalk Inner Relief Road; then proceeding in a north-westerly projection along the Dundalk Inner Relief Road to its junction with the road at St. Helena; then proceeding along the north-easterly projection of the said road at St. Helena to Dundalk Harbour; and the electoral divisions of Barronstown, Castlring, Creggan Upper and Haggardstown.

Source: Local Electoral Area Boundary Committee Report 2013

²³ EU Regulation 1303/2013, Article 33: 'Community-led local development strategies' states that the eligible population size 'shall be not less than 10,000 and not more than 150,000 inhabitants'.

11.3 Appendix: Consultation Profile

Table 37 - Community Consultation Profile

Organisation/Meeting	Venue	Date
Gyles Quay Community Group	St. Patrick's GFC	2 nd November 2015
Omeath District Development	Dolmen Centre, Omeath	2 nd November 2015
Carlingford Tourism	Dolmen Centre, Omeath	2 nd November 2015
IFA Focus Group	Ballymascanlon House Hotel, Dundalk	2 nd November 2015
Carlingford Heritage Centre	Carlingford Heritage Centre	3 rd November 2015
Carlingford Tidy Towns	Carlingford Heritage Centre	3 rd November 2015
Greenore Development	Greenore Co-op	3 rd November 2015
Carlingford Adventure Centre	Carlingford Adventure Centre	3 rd November 2015
Community Meeting #1	Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford	3 rd November 2015
Drogheda Volunteer Centre	Bolton Street, Drogheda	4 th November 2015
The Mill, Drogheda	The Mill, Drogheda	4 th November 2015
Drogheda Tourist Office	Millmount, Drogheda	4 th November 2015
Highlanes Gallery	Highlanes Gallery, Drogheda	4 th November 2015
Community Meeting #2	d-Hotel, Drogheda	4 th November 2015
Heritage Officer, Louth County Council	Dundalk Town Hall, Crowe Street, Dundalk	10 th November 2015
Dundalk Chamber	Ballymascanlon House Hotel, Dundalk	10 th November 2015
Muirhevnamor Community Centre	Muirhevnamor Community Centre	10 th November 2015
Dundalk Youth Centre	Dundalk Youth Centre	10 th November 2015
Gyles Quay Community Group	St. Patrick's GFC	10 th November 2015
Community Meeting	Crowne Plaza Hotel, Dundalk	10 th November 2015
Ardee Traders' Association	LLP Office, Ardee	11 th November 2015
Ardee Business Park	Ardee Business Park, Ardee	11 th November 2015
DCDB Ltd	Market House, Dunleer	11 th November 2015
Community Meeting #3	Grove Hotel, Dunleer	11 th November 2015
Louth LEO	Dundalk Town Hall, Dundalk	17 th November 2015
Dundalk Institute of Technology	Dundalk	17 th November 2015
Arts Officer, Louth County Council	Dundalk	17 th November 2015
Enterprise Ireland	Finnabair Business Park, Dundalk	18 th November 2015
Louth Tidy Towns Together	Crowne Plaza Hotel, Dundalk	18 th November 2015
Louth Leader Partnership	Ardee Business Park, Ardee	19 th November 2015
Drogheda Focus Group Meeting: SOSAD, SVP, Ablevision, Cultures Connect	LLP, Mayoralty Street, Drogheda	24 th November 2015
Ardee Group Meeting	LLP, Bridge Street, Ardee	24 th November 2015
Dundalk Group Meeting	LLP, Park Street, Dundalk	24 th November 2015

11.4 Appendix: Consultation Feedback

11.4.1 Theme 1.1: Rural Tourism

Rural Tourism: Visitor Services

Table 38 – Visitor Services Consultation Feedback

Theme	Sub-Theme	Trending Discussions
Rural Tourism	Visitor Services and Infrastructure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Louth tourism within the 'Ancient East' programme 2. Boyne Valley focus within the county 3. Signs and Signposting 4. Camping, Glamping and Caravan Facilities 5. Secure parking and restroom facilities

It was widely noted that the position of Co. Louth as a tourism destination was undermined by its initial omission from the *Ireland: Ancient East* major branding initiative. Within the county there is imbalance with the greatest emphasis and resource dedicated to the Boyne Valley, much of which occupies County Meath. Much of the north of the County is poorly promoted; much attention was brought to the lack of appropriate signage.

Co. Louth's position between the two biggest airports on the island is considered a considerable asset. Its size give rise to easy access off the Motorway to most sites. There is a considerable history and heritage site infrastructure, in addition to proximity to mountains (Cooley) and an excellent coastline.

Outcome

Louth needs a County Tourism Director; at present the position within Louth County Council is delegated to the Heritage and Conservation officers. Such a position would also facilitate a viable cross-border strategy to make best use of the links with the Mourne and Slieve Gullion.

A common issue throughout the county is the poor quality of signage and signposting on and off road.

Camping, glamping and caravan facilities are in poor supply in all areas of the county and there is evidence of referring tourists out of county to access appropriate facilities.

Public safety and security was a much discussed issue throughout the consultation process; in the context of Tourism it centred on appropriate CCTV and security at visitor attraction parking lots. Similarly the lack or poor quality restroom facilities in some towns (Dunleer) and facilities reflect poorly on the county.

Rural Tourism: History and Heritage

There is an abundance of history and heritage available to visitors from within and outside the county. The Táin Walk proved a very popular topic and represents for participants a walk with potential as a major heritage tourism product. Many castles and heritage facilities are in the ownership or stewardship of the Office of Public Works. Development works that have been in their plans were delayed through austerity. Some represent best quality historical sites but require making them either visitor accessible, friendly or safe (Parking facilities). Monasterboice and Greenore, representing different heritage eras are two very valuable visitor villages.

Outcome

Prime responsibility for the upgrade and development of sites remains the responsibility of the OPW or County Council. Participants and stakeholders noted a number of ways where

LEADER engagement can be effective: Marketing, provision of support amenities and facilities, tour guides and tour guide training.

Table 39 – History and Heritage Consultation Feedback

Theme	Sub-Theme	Trending Discussions
Rural Tourism	History and Heritage	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Táin Walk 2. King John's castle in Carlingford 3. Faughert Battle site 4. Castle Roche 5. Graveyards 6. Dundalk's industrial and railway heritage infrastructure 7. Oriel dialect – Omeath 8. Millmount/ Drogheda museum 9. Holy wells 10. Souterains 11. Monuments 12. Monasterboice 13. Greenore 14. Greenore Railway 15. Viking heritage

Rural Tourism: **Activities**

Table 40 – Activities Consultation Feedback

Theme	Sub-Theme	Trending Discussions
Rural Tourism	Activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Most talked about 2. Trails and Cycleways 3. Water Trails and River Access 4. Coastal Path 5. Looped walks

The Greenway is an excellent example of a successful family friendly trail between Omeath and Carlingford. The Cooley Mountains have some good walks but there is a need for appropriate maintenance and signposting and loop walks are required. In the south of the county the Boyneside trail requires support, as does St Patrick's Pilgrimage.

Outcome

1. Facilitate the development of an '*Upland Council*' to oversee walks and trails in the Cooleys.
2. Support the provision of ancillary facilities to support walkers and cyclists in the County.
3. Support the development of local trails
4. Support a county level strategy to link trails as an attraction for visitors

Rural Tourism: **Applied Technology**

Table 41 – Technology Consultation Feedback

Theme	Sub-Theme	Trending Discussions
Rural Tourism	Applied Technology	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Geo-point reference 2. Smartphone guides

The potential to use technology as a cost effective, environment-friendly way to provide visitor information across the tourism sub-themes was a subject of discussion in each of the public meetings.

Outcome

A county-wide approach is required in the development of such activity. There is private sector capacity in the county to work with. A feasibility study may be the starting point in developing this approach.

11.4.2 Theme 1.2: Enterprise Development

Enterprise Development discussion was both thematic and geographical. The main themes are outlined above with a rural focus on the arts and artisan opportunities. IT and Technology featured in both urban and rural areas. In addition, much of the tourism activity was clearly referenced in the public meetings as having an enterprise focus.

Table 42 – Enterprise Development Consultation Feedback

Theme	Area	Trending Discussions
Enterprise Development	Drogheda Area	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High-spec. designated FDI space. 2. Enterprise centre development and additional training 3. Food industry support technology space 4. Marine Enterprise – integrate Port in the town & regenerate old warehouses 5. Location for film and TV production 6. Business supporting young people
	Ardee Area	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Artisan Food and Drink 2. Support for Small Business – Funding, Marketing 3. Alternate energy 4. Feasibility Studies
	Dundalk Area	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Digital fabrication lab 2. B & B's 3. Campervan facilities 4. Community enterprise centres (focus on rural locations) 5. Holly horse centre 6. Artisan food and drink
	Carlingford and Cooley Area	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community Enterprise Centre, Greenore 2. IT Virtual administration and enterprise support, Omeath 3. Organic groups – niche food products 4. Hostels for tourists 5. Locals crafts and artists 6. Supports for co-ops 7. Artisan Foods/ Farmers Market 8. Family Restaurants

Drogheda is served by a thriving enterprise centre, the hub element of which includes the social inclusion population targeted in the LEADER programme. At town level there was consideration of modern artisan development that relates back to heritage industries (e.g. beer, bread). Artisan food and drink has developed as an industry. Support technology to this industry is seen as an opportunity. Regenerating the port area as an economic zone with marine enterprises is seen as meeting job creation, heritage and tourism goals.

The importance of tourism for the Ardee area was noted, particularly in relation to the need to ensure access to visitor attractions. Artisan food and drink businesses represent a viable option for creating rural micro and small enterprises. A good support infrastructure is required for these businesses. Dunleer has a home grown global business (Glen Dimplex) to which many business opportunities exist to supply support services. In close proximity to the town there are also a number of alternate energy investments relating to biomass and wind. The Enterprise Centre is keen to explore the potential to make the area an alternate energy hub and to develop a mobile information and education service in partnership with DKIT.

Much of the discussion in Dundalk centred on making best use of the existing education and industry infrastructure. A digital fabrication lab would provide important training and work opportunities for young people. The industrial heritage of the town could be used as a base to support artisan businesses. There are a number of successful models that can be applied.

There is a need to provide quality visitor accommodation facilities. The Dundalk area is home to one of the leading therapeutic care facilities for persons with disabilities.

In addition to the requirement for enterprise standard broadband there is a need for a camping/campervan facility. A viable hostel is also required. More family oriented cafes are required, particularly around the Greenway. Omeath Development Centre has a facility to provide virtual office and enterprise services that can support the self-employed and micro businesses.

Outcome

Louth LEO *operates a Women's Business Programme, a Programme for Creative Enterprise, Food Sector and Craft Business Support and a Business Networking Programme.* Louth LEO also provides support for rural community enterprise facilities. Similarly, Enterprise Ireland operates the Community Enterprise Initiative Fund with four strands that are relevant. One, fostering an increased collaborative, networked and linked approach to regional and local enterprise development and job creation links very closely to LEADER and networking among community enterprises is one initiative that might benefit from a joint approach.

11.4.3 Theme 1.3: Rural Towns and Villages

There was recognition that the sub-theme *Rural Towns* is a geographic endpoint for many of the issues and ideas discussed under the sector themes and sub-themes.

The improvement of rural towns was comprehensively discussed at the Dundalk public meetings. Streetscapes, street lighting and public seating are among the suggestions, street lighting is one feature noted as a need in the wider discussion of public safety. Improving the heritage infrastructure as a means of promoting rural tourism was discussed. Walking trails are advocated as a way of linking other sub-themes along nature trails (biodiversity), coastal paths (tourism).

In Drogheda much of the discussion focused on overarching inputs: town and village development planning and upgrading of existing facilities.

The discussion represented in the participant feedback for Carlingford shows that issues around the Cooley peninsula are what might be considered relatively standard for rural areas, lack of services (mobile banking services and ATMs much discussed). Similarly the degradation of transport links and poor connectivity are noted as issues. The need for appropriate development planning at town level and for the peninsula is seen as a way forward. The development of the Harbour (Carlingford) and the completion of the Greenway are noted. The Community Enterprise Centre in Greenore almost made it in under the last programme and is ready to progress in the short term.

In Ardee it was noted that improving historic facilities such as Collon church and facilitating the opening of Ardee castle were of importance. The concept of meeting local housing need through community based (co-operatives) house-building would provide local employment opportunities. Building playgrounds (Reaghstown) and walking trails also meets social inclusion needs.

Table 43 – Rural Towns and Villages Consultation Feedback

Theme	Area	Trending Discussions
	Ardee Area	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tourism create an Eastern Wild Atlantic Way, heritage 2. Community Centres, 3. Local groups to build local housing 4. Playgrounds and Walking Trails – link to bio-diversity 5. Tidy Towns Development Plan 6. Rural Transport
	Drogheda Area	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development Plans 2. Upgrading of existing community facilities 3. Pedestrian access to hospital 4. Business advocate/ network model
	Dundalk Area	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Linked projects – Tourism, heritage, biodiversity. 2. Public realm facilities 3. Playground and community facilities 4. Walking Trails
	Carlingford and Cooley Area	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development plans for towns 2. Infrastructure and services in rural areas 3. Transport links 4. Connectivity links 5. Car parking 6. Develop Harbour 7. Greenway 8. Security/ safety

Refurbishing community facilities such as Ardee Community School, the tennis courts and astro-turf surface are suggested as appropriate for consideration. A partnership approach is needed to ensure that transport links are maximised; at the moment national bus routes pass through rural towns in Louth and could provide set-down and pick-up facilities.

Outcome

Many suggestions in terms of Rural Towns are covered through specific sector themes. Two that should be considered under this measure include focused action-oriented town and village development plans. The second relates to the refurbishment of community facilities particularly where those facilities provide a significant social inclusion mandate.

11.4.4 Theme 1.4: Broadband

Table 44 – Broadband Consultation Feedback

Theme	Area	Trending Discussions
Broadband	Consolidated	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Group schemes – Ardee model 2. Wi-Fi hotspots throughout the county 3. Mobile Services 4. Infrastructure

Inequality of broadband access is shown in the volume of concerns and ideas on this topic. Whereas in Drogheda, and to a lesser degree, Dundalk there was no discussion, the feedback from the meetings in Carlingford and Dunleer indicates that Broadband quality and supply continues to be a significant issue. The Cooley peninsula suffers some of the most acute service issues. It hampers economic growth and many self-employed and micro-businesses indicate inability to conduct business from their home offices.

Outcome

In terms of sorting out the issues a number of suggestions were made. In terms of infrastructure it was noted that there is a need for more masts throughout the country and that these might be located in community facilities. Public WiFi hotspots should be available throughout the county. This is important to visitor and resident alike, and widespread coverage would be required if location based visitor information services were to be provided.

Banks are directing more services online and rural residents are disadvantaged in terms of access and education. Perhaps the most relevant suggestion to the LEADER programme is the suggestion re setting up community/ group schemes where residents can come together to lease broadband infrastructure.

11.4.5 Theme 2.1: **Basic Services for Hard to Reach Communities**

Inequality of access impacts hard to reach communities and the recreation of community hubs using, for example, redundant Garda Stations could address the loss of post offices in particular. Information and advocacy services for rural residents and for older people in particular could be provided in the form of a mobile service, perhaps in line with mobile library services. Ensuring that residents have access to some of the regional and national bus services that pass through the County would address some of the transport issues. Ensuring safe access to hospital facilities with bus services and safe pedestrian access were issues that surfaced in the Drogheda area.

Table 45 – Basic Services Consultation Feedback

Theme	Area	Trending Discussions
Basic services for hard to reach communities	Consolidated	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Poor access to information 2. Services to the elderly 3. ATMs 4. Creating community hubs in old Garda stations/post offices 5. Public transport

The creation of new groups in rural areas to meet the needs of new and younger residents is seen as desirable. A suggestion about connecting older people with new residents was discussed as being beneficial in terms of isolation of older people and new language development for immigrant communities. A form of welcome or befriending service would also be desirable in terms of new residents.

11.4.6 Theme 2.2: **Rural Youth**

The workshop discussions around rural youth focused on the issue of loss of population through emigration and the lack of facilities, services and employment opportunities for young people. Cutbacks in youth worker hours often means that there are redundant café and youth club facilities that would be beneficial if they were to open for longer periods.

Table 46 – Rural Youth Consultation Feedback

Theme	Area	Trending Discussions
Rural Youth	Consolidated	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Youth worker hours 2. Need for non-sports activities 3. Training for enterprise 4. Leadership and mentoring 5. Youth Café model

Sports activity is generally well catered for through the GAA, soccer and rugby clubs. There is a need for services for those with no interest in sports. For example Louth has three town based youth drama groups; extending this model into rural areas would meet rural population needs.

Local work and enterprise opportunities are needed if young people are going to become permanent residents. Leadership and mentoring from community members with previous experience is required as are youth entrepreneurship opportunities.

The youth café has become a viable model for providing youth-led services. It is mainly a town and city service and there is a need for it to be applied to rural areas.

Mental health services for young people reflect a national need and for the younger age groups there is a need for playgrounds at selected sites.

Outcome

Social Inclusion is a linking theme that has potential points of intersection with each of the other themes and sub-themes. LEADER can play a lead role in facilitating innovative approaches in respect of the ‘new’ rural realities resulting from austerity cuts in services and facilities.

With respect to Rural Youth, LEADER can facilitate links for town-based arts groups. It can play a role in extending the reach of youth theatre and community music into rural communities. In similar manner it can play a role in ensuring that rural-based young people have quality access to self-employment and micro-enterprise resources and supports.

11.4.7 Theme 3.1: Water Resources

Community initiatives linked to water harvesting were the most common discussion topic with the saved water seen as useful in community gardens and facilities. Adopting schemes at local level is seen as necessary and there is a need for a community champion, one suggestion was that the Tidy Towns group might run a project. At household level a subsidised scheme to provide water barrels or buckets can help in conservation in similar manner to the way recycling bins have been instrumental in Ireland moving to the forefront in household waste recovery.

Table 47 – Water Resources Consultation Feedback

Theme	Area	Trending Discussions
Water Resources	Consolidated	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Water butts and harvesting grey water for use in community facilities. 2. Community projects 3. Protecting and conserving streams 4. Water as an energy source 5. Using grey water in community and public buildings.

Education about water conservation was much discussed, starting with the youngest age groups. In similar manner to the calls for upland councils, there were calls for advocacy/management groups to manage sensitive waterways including Carlingford Lough and streams in the Cooleys.

Outcome

The county is fortunate in having a research and education centre in DKIT dedicated to freshwater and environmental studies. One research focus is on community initiatives and a separate discussion with the Centre established both a mandate and a keen interest in working with community schemes, for which activity in Ireland is in its infancy.

11.4.8 Theme 3.2: Bio-Diversity

The sub-theme relating to bio-diversity was subject to intense discussion in the public meetings. In a number of these discussions the lateral connection with other themes and sub-themes was commented upon, particularly in relation to rural tourism and social inclusion.

Participants were keen to see public and community spaces being used to plant native species and wildflowers. Among the sites discussed were the waste space around football pitches, the grounds of public and community facilities, close to playgrounds and along village and amenity walkways. Education and awareness is seen as an integral linking activity with suggestions around outdoor classrooms and display boards explaining local flora, fauna and wildlife. Local groups like Tidy Towns could offer maintenance and upkeep facilities. Geo-referenced information points should be explored; the county is small and could become a ‘pilot’ for integrating technology and public/ tourist information.

Table 48 – Bio-Diversity Consultation Feedback

Theme	Area	Trending Discussions
Bio-Diversity	Consolidated	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The use of public and community spaces for planting 2. Outdoor education and awareness 3. Walking trails.

Networking was also discussed and in the sensitive upland region of the Cooleys it was suggested that there is a need for an upland council comprising farmers, users and relevant agencies. Linked to this is the need for proper maintenance of trails, ditches and verges.

Dundalk Bay and Carlingford Lough are becoming increasingly important in terms of bio-diversity. Dundalk Bay, in particular, has become an important bird sanctuary for migrating birds. Well-designed bird-hides could serve both local education interest and tourist alike. Aquatic biodiversity also featured in the discussion with a suggestion about situating a lobster hatchery close to the lobster farm and the need for an aquatic centre.

Outcome

There is potential for a range of low-cost community based initiatives that could impact bio-diversity goals and those of a number of linking themes (Rural tourism, social inclusion). Within the county there may also a need to ensure that existing and new initiatives are networked for the benefit of the public user. Trail use, for example, will be maximised when the user has easy information and facility access through linking adjacent or proximate trails. Networking bodies should be supported to protect and promote diverse ecosystems in the context of tourism recreation development.

11.4.9 Theme 3.3: Renewable Energy

Table 49 – Renewable Energy Consultation Feedback

Theme	Area	Trending Discussions
Renewable Energy	Consolidated	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Education and awareness 2. Alternate energy sources 3. Local capacity 4. Public and community buildings

Perhaps the most common discussions were about information and awareness, about educating the public in general and young people in particular about the need to diversify energy sources and reduce dependence on fossil fuels, oil in particular.

A number of different renewable energy projects were suggested including solar panels, biomass and wood energy. The potential to create an alternate energy ‘hub’ around the Glen Dimplex complex opens up possibilities of creating a Louth brand in terms of alternative energy.

The involvement of groups like Tidy Towns was discussed as being important in developing local awareness and capacity. Perhaps the tidy towns evaluation scheme could include points for renewable energy initiatives. Another way of promotion is to get public and community buildings to lead in adopting technologies in local areas.

Outcome

Finding a number of niche areas for cost-effective input will be important and collaborating with the Centre for Renewable Energy (DKIT) will optimise the potential for effective programmes.

Other

There were three overarching topics that were discussed. The issue of communication is seen as important, particularly in a situation where less resource is available for distribution among a larger population base.

The need for breaking down ‘*silo*’ mentalities and working within and between communities was acknowledged as being critical. The capacity for a local co-ordination champion/volunteer/worker was suggested for ensuring the widest take-up of diverse ideas.

Finally the capacity of this fund to be used as leverage to draw other resources to the County was an important topic of discussion. Among the ideas there was one to set up a symposium or forum of business leaders to explore ideas in this regard.

Table 50 – Other Consultation Feedback

Theme	Area	Trending Discussions
Renewable Energy	Consolidated	1. Communication 2. Local coordination 3. Leverage

Outcome

The issues of communication, networking and local coordination are common across all themes and have been discussed previously. The issue of leveraging is one that should be engaged with a strategic level, particularly in the context of enterprise development.

11.5 Appendix: Financial Plan

Table 51 - Implementation of LDS Operations/Projects

	2015 (€)	2016 (€)	2017 (€)	2018 (€)	2019 (€)	2020 (€)	Total (€)
Preparatory Costs for the Development of the LDS							
Preparatory Costs for the LDS	€0.00	€0.00					€0.00
Theme 1: Economic / Enterprise Development & Job Creation							
LO1 - Rural Activity, Adventure, Heritage and Cultural Tourism	€0.00	€34,213.03	€265,695.52	€214,352.14	€185,000.00	€95,000.00	€794,260.69
LO2 - Support for the Provision of Rural Visitor Services and Infrastructure	€0.00	€10,000.00	€20,000.00	€5,000.00	€20,000.00	€5,000.00	€60,000.00
LO3 - Development and Strengthening of Rural Enterprise	€0.00	€22,500.00	€361,479.96	€121,917.31	€338,363.42	€10,000.00	€854,260.69
LO4 - Improvement of Rural Towns and Villages	€0.00	€60,000.00	€155,000.00	€165,000.00	€230,186.20	€0.00	€610,186.20
LO5 - Support for Rural Broadband Development Initiatives	€0.00	€5,000.00	€45,000.00	€40,000.00	€25,000.00	€7,037.23	€122,037.23
Sub- Total	€0.00	€131,713.03	€847,175.48	€546,269.45	€798,549.62	€117,037.23	€2,440,744.81
Theme 2: Social Inclusion							
LO6 - Support for the Promotion of Social Inclusion in Rural Areas	€0.00	€35,000.00	€220,000.00	€252,500.00	€170,232.75	€85,000.00	€762,732.75
LO7 - Improving the Capacity of Rural Young People	€0.00	€51,250.00	€266,232.75	€215,250.00	€182,500.00	€47,500.00	€762,732.75
Sub-Total	€0.00	€86,250.00	€486,232.75	€467,750.00	€352,732.75	€132,500.00	€1,525,465.50
Theme 3: Rural Environment							
LO8 - Rural Water Resources	€0.00	€5,000.00	€57,013.97	€57,013.97	€42,013.96	€22,013.96	€183,055.86
LO9 - Rural Biodiversity	€0.00	€0.00	€57,013.97	€62,013.97	€47,013.96	€17,013.96	€183,055.86
LO10 - Rural Renewable Energy	€0.00	€5,500.00	€87,018.62	€42,018.62	€87,018.62	€22,518.62	€244,074.48
Sub-Total	€0.00	€10,500.00	€201,046.56	€161,046.56	€176,046.54	€61,546.54	€610,186.20
Total Budget Cost	€0.00	€228,463.03	€1,534,454.79	€1,175,066.01	€1,327,328.91	€311,083.77	€4,576,396.51

Explanatory Notes

1. Preparatory Support: this cost relates to preparatory supports for the development of the LDS for 2015 as referenced in the Expression of Interest (Stage 1 of the LDS Selection Process).
2. Sub-Themes: LAGs are required to provide an estimated annual breakdown of expenditure against each LDS local objective, which is aligned to a sub-theme. NB: actual expenditure will not be monitored against this estimate. It is acknowledged that the financial estimates will change over the course of the programme.
3. The details provided under each Sub-Theme and Local Objective number above should correspond with the information provided in Appendix 1: LDS Action Plan Template (Document 2: LDS Framework Guidelines)
4. Please contact Pobal if an additional number of objectives are required.

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

Table 52 - Administration and Animation Costs

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Rent & Rates	€14,423.00	€14,423.00	€14,423.00	€14,423.00	€14,423.00	€72,115.00
Office Costs	€13,775.00	€13,775.00	€13,775.00	€13,775.00	€13,775.50	€68,875.50
Insurance	€1,100.00	€1,100.00	€1,100.00	€1,100.00	€1,100.00	€5,500.00
Recruitment						
Staffing - Salaries	€266,062.00	€264,940.00	€266,880.00	€268,816.00	€270,760.00	€1,337,458.00
Staff Training						
Communications/Publicity						
Evaluation						
Financial/Professional Fees	€2,704.00	€2,704.00	€2,703.00	€2,703.00	€2,703.00	€13,517.00
Travel and Subsistence	€5,600.00	€5,600.00	€5,600.00	€5,600.00	€5,600.00	€28,000.00
Animation Costs						
Other						
Total Budget Costs	€303,664.00	€302,542.00	€304,481.00	€306,417.00	€308,361.50	€1,525,465.50

Explanatory Notes

1. The total cost for animation and administration cannot exceed 25% of the Total Budget Cost. See Summary Sheet for validation.
2. Rent and Rates: This cost refers to the rental cost of LEADER office; electricity and heating costs; service charges; and any Louth County Council rates.
3. Office Costs: This cost includes but is not confined to other overhead costs such as: postage and couriers, mobile, landline, fax, broadband, printing and office supplies, IT maintenance, repairs and maintenance, purchase / lease of equipment, sundry expenses.
4. Insurance: This cost covers insurance for both premises and staff.
5. Staffing: This covers the entire LEADER salary budget for each year including Employers PRSI and pension contributions. See staffing sheet for more information.
6. Communications/Publicity/Advertising: This includes the animation costs involved in raising awareness of the LDS strategy and other communication costs that relate to LEADER.
7. Evaluation: This cost may include the fees of external evaluators and any other costs involved in the implementation of an evaluation strategy (e.g. data collection, surveys, focus groups)
8. Financial/Professional Fees: These costs include legal costs; audit and accountancy costs. NB: Bank interest or loan interest is not an eligible cost.
9. Travel & Subsistence: These costs refer to T&S incurred in the management or administration of LEADER by the staff of the LAG.
10. Animation Costs: These are any costs incurred in promoting the LDS in the sub-regional area such as capacity building and training and technical support for potential Project promoters. Costs may include venue hire, materials, sub-contractors with expertise in specific areas (e.g. facilitation, training, enterprise, economic development etc.). This cost does not include any salary costs relating to LEADER staff or any publicity / awareness raising costs. These are covered by other budget lines. Any costs associated with the preparation of the LDS is not to be included as animation costs.
11. Other: Provide details of any other costs that may be associated with the administration or animation of LEADER.

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

Table 53 - Staffing Costs

Title of Staff Role/Position	Full Time Equivalent	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
CEO							
RDP Manager							
Administrator							
Project Officer							
Clerical							
Total							

Explanatory Notes

1. The total staffing costs outlined above must equal the staffing costs in the Administration/Animation Budget Sheet.
2. When including the salary costs, only include the amount of costs being allocated for work completed on Leader. i.e. if 0.6 of an FTE is being allocated to Leader only 60% of the total salary costs should be charged to the programme. The salary cost for each member of staff must include Employers' PRSI and any pension contributions.
3. The full-time equivalent is the actual time that funded staff will allocate to LEADER activities. This takes into account staff that may be funded to work part-time on LEADER and part-time on other programmes. Where staff time is apportioned to LEADER and other funding programmes, the amount of public funding cannot exceed 100% of the total salary cost. Please indicate the full-time equivalent as follows:
 - 5 day week = 1 FTE
 - 4 day week = 0.8 FTE
 - 3 day week = 0.6 FTE
 - 2 day week = 0.4 FTE
 - 1 day week = 0.2 FTE
4. As part of the LDS, a job description must be provided for each member of LEADER staff (see Section 1 of the LDS Framework).

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

Table 54 – Summary

	2015 (€)	2016 (€)	2017 (€)	2018 (€)	2019 (€)	2020 (€)	Total (€)
Preparatory Support for the Development of the LDS	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Implementation of operations / projects under the LDS							
Theme 1: Economic / Enterprise Development & Job Creation	€0.00	€131,713.03	€847,175.48	€546,269.45	€798,549.62	€117,037.23	€2,440,744.81
Theme 2: Social Inclusion	€0.00	€86,250.00	€486,232.75	€467,750.00	€352,732.75	€132,500.00	€1,525,465.50
Theme 3: Rural Environment	€0.00	€10,500.00	€201,046.56	€161,046.56	€176,046.54	€61,546.54	€610,186.20
LAG Administration & Animation Costs	€0.00	€303,664.00	€302,542.00	€304,481.00	€306,417.00	€308,361.50	€1,525,465.50
Total	€0.00	€532,127.03	€1,836,996.79	€1,479,547.01	€1,633,745.91	€619,445.27	€6,101,862.01

	Cost (€)	% of Total Budget Cost	Validation
Total Administration & Animation Costs:	€1,525,465.50	25%	Okay

Explanatory Notes

- i. The total cost for animation and administration cannot exceed 25% of the Total Budget Cost. If administration and animation costs exceed 25%, the budget must be revised.

This sheet should be automatically filled in with figures from the other templates. Please contact Pobal directly if this is not the case.

11.6 Appendix: LDS Expressions of Interest

Table 55 – Expressions of Interest

Promoter	EA	Project
Dunleer and District Historical Society	Ardee	Dunleer Station House
Blackrock Park Committee	Dundalk South	Park Enhancement
Drogheda Girl Guides	Drogheda	Drogheda Girl Guide Hall
Gyles Quay Community Group	Dundalk Carlingford	Gyles Quay
Carol and Peadar McElroy	Dundalk Carlingford	The Bike Shed
Scoraiocht Lannleire	Ardee	Wren Boys Festival
Peadar McElroy	Dundalk Carlingford	Ravensdale Bicycle Hire
Eric Boyle	Drogheda	Harpur House
On Yer Bike	Dundalk Carlingford	Bike Hire expansion
Bernie Neary	Ardee	Pet Crematorium
Breffni Martin	Dundalk Carlingford	Bird Hide
Stabannon Tidy Towns	Ardee	3 Year Plan
ISPCC Childline	Drogheda	Facilities
Des Goldrick	Dundalk Carlingford	Craft Micro Brewery
Ravensdale Historical Society	Dundalk Carlingford	Flurry Valley Book
Ardee Tidy Towns	Ardee	Enhancement
Martin McKeown	Dundalk Carlingford	Commercial Diving Company
Elizabeth McArdle	Dundalk South	Working Farm Holiday
WallBuddy Limited	Dundalk Carlingford	<i>WallBuddy</i>
Calipo Picture Company	Drogheda	A Date for Mad Mary
O'Connor Roofing	Dundalk Carlingford	Equipment
Tallanstown Community Playground Committee	Ardee	Tallanstown Playground
Louth Leader Partnership	Ardee	Training Facility
The Ogam Apothecary	Dundalk Carlingford	Yurt Holiday Farm
Inti Leathers	Dundalk South	Training
Stephenstown Pond Trust Ltd	Dundalk South	Stephenstown Pond
Drumshallon Forge Restoration Community Group	Drogheda	Landscaping and Community Garden
Caroline Macken t/a Sea Remedies	Dundalk Carlingford	Seaweed Baths
Joanne Ward	Ardee	Pottery enterprise
Pat McMahan	Forge Renovation	Forge Renovation
Farm Tours Ireland Ltd	Ardee	Farm Tours Expansion
Curtis Coffins Limited	Ardee	Coffin Tradeshow
Aclint Community Hall	Ardee	Community Hall Refurbishment
Andrea and Graham Doolan	Ardee	Super Playbus
The Tasty Tart	Drogheda	Kitchen Facility
Louth Leader Partnership	Ardee	Food Poverty Reduction
Nicola Jordan	Dundalk Carlingford	Yurt Holiday Farm

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Promoter	EA	Project
John White	Dundalk Carlingford	Campsite
Louth LEADER Partnership	Ardee	Ardee Tourism Officer
Louth LEADER Partnership	Ardee	Ardee Farmers Market Officer
Patrick J McShane	Dundalk Carlingford	Motor Home and Glamping Facility
Patrick McShane Snr	Dundalk Carlingford	Self-Catering Cottages
Dunleer Men in Sheds	Ardee	Equipment
Louth Leader Partnership	Ardee	Social Farming
Bellingham Estate	Ardee	Holiday Homes
Martin Murnaghan	Dundalk Carlingford	Getting Irish Retail Online
Dunleer Tidy Towns	Ardee	Tidy Towns Plan
Killanny Community Development	Ardee	Car Park
Garrett Mallon t/a Carlingford Design House	Dundalk Carlingford	Marketing
Mid Louth Strengthening Families Programme	Ardee	Strengthening Families Programme
Louth Environmental Group	Dundalk South	Extension of the Navvy Bank Walk
Cooley Peninsula Cardiac Responders	Dundalk Carlingford	Equipment and Training
Martin Fitzgerald	Dundalk Carlingford	3D Printing and Design
Carlingford Community Development	Dundalk Carlingford	Feasibility Study
Holy Family Parish School Completion Programme	Dundalk South	Personal Development Programme
Drogheda Garda Mid Night League	Drogheda	Enhancing Community Relations
WALK Louth/Louth Volunteer Centre	Ardee	Walk Programme
Joseph Duffy (Holly's Social Haven)	Dundalk Carlingford	11Bedroom community house
Joseph Duffy (Holly's Social Haven)	Dundalk Carlingford	Manufacture holistic products
M.A.D. Youth Theatre	Dundalk South	Youth Theatre Support
The Táin March	Dundalk Carlingford	The Táin March
Foróige	Drogheda	Foróige Programme
The Mill Enterprise Hub	Drogheda	6 <i>Foodtech</i> lectures
The Mill Enterprise Hub	Drogheda	River Boyne Feasibility Study
The Mill Enterprise Hub	Drogheda	Ignyte Programme
Cuchulainn's Visitor Centre	Dundalk Carlingford	Cuchulainn's Visitor Centre
Drogheda Youth Development	Drogheda	PEER Scheme
Calipo Picture Company		The Digital life Film Project
The Mill Enterprise Hub	Drogheda	Phase 2 Building
Creative Spark	Dundalk South	<i>Fablab</i> at Creative Spark
Centre for Renewable Energy	Dundalk South	Renewable energy training
Zoe Conway	Dundalk Carlingford	Recording Studio
County Louth Cardiac First Responders	Dundalk South	Equipment and Training
Louth Community men's Shed	Dundalk Carlingford	Timber to make Bee Hives
Development Perspectives	Drogheda	Documentaries and Training
Upstate Theatre Project	Drogheda	Story Trail
Greenore Greencastle Community Association	Dundalk Carlingford	Community Enterprise Centre

/continued

County Louth: Local Development Strategy

/continued

Promoter	EA	Project
Greenore Historical Group	Dundalk Carlingford	Transnational Project
Greenore Tidy Towns	Dundalk Carlingford	Water Conservation, Monument, Flower Beds
Creative Spark	Dundalk South	Creative Enterprise Development Programme
Dunleer Tidy Towns	Ardee	Suite of projects relating to new Plan
Blackrock Tidy Towns	Dundalk South	Suite of enhancement projects
Dundalk Youth Centre	Dundalk South	Cross border youth engagement
Ciaran Hanlon	Dundalk Carlingford	Open Farm
Louth Village Community Development Group	Dundalk South	Suite of enhancement projects
Junior Achievement Ireland	All Louth	My-Future-My-Business
Beaulieu House	Drogheda	Needs Analysis Plan
Cre8 the Gr8 in U	Ardee	Online Granular Module
Tallanstown Cemetery Committee	Ardee	Recording Gravestones Genealogy
Brian and Terrance McKeivitt	Dundalk Carlingford	Shopping Arcade
Peter Finnegan	Dundalk Carlingford	Camping Pods
Dee Hub Project	Ardee	Community Resource Hub

11.7 Appendix: Declaration and Disclaimer

By submitting the Local Development Strategy (LDS), the Local Action Group (LAG) authorises the submission and declares that the information provided in relation to the organisation described in this LDS is true and complete to the best of its knowledge and belief.

The LAG acknowledges that any funds awarded must be used for the purpose stated and not used to replace existing funding. The LAG also understands that information supplied in, or accompanying this application may be made available on request under the Freedom of Information Acts 2014.

The LAG accepts, as a condition of the award of a grant, that it involves no commitment to any other grants from the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government or Pobal. The LAG is agreeable to ongoing programme monitoring by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and/or its agents and to allowing access to premises and records, as necessary, for that purpose.

The LAG also accepts that Pobal may contact other public funding organisations or Government Departments to discuss this application and previous funding awarded, as part of the appraisal process.

Disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act

The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and Pobal wish to remind LAGs that the information contained in the LDS and supporting documentation may be released, on request, to third parties, in accordance with all obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2014.

You are asked to consider if any of the information supplied by you in applying for funding under the LEADER element of the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020, should not be disclosed because of sensitivity. If this is the case, you should, when providing the information, identify same and specify the reasons for its sensitivity.

The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government/ Pobal will consult with you about sensitive information before making a decision on the release of such information. The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government/Pobal will release, on request, information to third parties, without further consultation with you, unless you identify the information as sensitive with supporting reasons.

If you consider that some of the information is sensitive, you are required to clearly identify such information when submitting your LDS.

If you do not identify any of the information supplied in the LDS and supporting documentation as being sensitive you are acknowledging that any, or all of the information supplied, will be released in response to a Freedom of Information request.

Disclaimer

It will be a condition of any application for funding under the terms and conditions of the LEADER element of the RDP (2014-2020) that the Local Action Group (LAG) has read, understood and accepted the following:

- The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government/Pobal shall not be liable to the LAG or any other party in respect of any loss, damage or costs of any nature arising directly or indirectly from: -
 - The Local Development Strategy or the subject matter of the Local Development Strategy;

County Louth: **Local Development Strategy**

- o The rejection, for any reason, of any application.
- The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, its servants or agents shall not at any time in any circumstances be held responsible or liable in relation to any matter whatsoever arising in connection with the development, planning, construction, operation, management and/or administration of individual projects.

By submitting this Local Development Strategy application the LAG acknowledges that it has read, understood and accepted the above points.

The Chairperson of the LAG should sign the Declaration and Disclaimer.

Name (Print):

Signature:

Position:

Date: