



## Open Call for LEADER Funding – SECAD Partnership

### Rural Development Programme 2023-2027

#### **Sustainable Development of the Rural Environment & Climate Change Mitigation & Adaptation**

SECAD Partnership is delighted to announce an Open Call for eligible environmental projects in SECAD’s **West Cork LEADER** region, under the Rural Development Programme 2023-2027.

LEADER is an EU wide rural development programme which supports the sustainable growth and development of rural communities, businesses & rural environments. It is delivered by a network of Local Action Groups (LAGs) selected to implement Local Development Strategies (LDS) for their respective geographical areas. SECAD Partnership CLG is an Implementing Partner responsible for delivering LEADER supports in parts of the West Cork area on behalf of the West Cork LAG.

Every community in Cork County can potentially benefit from the LEADER Rural Development Programme. There are five Local Development Companies delivering LEADER in Cork, each with their own specific and distinctive area of coverage and only they can process applications for each project depending on the location of the project.

#### **West Cork SECAD LEADER Area**



## **LEADER Fund Local Priorities**

Each Local Development Company must set key areas of focus and priorities that they will support through the LEADER Programme. This reflects the fact that (i) these funds are limited and choices have to be made to target project types that will have the greatest impact for that particular area (in line with the Local Development Strategy) (ii) they must be allocated to projects that meet local needs and (iii) towards projects that are eligible for consideration within the LEADER Operating Rules and the overall LEADER programme priorities. Additionally, under the current LEADER Programme, projects from groups or communities which have not received substantial LEADER funds in recent years are being prioritised.

Across the County, there will be differences in terms of the priorities which each local development company has focused on for their area. There may also be differences in terms of which priority groups can be supported at this time, all of which reflects the fact that this is a limited budget.

## **The LEADER Application Process**

The stages of the application process are as follows:

- *Stage 1 – Applicants asked to complete a simple Expressions of Interest (EOI)*
- *Stage 2 – Evaluation of EOI's for eligibility*
- *Stage 3 – Eligible EOI applicants will be invited to submit a full funding application*
- *Stage 4 - Application stage (submission of application form and supporting documentation*
- *Stage 5 – Evaluation of full project application*
- *Stage 6 – Award of funding and issue of funding contracts to successful applicants*
- *Stage 7 – Project may commence*

## **Eligible LEADER Project Process**



## **Rolling Calls**

Under the LEADER Programme, an Expression of Interest (**EOI**) can be accepted on a ‘rolling call’ (‘first-come, first served’) basis.

Under a ‘**rolling call**’, applicants can submit an EOI at any time. When the EOI has been assessed and deemed eligible, a promoter will then be invited to submit a full application. Funding under a rolling call will be allocated to projects on a ‘first come, first served’ basis.

## **Expression of Interest for LEADER Projects**

SECAD Partnership is delighted to announce a rolling call for Expressions of Interest and applications under the following theme:

- **Sustainable Development of the Rural Environment & Climate Change mitigation and adaptation**

Further details on the specific call criteria and eligibility can be found overleaf and should be read carefully prior to completing or submitting an EOI.

## **General Important Things to Note:**

- Any project activity undertaken or started prior to formal grant approval and the signed acceptance of the contract will not be eligible for LEADER funding.
- Potential applicants should speak with a LEADER Development Officer prior to submitting an EOI to ensure your project is within SECAD’s LEADER area and to discuss your project and potential supports that might be available to you. To contact a Development Officer, please email [leader@secad.ie](mailto:leader@secad.ie) and a member of the team will be in touch.
- Completed EOIs should be submitted by email to [leader@secad.ie](mailto:leader@secad.ie).
- A link to ineligible activities can be found at the end of this document. Please read this carefully and consult with your Development Officer if unclear.

## Call 1 - Sustainable Development of the Rural Environment & Climate Change Mitigation & Adaptation

Under the Sustainable Development of the Rural Environment & Climate Change Mitigation & Adaptation Theme, SECAD Partnership invites Expressions of Interest (EOI) for projects that align with the call criteria outlined below.

As this is a **Rolling Call**, funding will be allocated on a ‘first come, first served’ basis until such time as the budget is exhausted.

<b>Deadline for Submission of EOIs:</b>	This is a Rolling Call (i.e. ‘first come, first served’ basis)
<b>Grant Range:</b>	Grants will generally be in the range of €20,000 to €50,000. The maximum grant available is €200,000.  Capital grants to a maximum of 75%  Analysis and Development grants to a maximum of 90% or €30,000

### Important Call Details:

Sustainable Development of the Rural Environment & Climate Change Mitigation & Adaptation

- Projects must align with the call criteria outlined in either Section 1.a), 1.b) or 1. c), below to be considered eligible under this call.
- Applicants must be able to demonstrate the potential of the project to contribute to the wider community.
- Where required, planning permission must be in place, or in progress, at the time of submitting a full application for LEADER funding. Please note that priority will be given to projects where planning permission has already been granted at the time of full funding application.
- Applicants should send an Expression of Interest as soon as possible.

The following types of projects will be considered eligible under SECAD's South Cork Sustainable Development of the Rural Environment & Climate Change Mitigation and Adaption Rolling Call:

### **1.a) Sustainable Development of the Rural Environment:**

EOIs are being accepted for projects which lend to the sustainable development of the rural environment. Sustainable Development of the Rural Environment projects will be considered under this call if they align with one or more of the following criteria:

- Sustainable Development of the Rural Environment
- Re-wilding rural spaces
- Conservation of water resources
- Supporting conservation and enhancement of local biodiversity
- Using technology to promote sustainability

### **1.b) Climate Change Capacity Building:**

EOIs are being accepted for projects which will promote awareness around Climate Change, help communities prepare for Climate Change and promote Climate Resilience. Projects will be considered under this call if they align with one or more of the following criteria:

- Building awareness of climate change in rural communities
- Projects increasing energy efficiency
- Habitat management
- Training and capacity building

### **1.c) Climate Change Mitigation and Adaption:**

EOIs are being accepted for projects which will reduce the impacts of Climate Change on communities, habitats, and species. Projects under the Climate Change Mitigation sub-theme will be considered under this call if they align with one or more of the following criteria:

- Supporting community food initiatives, community gardens etc
- Projects supporting energy transition
- Area-based community sustainability
- Sustainable waste management
- Project addressing effects of climate change

## **Ineligible Projects**

**Under the LEADER Operating Rules, funding shall not be awarded or paid in respect of the following projects which can be found [here](#).**