** **

**Update on LEADER 2015-2020**

**Mayo Rural Development Programme (RDP)**

**February 2016**

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The Mayo Local Community Development Committee Local Action Group **(LCDC- LAG**) has submitted a Local Development Strategy to the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government **(DECLG)** for the delivery of the LEADER Programme in County Mayo for the next five years

**Partnership Approach**

The Mayo **LCDC LAG** is unique in the history of local development in Mayo as it brings together all of the local development companies which have been active in the delivery of previous **LEADER** programmes in the County with the local authority, statutory agencies, social partners and community representatives under one unified structure for the delivery of the new programme. Work has been ongoing since early 2015 to achieve consensus on a single strategy for the County and to ensure that the impact of the funding available to the County is maximised. Unlike previous **LEADER** Programmes, the towns of Ballina and Castlebar will now be eligible for funding which is a significant step forward from previous programmes.

**First point of contact**

When the strategy is approved, final decisions on project funding will rest with the **LCDC- LAG.** The three existing **LEADER** companies-South West Mayo Development Company, Mayo North East Leader Partnership Company and Comhar na nOileán, assisted by Animation Partners Moy Valley Resources and IRD Kiltimagh, will be the first point-of-contact for potential project promoters in their respective implementation areas. These organisations will provide advice and support at a local level to groups and individuals seeking to develop projects.

**Programme supports**

The **LEADER** programme supports the delivery of local development actions in rural communities which seek to promote social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development. It is supported by funding from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development **(EAFRD)** and is co-financed by the National Rural Development Programme. The programme will facilitate the provision of supports to address some of the key challenges faced by the County following the economic downturn such as the impact of high levels of unemployment and an increase in levels of poverty and exclusion. The funding will directly support nine full- time-equivalent positions in the local development sector in County Mayo, with in excess of €8 million available to communities and enterprises in project funding.

The strategy submitted to the DECLG was prepared following over 6 months of research and consultations throughout County Mayo. It was approved by the **LCDC- LAG** at its meeting in January 2016. It includes objectives to support local actions relating to rural tourism, enterprise development, rural towns, broadband, basic services targeted at hard to reach communities, rural youth, protection and sustainable use of water resources, protection and improvement of local biodiversity and the development of renewable energy.

The **LCDC-LAG** awaits the approval of the strategy which was submitted to the **DECLG** in early February and will organise a comprehensive public information programme as soon contracts for the County have been put in place. It is envisaged that the **LEADER** Programme will commence by mid-year, 2016.

Ends,

29th February 2016

Note to editors - for further information contact Declan Turnbull, Chief Officer, LCDC LAG, Tel. 094 – 904 7545; email [dturnbull@mayococo.ie](mailto:dturnbull@mayococo.ie).

