

## **LEADER 2014 – 2020 Programme in Rural Conwy**

### **Guidance Notes**

#### **Background**

Funded through the The Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 as part of the Welsh Government and European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, the Conwy Local Action Group (LAG) is responsible for the LEADER 2014 – 2020 programme in Conwy.

LEADER's approach involves a rural development methodology based a number of core components including partnership, 'bottom-up' territorial development, innovation and cooperation.

LEADER methodologies are implemented by local area partnerships which bring together public, private and third sector organisations. A LEADER partnership is known as a LAG. LAGs are made up from a cross section of local communities and LAG members include representatives from, among others, local authorities, business groups, third sector or social organisations and environmental bodies. These multi-sector LAGs bring together a large centralised knowledge base of skills and ensure an equitable coverage of interests.

Each LAG has a Local Development Strategy (LDS) which contains a set of rural development actions and objectives that have been suggested by local communities in the LAG territory. All LAGs are required to prepare a LDS before they start distributing European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development funds (EAFRD) to LEADER projects. The LDS involves an in-depth analysis of a LAG area to identify what local people believe is most important for the development of their area. The LDS also clarifies what issues the rural population considers to be the main challenges that LEADER funds should be used to tackle. All LAG projects supported by the EAFRD must fit with the aims of the LDS.

Innovation is an important part of the LEADER methodology. By promoting innovation, LAGs aim to encourage local organisations, groups and businesses to test new ways of developing their territory. LEADER has been extremely effective at stimulating all sorts of different socio-economic and environmental innovations throughout rural Europe.

Different ways that innovation is expressed by LEADER include:

- Working in new ways: this might involve rural development approaches that apply new ideas, using new techniques, focusing on alternative markets, bringing diverse sectors and stakeholders together via new networking methods, supporting new priority groups, or finding new solutions to social, economic and environmental challenges.
- Developing new products and services: these often result from testing innovative ways of working and can be created through the application of new or novel techniques, partnerships, technology, processes, research and thinking.
- Adapting proven approaches to new circumstances is also recognised as an effective means of creating locally significant innovative rural developments. These types of innovative actions are often facilitated by knowledge transfer between regions or Member States.

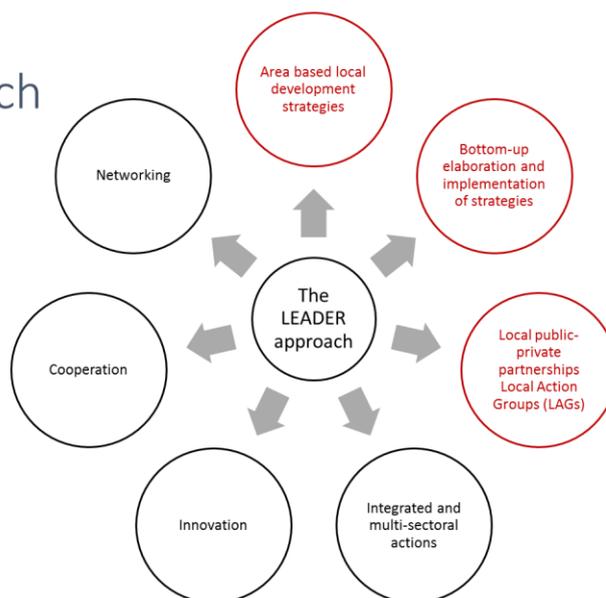
LEADER is based on seven principles - all of which must come together for it to be successful.

## The LEADER approach Y dull LEADER



*'Liaison Entre Actions de Développement  
de l'Économie Rurale'*

*'Links between the rural economy and  
development actions'*



The key advantages of the LEADER approach are:

- Local people have a better knowledge of local challenges that need to be addressed and the resource and opportunities available.
- They are able to mobilise local resources for the development process in a way that does not happen with traditional "top-down" approaches.
- This gives local people a greater sense of ownership and commitment to the projects, which in turn allows them to make the best of their local assets.

The approach can help develop trust and positive working relationships amongst the local community and businesses.

### **The LEADER Programme in Conwy**

Following the successful completion of the LEADER Programme 2007 – 2013, we are now in a new LEADER programme since the autumn of 2015.

The Conwy LAG (Conwy Cynhaliol) has been formed and submitted a LDS to Welsh Government in September 2014. It has been successful in securing funding for projects which will create vibrant, empowered and connected local communities. Delivering sustainable and innovative solutions to current and future economic, social and environmental issues, to enhance the economic wealth of the County.

The Conwy LAG would like to know if your organisation, group or business has an innovative idea that fits with the following LEADER themes, Cross Cutting Themes and LDS objectives.

### **LEADER themes**

- Adding Value to local identity and natural and cultural resources
- Facilitating pre-commercial development, business partnerships and short supply chains,
- Exploring new ways of providing non-statutory local services,
- Renewable energy at community level,
- Exploitation of digital technology.

### **Cross Cutting Themes**

- Social Exclusion
- Tackling Poverty
- Welsh Language
- Uplands
- Sustainable Development
- Equal Opportunities

### **The Conwy LDS Strategic Objectives:**

- Develop a diverse economic base and suitably qualified workforce in rural Conwy
- Provide accessible transport for those who cannot access or do not have access to conventional public transport.
- Improve the economic exploitation of the cultural, built and natural environment
- Support community cohesion/integration and access to basic services

### **Revenue type projects**

Projects supported must be revenue in type with revenue being defined as anything costing less than £10,000.

### **Who can be involved?**

Conwy Cynhaliol will seek to engage with communities of interest as well as those defined by their geography. Successful activities will require input from a broad range of participants and success will often be determined by ensuring all interested parties are involved and fully engaged in the process. Projects may include participants from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors.

Conwy Cynhaliol can cooperate with a broad range of groups and individuals however it is not possible to fund projects for others to deliver outside procurement arrangements. There are several reasons for this:

- It is not possible to award a grant (or anything that looks like a grant)
- Conwy Cynhaliol must adhere to all procurement rules on all expenditure
- Conwy cynhaliol must adhere to State Aid rules and must avoid giving a commercial advantage to a business or organisation.

### **How are projects developed?**

Organisations can submit a Project Idea Form to the LAG. The Conwy Cynhaliol Team will then work with the organisation and the LAG members develop the project idea.

We do not expect projects to be presented in their final form. The staff have an important role in identifying potential projects and adding elements in order to elevate them to become LEADER projects.

The Conwy Cynhaliol Staff and LAG members will have proactive approach in developing and implementing its own projects to respond to the Local Development Strategy. In these instances Conwy cynhaliol will recruit or develop the community of interest to support the delivery of the project.

### **Capacity and Timescales**

This is a 6 year programme with limited human and financial resources. It is important for Conwy Cynhaliol to control the resources over the programme period to ensure the quality and impact of the activities. Conwy Cynhaliol will retain the right to limit the number of projects that are being developed and delivered at any one time.

Once a Project Idea Form has been submitted there will be regular contact with the organisations and we will aim for a decision within 6 weeks.

### **So what next?**

If you're an individual, a group, community, business or organisation that has an idea, please complete the form provided and return it to: [ConwyLocalActionGroup@conwy.gov.uk](mailto:ConwyLocalActionGroup@conwy.gov.uk) or by post to Conwy LAG, Glasdir, Plas yn Dre, Llanrwst, Conwy. LL26 0DF.

If you have any questions that you would like to ask before completing the form or would just like to discuss your ideas with us please contact us on: 01492 576 674

