

West Cork LEADER Co-operative Limited



LEADER Programme (the LEADER Local Action Group) 2001 - 2006

Established by the European Commission the primary objective of the LEADER Programme has been to encourage and support rural areas, to demonstrate the value of direct support for locally based initiatives and for them to think about longer term potential. The LEADER programme is the third LEADER Programme, and is preceded by LEADER I and II; the objective of LEADER I was to develop and foster an environment and culture conducive to, and supportive of local enterprise in West Cork and the LEADER II programme was to develop a regional branding strategy with a view to achieving a more evolved approach to the food and tourism sectors and after much debate it was decided to have the image of the fuchsia flower as the centerpiece of regional brand. The Fuchsia, long associated with West Cork, represents a symbol of quality for the food & tourism products of the region. The products marketed under the Fuchsia Brand are firmly rooted in the unique traditions and influences of the region.

The Fuchsia Brand initiative has also been instrumental in the Society's endeavours to stimulate technology sector investment through the development of the West Cork Technology Park in Clonakilty. The success of this project and the strategic approach of the Society clearly demonstrates the region's distinctive character and strong regional profile can be utilised to significant effect in broadening the economic base and in achieving competitive advantage for the region.



Nine specific programme objectives were set for the programme and these are as follows:

- To improve the quality of life by developing, renewing and diversifying the economic base.
- To enhance the region's productive potential through the effective use of the region's unique character and identity
- To utilise regional identity and character in encouraging the location and development of clean technology and natural resource initiatives
- To promote the use and development of information and communication technologies in offsetting rural, geographic and demographic disadvantage
- To achieve balanced community and economic development throughout the region
- To develop high quality, innovative goods and services using local natural resources and skills to satisfy specific market demands
- To foster an appreciation of and responsibility for the unique aspects of the local natural, built and cultural environment
- To build capacity and resources in order to achieve community participation in planning and project development
- To develop and support trans-national networks to assist community and enterprise development



Rural Social Scheme - 2003

The Rural Social Scheme was announced in the 2003 budget and was launched by the Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs in July 2004. The scheme provides an income supplement for farmers and fishermen while providing services to rural communities by harnessing the skills and talents available in the farming and fishing communities. The scheme requires the participants work for 19.5 hours a week in return for a weekly payment which is dependent upon individual circumstances. The major advantage of the Rural Social Scheme is that these hours are based on a flexible work schedule and the participants can schedule their hours around existing commitments to their farming/fishing enterprises. The Rural Social Scheme offers rural communities access to a very skilled pool of labour but capital material funding of approximately €41,232 was allocated to West Cork LEADER in 2006 which was passed on to the local community groups already benefiting from the expertise of the participants on the scheme.



Information & Contacts

If you have a proposal that you wish to discuss, please contact any of the following: **Ian Dempsey**, Chief Executive Officer, **Ivan McCutcheon**, Development Officer, **Kevin Santry**, Development Officer, **Jean O'Sullivan**, Development Officer, **Arran O'Driscoll**; Rural Social Scheme Administrator **Lisa Whelton**, Administrator, **Michelle Ryan**, Administrator Assistant

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