

# Wicklow

## Local Development Strategy

### LEADER Programme 2014 – 2020



Dec 2015



Wicklow County Council  
Comhairle Contae Chill Mhantáin



County Wicklow Partnership

Ms Finola Moylette  
Principal Officer  
Department Environment Community & Local Government  
Ballina  
Co Mayo

Dear Ms Moylette

It gives us great pleasure to submit this Local Development Strategy for County Wicklow. This LDS Strategy has been designed as a result of in-depth countywide public and stakeholder consultation. We believe that the priority actions identified in this Strategy represent a very focused and targeted plan, based on identified needs, which has the ability to deliver on local objectives and the overall policy objectives of 'Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas'. In addition, the three cross-cutting themes of Climate Change, Environment, and Innovation have been core considerations throughout the design of this plan.

Strong networks and partnerships have been established through the LEADER Programme in Wicklow over the past 25 years. Both the Local Community Development Committee and Local Development Company look forward to strengthening this collaborative approach under the upcoming LEADER 2015–2020 Programme, for the economic, social, and environmental benefit of the county and the people of Wicklow.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

---

Cllr Pat Casey  
Chairperson LCDC

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Mr Tom Gregan  
Chairperson CWP

## Glossary of Abbreviations

Abbreviation/Term	Definition
AIP	Annual Implementation Plan
BIFE	Bray Institute for Further Education
CDP	County Development Plan
CLLD	Community Led Local Development
COA	Census of Agriculture
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CWNOP	County Wicklow Network for Older People
DAF	Department of Agriculture & Food
DECLG	Department of Environment, Community & Local Government
DSP	Department of Social Protection
EI	Enterprise Ireland
FI	Fáilte Ireland
IAE	Ireland's Ancient East
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ILDN	Irish Local Development Network
KWETB	Kildare & Wicklow Education & Training Board
LA	Local Authority
LAG	Local Action Group
LEO	Local Enterprise Office
NBP	National Broadband Plan
NRN	National Rural Network
PPN	Public Participation Network
REDZ	Rural Economic Development Zones
RRO	Rural Recreation Officer
RSS	Rural Social Scheme
RTI	Rural Transport Initiative
SE	Social Enterprises
SEAI	Sustainable Energy Association of Ireland
SWOT	Strengths, Weakness, Opportunity and Threats
USP	Unique Selling Point
WCC	Wicklow County Council
WCT	Wicklow County Tourism
WUC	Wicklow Uplands Council

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## Section 1 The LAG

### 1.1 LAG Organisation Legal and Contact Details

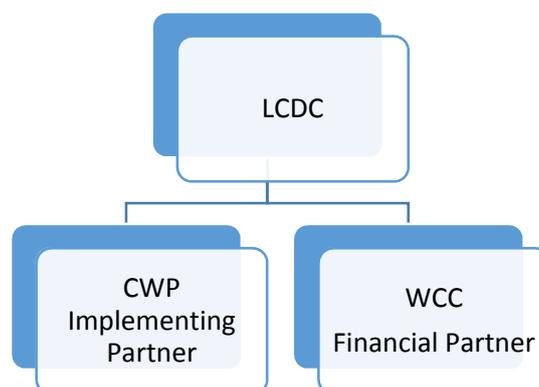
Organisational Detail & Legal Description	
Name of LAG	Wicklow Local Community Development Committee
Postal Address	Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Whitegates, Wicklow, Co. Wicklow
Telephone No	0404 20100
Email Address	<a href="mailto:lcdc@wicklowcoco.ie">lcdc@wicklowcoco.ie</a>
Website	<a href="http://www.wicklow.ie">www.wicklow.ie</a>
Date of Establishment	30 <sup>th</sup> November 2015
CRO Number	
Tax Clearance Cert	04773287 – 31349B Expiry 20/6/16
Legal Structure	Committee structure

Primary Contact for LEADER	
Name of Contact	Michael Nicholson
Position	Chief Officer
Postal Address	Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Whitegates, Wicklow, Co. Wicklow
Telephone Number	0404 20208
Email address	<a href="mailto:lcdc@wicklowcoco.ie">lcdc@wicklowcoco.ie</a>

### 1.2 Overview of operational model

The LEADER programme 2014-2020 for county Wicklow will be administered by an LCDC-led LAG. Wicklow LCDC will provide management and oversight of the programme at a strategic level but will draw on the skills and experience of County Wicklow Partnership (CWP) as the sole implementation body and Wicklow County Council as financial partner. This will ensure that Wicklow LCDC has the required management, financial, and organisational capacity to effectively manage and implement the LDS and will facilitate:

- Good governance
- Transparency
- Sound financial management
- Informed decision making
- Accountability to stakeholders



### 1.3 Introduction to Wicklow LCDC

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 provides for Local Community Development Committees (LCDC) to be established as committees of the Local Authority. Wicklow LCDC was established on 30 November 2015 to meet this requirement and comprises representatives who are members of the Local Authority, other state

agencies, community and voluntary sector, and social partners. The balance of representation between the sectors is intended to be in favour of the non-statutory sector. The LCDC is independent of the Local Authority in the discharge of its functions.

The aim of the LCDC is to “develop, co-ordinate and implement a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development”. A primary function in this regard is the preparation of the community elements of the six-year Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP). The Wicklow LCDC is currently finalising the draft LECP and has considered the economic elements of the plan, existing local and community development programme strategies, as well as wider policy documents in the preparation of same. This will provide clear strategic direction and identify priorities for the county. Draft LECP goals have been referenced in Sections 4 and 5 of this LDS to ensure complementarity.

The LCDC also has primary responsibility for co-ordinating, planning and overseeing local and community development funding in County Wicklow and will provide oversight with regard to a range of programmes including the Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme (SICAP) and the LEADER/Rural Development Programme 2014-2020. Any additional Community Led Local Development (CLLD) funding is also intended to be delivered through the LCDC structure.

#### **1.4 Operational Ethos**

Wicklow LCDC has adopted a CLLD approach to the preparation of this LDS. CLLD involves the participation of rural communities in developing responses to key economic, environmental and social challenges. The involvement of local citizens has been vital to the preparation of this LEADER plan for County Wicklow and it is intended to continue to engage local communities and relevant stakeholders throughout the programme period 2014-2020. This is evident in the structure of the LCDC itself, the proposed operational and implementation arrangements and the LDS review process outlined. This will ensure that the LEADER programme will be proactive, flexible and responsive to local needs and opportunities.

The LEADER approach is underpinned by a unique set of specificities (operational principles) as follows; these are a cornerstone of this LDS and will continue to be a feature in the delivery of the programme.

1. Area-based approach
2. Bottom-up approach
3. Local group (partnership approach)
4. Integrated and sustainable development strategies
5. Multi-sectoral integration
6. Trans-national and Inter-territorial co-operation
7. Networking

### 1.5 LAG Composition & Experience & Expertise

The current LAG members are listed below and represent each of the four pillars required, namely: Local Authority, state agencies, community and voluntary sector, and social partners. These members bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the LCDC. Wicklow LCDC also strives to achieve balanced gender representation and currently has six female members (35% female participation rate). Every effort will be made to ensure an equitable gender balance among the local authority members on the LDCD. In addition, the LCDC will request all nominating bodies to nominate both a female and a male representative to the LAG. Positions will then be filled based on achieving balanced gender representation in line with relevant experience.

	<b>Representing Body</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Public / Private</b>	<b>Pillar</b>
1	Wicklow County Council CEO	Bryan Doyle	Public	Local Authority Official
2	Wicklow County Council	Cllr. Grainne McLoughlin	Public	Local Authority member
3	Wicklow County Council	Cllr. Pat Casey (Chair)	Public	Local Authority member
4	Wicklow County Council	Vacancy	Public	Local Authority member
5	Health Service Executive	Maurice Farnan	Public	Public Authorities
6	KWETB	Kevin Lewis	Public	Public Authorities
7	Local Enterprise Office	Sheelagh Daly	Public	Local Authority Official
8	Bray Area Partnership	Peter Brennan	Private	Local & Community Development
9	County Wicklow Partnership	Tom Gregan	Private	Local & Community Development
10	PPN - Community & Voluntary	Liam O'Loughlin	Private	Community & Voluntary
11	PPN - Community & Voluntary	Mai Quaid	Private	Community & Voluntary
12	PPN - Social Inclusion	Niamh Wogan	Private	Community & Voluntary
13	PPN - Social Inclusion	Martina Cronin	Private	Community & Voluntary
14	Business Interests	Rory Benville	Private	Business Interests
15	Farming Interests	Chris Hill	Private	Farming Interests

16	PPN - Environmental Interests	Richard Webb	Private	Environmental Interests
17	(Clermont College, IT Carlow) Local & Community Interests	Denis O' Brien	Public	Public Authorities

**Bryan Doyle**

Chief Executive, Wicklow County Council

**Cllr. Grainne McLoughlin, MA Public Cultural Studies**

An elected Member of Wicklow County Council, Grainne holds a Masters in Public Cultural Studies. She sits on the Council's Community, Cultural and Social Development Strategic Policy Committee and is a member of the County Wicklow Heritage Forum. She is a Director of Kilcoole Heritage Group and the Greystones Arts Festival and is also a member of the Board of the Mermaid Arts Centre, Bray. Grainne served on the CWP LEADER Evaluation Committee for a period of 14 years from 1998 to 2012.

**Cllr. Pat Casey**

An elected member of Wicklow County Council, Pat is a local hotelier and business man. Pat is Chair of the Local Community Development Committee and the Council's Economic and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee. He has been involved for many years with the Laragh GAA Committee and the Glendalough Mining Heritage Committee. He is also a member of the County Wicklow Local Enterprise Board, the Council's Internal Audit Committee, and the County Wicklow Joint Policing Committee. Pat served on the Board of CWP from 2005 to 2014.

**Maurice Farnan MBA, M.Sc., Dip. LS**

HSE representative on the LCDC, Maurice is the General Manager for Mental Health and Social Inclusion Services for Community Health Organisation 6 which includes Dublin South, Dublin South East and Wicklow. Maurice has extensive experience of collaborative multi agency work and is also the HSE rep on the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown LCDC. His career has been focused on social inclusion with a particular emphasis on addiction issues and he has served as National Drug Rehabilitation Co-ordinator. He has extensive experience in the delivery of addiction services in the HSE and in both Regional and Local Drug Task Forces. Maurice has also considerable experience in the area of LGBT services, traveller health, homelessness and anti-human trafficking services.

**Kevin Lewis**

As Chief Operations Officer with Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB) since the amalgamation on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013 of Co. Wicklow VEC with Co. Kildare VEC, Kevin Lewis has led the corporate, finance and operational functions of KWETB. Over the past two years he led the transfer of responsibility to KWETB for the training functions formerly administered in Co. Wicklow by FAS via Loughlinstown and Waterford Training Centres. He has played a lead role in the Integration Steering Committee for the amalgamation of the two VEC's and since 2015 he has also taken on the role of Acting Education Officer which is a lead role for the 22 post primary schools within KWETB. Immediately prior to the amalgamation, Kevin was Acting Chief Executive Officer of Co. Wicklow VEC for over a year following on from his previous role as Head of Finance, ICT and Administration. KWETB has an annual

budget of over €100 million, 2500 staff and approximately 30,000 learners at primary, post primary and further education & training levels.

**Sheelagh Daly**, B.A (Training & Education), MSc Project Management

Head of Enterprise of the Co. Wicklow LEO, Sheelagh has a proven track record in leading and developing effective business strategy, influencing and working with diverse stakeholders, devising and delivering innovative solutions, developing start-ups and managing change. Sheelagh is a graduate of Shannon College of Hotel Management and also holds a degree in Education & Training (NUI Galway) and an MSc in Project Management (UCD Smurfit School of Business). In her role as Head of Enterprise, Sheelagh is responsible for encouraging entrepreneurship and providing state supports to enterprise in County Wicklow. Sheelagh also holds a number of national positions including serving on the Entrepreneurship Implementation Body (Chaired by the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation) and is a Director on the board of Microfinance Ireland. Sheelagh also served on the CWP LEADER Evaluation Committee from six years during the period between 2009 to 2015

**Peter Brennan**

Peter has over 35 years' experience of working in the local government and local development sectors. In that time Peter has held positions as a Community Worker and Development Officer with a local authority and for the past 18 years or so has worked for Bray Area Partnership – a not for profit state funded local development company. Over the years Peter has been appointed to and served on the boards of various state funded bodies. Peter is committed to advancing social change that contributes to the development of a more equitable society.

**Tom Gregan**

Tom Gregan represents Local and Community Development interests on the LCDC. Tom is the current Chairperson of County Wicklow Partnership and has been involved with the Board of the Company since 1999, he was previously on the Board of the Irish LEADER Development Network (ILDN). Tom is also a member of the Board of Wicklow LEO and was a member of its predecessor Wicklow County Enterprise Board. Tom was a Senior Area Manager with FBD for many years and is very involved in his local community. He has been Chairperson of the Tinahely Show and his local Parish Committee. He has also been involved with Carnew and Coolboy GAA clubs as both a player and Board member. He is Chairperson of WCC's Audit Committee and the Wicklow Mountains National Park Council of the National Parks and Wildlife Service and is currently on the Board of Arklow Home Help.

**Liam O' Loughlin**, Diploma in Rural Development

Community & Voluntary College Representative to the LCDC, Liam has been involved with the GAA both at club and county level all his life as a player and administrator. He has been active with the Aughrim Community Sports & Leisure Association from its inception 30 years ago to the successful community facility it is today. Liam holds a Diploma in Rural Development from UCD. Up until his recent retirement Liam was the coordinator of the Rural Social Scheme (administered by CWP) and worked with farmers and rural community groups for 10 years.

**Mai Quaid**

Community & Voluntary College Representative to LCDC, Mai has been a member of various committees including West Wicklow Development Committee and has served as chairperson of County Wicklow Community Forum, Wicklow Network for Older People and Baltinglass and District Forum. She also sat on the steering group for organising “The Gathering” in 2013. Mai is also the national president of Active Retirement Network of Ireland and is currently a Board member of Wicklow County Tourism.

**Niamh Wogan**

Social Inclusion College Representative to the LCDC, Niamh has worked in the community & voluntary sector over the past 15 years in Bray & Wicklow. Working in the Bray Family Resource & Development Project, she has played a major role in the development and implementation of a range of Social Inclusion initiatives and programmes in response to identified needs within the local community. Niamh is currently a member of a range of local groups and organisations in the county that focus on addressing Social Exclusion and Poverty. These include the Marion Pre-school and Family Centre, Bray New Directions Special Justice Project, Bray Local Drugs and Alcohol Task Force, SPECS Initiative Consortium, and the Prevention, Partnership and Family Support (PPFS) Steering Committee. Niamh is also an active member of the Wicklow Branch of Down Syndrome Ireland.

**Martina Cronin**

Social Inclusion College Representative to the LCDC, Martina has been the Development Manager of Co. Wicklow Citizen Information Service for 15 years and her work includes networking with a wide range of community, voluntary and statutory agencies throughout the county. Her job with the Citizens Information Service focuses on advocacy and representing people who feel that their rights have been infringed. This has made Martina aware of the importance of giving people a voice both at a personal and community level. Her work has given her a good insight into the primary issues and concerns of the community and this will inform her input into the LCDC

**Rory Benvill, BCL**

Business Pillar representative on the LCDC, Rory is the Senior Partner with Benville Robinson Solicitors, Bray. He is a member and former President of the Bray Chamber of Commerce and is the current secretary of the Association of State Solicitors in Ireland. Rory is also involved with the Rotary Club and is a member of Bray Emmetts GAA club.

**Chris Hill BSc AG, Dip Corporate Direction**

Farming Pillar representative to the LCDC, Chris was nominated by the IFA and ICOS to sit on the LCDC. Chris previously represented East Wicklow/North Wexford on the Board of Glanbia PLC and has been involved with the IFA for over 30 years at local and National level. He holds a B.Sc in Agriculture from UCD and a Diploma in Corporate Direction from UCC. He has been a Board member of CWP since 1998.

**Dr. Richard Webb**

Representative of the Environmental Pillar of the LCDC, Richard is currently director of Sugradh, promoting better play facilities for children and recently retired as senior play safety officer with RoSPA. Committee, member of Bray Tidy Towns and co-ordinator of Bray GIY. Richard is a former Senior Research Officer with An Foras

Forbartha. Past President of the Irish Landscape Institute and of CAAS Environmental Services. He ran his own practice in landscape architecture, environmental consultancy and community development, working with local authorities and communities throughout Ireland. He was also previously technical advisor on the Irish Aid community forestry project in Sudan and lectured in in eco-design and management on the DIT MSc. in Sustainable Development.

**Denis O' Brien, BA, ACMA, MBA**

Denis lectured in Accounting and Finance in IT Carlow for 5 years before taking up his current post as Lifelong Learning Manager. He has over 20 years' experience in the Banking and Financial Sector. As Lifelong Learning Manager with IT Carlow, he has specific responsibility for the development and directing of the Wicklow County Campus in Rathnew, Co. Wicklow.

**1.6 LAG Decision Making & Governance**

Wicklow LCDC has procedures in place to ensure effective governance. Standing Orders for Wicklow LCDC are included in Appendix 1 and set out in detail the functions, composition, procedures, and operation of the LCDC including meetings, conflict of interest and decision making. LAG governance requirements outlined in the Operating Rules for the RDP 2014-2020 in relation to governance, decision making and conflict of interest will also be adhered to.

As stated in the operational ethos, all LAG decisions are representative and support a CLLD approach. To achieve this, decision-making procedures are in place to ensure that neither the public sector nor any single interest group will represent more than 49% of the voting rights of the committee. In addition, a minimum of 51% of the members who are voting in any project selection decision will come from non-public sector partners.

As written in the Wicklow LCDC standing orders, decisions will be made by consensus where possible. Where consensus cannot be achieved, decisions will be determined by a majority of the votes of the members present eligible to vote. The Chairperson of the LAG will not have a casting vote.

The Department requires that a minimum of 60% of LAG members be present during decisions on project funding. This quorum applies to decisions made by the LCDC after all relevant conflict of interest issues have been addressed. Recognising the largely voluntary nature of the individuals involved in LEADER decision making, the operating rules provide for this requirement to be supported by a written decision-making procedure that allows flexibility and makes it easier to meet the 60% requirements. Wicklow LCDC will follow the guidance from the rules in this regard.

A quorum is required to commence an LCDC meeting, therefore meetings will be postponed or rescheduled when a quorum cannot be raised. The current standing orders state that the LCDC "will hold as many meetings as is necessary in the performance of its function but should meet no less than six times in any calendar year". The LCDC is fully aware that the programme provides for time specific as well as rolling calls and will meet at least monthly and as appropriate to deliver on this.

Conflict of interest procedure is also outlined in the standing orders. Where a conflict of interest is declared by a member, that member will leave the meeting and will not be entitled to vote on the matter in which they have an interest. This decision is the responsibility of the member. Upon returning to the meeting, the member will be

notified of the decision by the Chair and no further discussion will take place. In addition to LAG members, notification of conflict of interest will also apply to all personnel involved in the application for support, including the processing and evaluating of that application. Conflict of interest will be recorded in the minutes of all decision-making meetings i.e. evaluation committee, CWP Board, and LCDC. Additional conflict of interest procedures are outlined in the CWP procedures manual 2007-2013. This will be amended to reflect the new implementation structures and finalised operating rules.

The current standing orders will be amended as necessary to meet and acknowledge the LEADER programme's operating rules when the final version is available. Any other additional guidance offered by the Department or its agents will also be included. The LAG intends to continually improve processes as necessary to provide strong governance. As required in the operating rules, a corporate governance and accountability plan will be developed and implemented for all LAG members. LCDC/LAG members will engage in t2 raining to assist them in effective decision making and training will be provided for any new members joining the LAG.

*See Appendix 2 for Statement of LAG and Implementing Partner Roles and Responsibilities.*

### **1.7 LAG Financial Management**

Wicklow County Council will be the lead financial partner for the LAG in the operation of the RDP. The LAG will be supported by the financial systems and procedures in place both in Wicklow County Council and CWP which will be compliant with the RDP Operating Rules 2014-2020. WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL has the requisite financial management systems and procedures in place to guarantee transparency and accountability on behalf of the LAG. These are fully outlined in the financial management and procurement/purchasing procedures manuals. Payments by Wicklow County Council as financial partner to the LAG will be made from a dedicated LEADER account to CWP as the implementing partner.

As the delivering body for the LEADER programme in Co. Wicklow to date, CWP has a comprehensive procedures manual in place detailing clear financial administration procedures for all staff to follow. These comply with operating rules and requirements in relation to the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 and guide employees and the employer on the procedures in place to ensure a transparent, effective and secure delivery of the Programme. The chapters contained in the procedures manual is outlined in Appendix 3 and provides detail on reporting structures, operational procedures, administration and expenditure checks, controls, complaints procedure, segregation of duties, reporting responsibilities, confidentiality, financial procedures, project development, assessment evaluation and claims procedures and tendering/public procurement procedures. The procedures outlined in this manual will be updated to reflect the new operating rules of the 2014-2020 programme period when finalised.

Cognisant of the importance of public procurement processes in delivering transparency and value for money, both Wicklow County Council and CWP have increased resources in this area. To date, both bodies have ensured that public procurement regulations have been followed by putting processes in place to guide both employees and project promoters. This is evident in the aforementioned procedures manuals. In addition to a comprehensive procurement/ purchasing manual, Wicklow County Council has a public procurement specialist on staff. To date, CWP has brought in outside expertise with the specialist skills set required to assist promoters and the LDC with compliance. CWP has also provided staff training

in the area with one of the project development officers going on to further training in the area. Both Wicklow County Council and CWP will continually review these procedures to ensure they fully reflect current legislation. Public procurement procedures will apply to both internal and externally driven projects.

As the Company is publicly funded, CWP applies the concepts of integrity, accuracy, transparency, reliability, confidentiality, and proper disclosure and presentation. The accounting administration for the RDP and the other company programmes is based on:

1. Recognised accounting principles, which have been translated into clear practical procedures
2. Public accountability
3. EU and State funding conditions including Commission Regulations

### **1.8 LEADER Staffing**

The LCDC will be supported by both CWP and Local Authority staff. One full-time equivalent Local Authority staff member has been assigned to support the functioning of the LCDC on a full-time basis. This will be provided for through the existing resources of Wicklow County Council. In addition, the Local Authority will provide support to the LCDC in its role as the LAG through the following sections:

- Community, Cultural & Social Development Section
- Enterprise and Corporate Services Section
- Finance Section (financial expertise, audit expertise, procurement)
- Other supports where appropriate to projects (e.g. legal, planning, Irish Language)

In relation to the operation of the LEADER programme, the LCDC is primarily supported by the staff of CWP through its role as implementing partner. CWP is engaged in the planning and delivery of a range of rural development, community development and social inclusion programmes and initiatives in Co. Wicklow as outlined below. A company organisational chart is available to view in Appendix 4. CWP can draw on the expertise and experience of its entire programme complement which will be of great benefit to the RDP given the current linkages that exist between programmes.

- Rural Development Programme/LEADER 2007-2013
- Family Support Services (Wicklow Child & Family Project and Arklow Springboard Project)
- SICAP (including Croí Rath Naoi CDP and Arklow CDP)
- Wicklow Rural Transport (moving to Ring-a-Link Kilkenny)
- Rural Social Scheme
- Walks Scheme/Rural Recreation
- Arklow Mental Health Project (The Tunnel)
- Older People's Network (Get Vocal Project)
- Tús Programme
- Wicklow Information Network
- Employment & Social Inclusion Unit

The LEADER Rural Development Programme team 2014-2020 is proposed as follows and will be dependent on the administration budget available over the programme period. In addition to the core staff assigned to the Rural Development Programme, CWP also provides additional staff supports in the areas of

management, reception, IT, HR, and PR. Job descriptions for the CEO, Project Development Officer, and Administrative roles are included in the appendices and full time equivalent figures are included in the financial plan. A brief description of skills and capabilities of the existing RDP team is outlined here.

#### **LEADER Core Staff**

- CEO
- Project Development Staff (x2-3)
- Admin Staff (x2)

See Appendix 5 for Job Descriptions

#### **CEO**

Frank d'Arcy has been in the role of CEO of CWP since July 2011 and previous to this was CEO of Wexford Organisation for Rural Development from 1996 to 2010. His education and training background includes the Institute of Chartered Accountants, Institute of Directors, Management Research Institute, Institute of Public Administration, and the Irish Management Institute. Frank is responsible for the overall management of CWP and has specific responsibility for the financial administration and HR functions under the RDP. He is supported in his work by a management team consisting of representatives of the various programmes. Skills and competencies include financial management, HR management and change delivery.

#### **Project Development Team**

Alison Keogh joined CWP as a Project Development Officer (PDO) in October 2011 and has worked for various LEADER companies since 2001. Alison's qualifications include an MBA, Higher Diploma in Co-operative Organisation, Food Marketing and Rural Development and a BA in European Studies including Italian and French. She is also enrolled in the Institute of Public Administration Certificate in Public Procurement course commencing in January 2016. The PDO role is tasked with working on the implementation of the company's business plan for the delivery of the Rural Development Programme in Co. Wicklow. This is a varied role including animation/capacity building and project development and management of both internal and external projects. Skills and competencies include project management, IT capabilities, report writing and analysis, communication, presentation and facilitation skills and the use of strategy, change management and monitoring and evaluation tools.

It is proposed to recruit one or two additional PDOs who will meet the job description outlined in Appendix 5.

#### **Administration**

Karen Windsor has been part of the Rural Development administrative team since 2011 having commenced working at CWP in 2008 on the LDSIP (now SICAP) programme. Qualifications include BA (Hons.) in Business Studies and A Levels in Business Studies, Sociology, and Law. The administrative role includes supporting the CEO, Development Officer/s and administration; liaising with promoters, the Department, the Board, auditors, etc.; completion of financial returns and reports; establishing and maintaining project files; ensuring compliance; and processing payments to promoters. Key skills and competencies include use of ICT systems and packages, financial reporting and audit compliance on CWP admin and project files.

Denise Healy has worked as an RDP administrator with CWP for over 20 years. The administrative role includes supporting the CEO, Development Officer/s and administration; liaising with promoters, the Department, the Board, auditors, etc.; completion of financial returns and reports; establishing and maintaining project files; ensuring compliance; and processing payments to promoters. Key skills and competencies include use of ICT systems and packages, financial reporting and audit compliance on CWP administration and project files.

### **1.9 Project Selection Procedures for LEADER**

The process of appraising and selecting projects for project promoters and the LAG will be undertaken by both the LCDC and CWP. There are various stages to this process as outlined in the roles and responsibilities chart. In line with an agreed selection procedure and criteria, CWP will develop, issue, and manage both time-specific and open/rolling calls for proposals as outlined under each LDS Priority Action in Section 4. The LCDC will generally approve this process in keeping with the LDS.

**Wicklow LCDC confirms that the required 40% minimum project budget has been allocated to “time-limited” calls for proposals.** This will ensure that funding is ring-fenced in priority areas where an animation programme is anticipated to precede the intervention. Time-limited calls will also be helpful in evaluating projects in a comparative way. Rolling/ open calls also have advantages, allowing for flexibility for projects where timing is critical to the project (e.g. a new business that needs to start immediately to take advantage of an existing gap in the market or a tourism project that needs to be open in time for the peak season).

CWP will then receive and process applications and will work with project promoters to assist in project development and progress. CWP Project Officers will also develop LDC-led initiatives which form an integral part of the priority actions outlined in this LDS. This will involve engaging relevant stakeholders in project development, animation and capacity building and managing the public procurement process on behalf of the LDC. CWP officers will also be required to liaise with the Department/Pobal in relation to in-house projects. When projects are ready for a funding decision, CWP Project Officers will compile a comprehensive project assessment report which will then be sent through the project evaluation process.

In keeping with the programme operating rules, an evaluation committee independent of the LCDC will make recommendations on applications for funding. The membership of this committee will be independent of both the LCDC and the Board of CWP and will be selected by both the LCDC and CWP.

This independent evaluation committee will comprise membership with relevant expertise in line with Wicklow’s LDS priority areas as follow:

Priority Area	Experience & Expertise
Tourism	Heritage/Activity/Outdoor Recreation/Eco/Sustainable
Business	Micro/SME/Social Enterprise
Social Inclusion	Geographical/Issue Based/Inclusion
Environment	Renewable Energy/Biodiversity/Conservation /Sustainable
Youth	Geographical/Issue/Training Needs
Community	Needs/Planning/Volunteerism/ Inclusion

While it is envisaged that the above core group would form the Evaluation Committee, additional members with specific areas of expertise may be invited onto

the Committee where relevant. This would be particularly beneficial when assessing projects following time specific calls for proposals in specific themes.

A scoring framework will be used to assess all applications for funding support, a sample of which is included in Appendix 6. Each evaluation committee member will be required to complete the scoring sheet and a cumulative total of 60% must be achieved by the project for it to be approved.

Projects will then be considered by the CWP Board given their wealth of experience in this role to date. A final decision on the funding application will then be made by the LCDC. For further information, see the Heads of Agreement document in Appendix 3. This process should ensure a transparent selection procedure strengthened by the LAG governance arrangements and decision-making procedures in place. Currently there are no further sub-committees or advisory committees provided for, however special interest or sectoral committees may be established where the need arises.



**Project Decision Process 1**

### **1.10 Relevant Experience**

Wicklow LCDC was established relatively recently but since its inception in 2015 it has been proactive in establishing appropriate procedures to assist in the coordination delivery of CLLD programmes. It is currently the management and oversight body for the SICAP programme in the county and it hopes to deliver a number of additional programmes in the future.

In relation to LEADER, it benefits from the experience of its partners in the delivery of a large number of programmes. Wicklow County Council operates a number of EU and Exchequer funding schemes, the most relevant being those run through the Environment, Roads and Community, Cultural and Social Sections. Some examples of these include Interreg, Life, Community Grants Scheme, REDZ pilot, Town and Village Renewal Scheme, Wicklow Community Heritage and Cultural Awards Scheme, Grants for the Conservation of Protected Structures, Local Agenda 21 Environmental Partnership Fund, and the Community Involvement Scheme.

CWP's suite of funding programmes and schemes has already been outlined and amounts to approximately €24 million in funding in the last three years. The company has also leveraged additional private match-funding to assist in the delivery of local initiatives. CWP's LEADER experience is a vital input to this LDS as it has delivered a CLLD model on the ground. Managing and administering calls for proposals have been a feature of LEADER programmes to date and involved the regular promotion of the multi-annual funding available under the programme through a rolling call. Advertising, PR, and animation work through sectoral and community/public meetings was the primary methodology used here. Time-specific calls were also used where demand was high and limited resources were available e.g. a call for

proposals under the Basic Services Measure. A time-specific call was also used when a small amount of funding became available to reallocate in a short timeframe. In this case, a criterion was developed to encourage projects that generated employment.

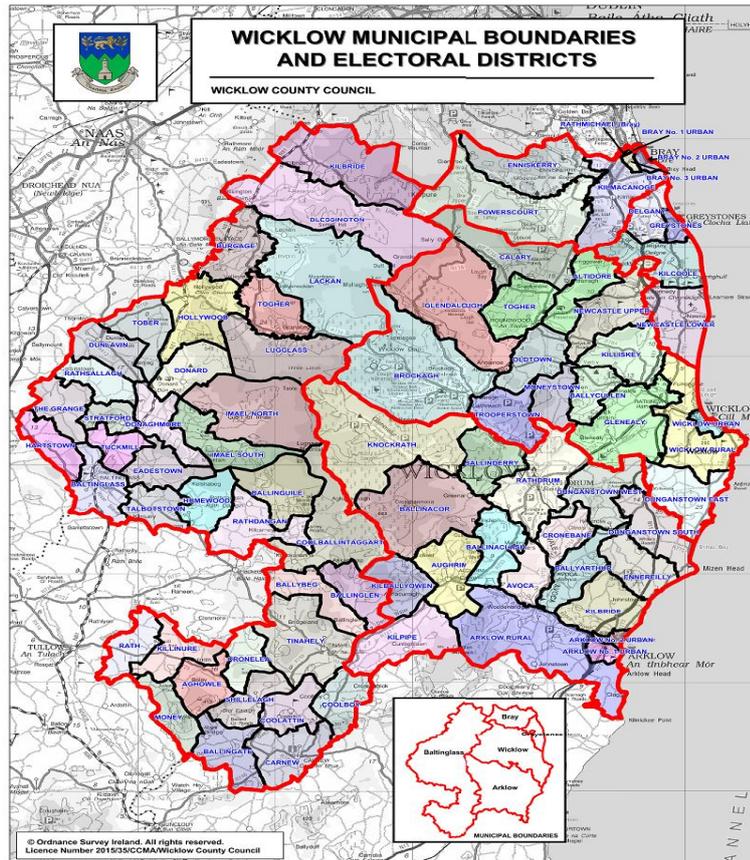
Developing an area-based approach to economic development in rural areas is evident in CWP's use of the LEADER methodologies in preparing strategies to date. In addition to previous LEADER plans, the company has animated and devised a range of plans and initiatives including Good Food the Wicklow Way, Outdoor Recreation Strategy, Role of Women in Agriculture, Young Filmmakers Programme, Festivals Clustering Initiative, Oral History Training etc.

Delivering interventions that support social inclusion and poverty reduction, in particular those that target 'hard-to-reach' communities has been a prominent feature of CWP's programme delivery. A wide range of social and recreational infrastructure is in place as a result of the programme and includes community halls, playgrounds, skate parks, walks and the development of amenity areas to name but a few. Many of these are physically located in very rural areas of Wicklow while others assist social cohesion in the community by bringing people together. Other LEADER supports such as training programmes and mentoring have focused on targeting specific groups in society e.g. youth and rural women. This LDS builds on this and aims to target specific 'hard-to-reach' geographic areas and marginalised groups through intensive animation and capacity building initiatives. CWP has also delivered the LDSIP programme and won the tender for the SICAP programme 2015-2017 in Wicklow (excluding Bray) which aims to "reduce poverty and promote social inclusion and equality through local, regional and national engagement and collaboration".

## Section 2 LDS Area Profile

### 2.1 Area Profile

County Wicklow's Local Development Strategy (LDS) will operate throughout the entire county of Wicklow in order to deliver the LEADER Rural Development Programme 2014 - 2020. This LDS will serve a population of some 136,640 people (CSO, 2011) and will cover an area of 2,017 square kilometres (see map below).



The typical topography of Wicklow is one of mountains, rolling foothills, forests and lakes. The county is dominated by the Wicklow Granite Mountains which present unique challenges and opportunities to the area. The spine of the mountain range runs in a northeast-southwest direction across the county. East-west movement across the county can be severely restricted by the mountains, particularly during severe weather conditions. Wicklow's upland areas are rich in biodiversity and form the largest unbroken area of high ground in Ireland. The Sally Gap, Powerscourt Waterfall, Lugnaquilla (925 metres) and Glendalough are other notable features in the county, along with its 66km coastline. Wicklow National Park stretches across some 20,000 hectares and attracts over one million visitors per year. Wicklow possesses a number of ports and harbours along its coast including Arklow, Wicklow, Greystones, and Bray.

The county can be divided into four distinct landscape zones:

**Table 1: Landscape zones in Co Wicklow**

Landscape Zone	Landscape Category	Landscape Vulnerability
Areas of outstanding natural beauty	Mountain uplands Northern Hills Glencree/Glencullen Poulaphoucca Reservoir Coastal area	Very high
Areas of special amenity	North Mountain Lowlands South Mountain Lowlands Baltinglass Hills Southern Hills	High
Rural Areas	Rural Areas	Medium
Corridor Areas	Eastern Corridor Western Corridor	Medium

Source: County Development Plan 2010 – 2016

The majority of the principal towns are located along the East Coast with a second linear arrangement of smaller centres in the west of the county. The principal transport routes are the N11 in the east and the N81 in the west. The location and sheer mass of the mountain range contributes to a socio-cultural habitus of east, west, and south which presents real challenges for the identity of Wicklow as a single county. The concentration of services on the east further compounds a sense of disadvantage among communities on the west and the south. The county's location and proximity to Dublin present its own set of unique challenges and opportunities. Developments in the county have been significantly influenced by the location of key infrastructure and the settlement pattern that has evolved over centuries. In recent times, the dominant influence has been the extent of commuting for work purposes that has resulted from the overspill of Dublin's urban shadow. There is a need to create employment opportunities locally for the benefit of the local rural economy and also for the benefit of social capital within Wicklow's communities.

Wicklow has five Municipal Districts comprising a range of urban and rural Electoral Divisions (ED) (see map in Appendix 7 and ED listing in LDS Socio Economic Profile in Appendix 8, Table 3).

1. Arklow Municipal District
2. Baltinglass Municipal District
3. Bray Municipal District
4. Greystones Municipal District
5. Wicklow Municipal District

## **2.2 Socio Economic Profile** (see complete profile in Appendix 8)

### *Demographics*

#### **2.2.1 Population**

According to the 2011 Census, the county's population showed an increase in population of 8.3% (10,446 persons) and resulting in a total population of 136,640. This increase is slightly below the 9.1% increase recorded in Leinster. However, the entire county did not grow at the same rate: further analysis highlights both reductions and increases across EDs, each change impacting and bringing new challenges and opportunities within their respective communities.

Based on the settlement hierarchy outlined in Wicklow’s County Development Plan (CDP) 2010- 2016, there are five main settlements in the county. As can be seen from the Table 2 below, four of these settlements are located in the east of the county with the smallest population settlement of Blessington located in the west. Population figures from the 2011 Census for these areas indicate that over half of the county’s population (57%) reside in these five main towns. These statistics also show that an increasing percentage of the county’s population (65.1% - 99,945 persons) live in aggregate town areas. The highest growth between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses was experienced in Wicklow town and environs at 33.7%. In the west of the county, the population increased significantly in Blessington and grew from 4,018 to 4,639, an increase of 15.5%.

**Table 2: Settlements in County Wicklow**

<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Population (2011)</b>
Bray	29,339
Wicklow-Rathnew	13,468
Arklow	13,066
Greystones-Delgany	17,208
Blessington	4,780

Source: County Development Plan 2010 – 2016

Census 2011 data identifies that the percentage of people living in rural areas (areas outside of the designated towns and villages) now stands at 27%. While the proportion of the county’s population living in rural areas has declined, Co. Wicklow’s aggregate rural population increased by 1,996 or 4.4% between 2006 and 2011, which is a slower rate than that experienced in the aggregate urban areas where a 10.5% increase was experienced.

Some of Wicklow’s smaller towns and villages experienced growth, according to Census 2011 (CSO, 2011). The highest population growth - 24.5% (797 people) - was experienced in Kilcoole in the east. Baltinglass, in the west of the county, also increased by 18.8% (2,016 persons) while the village of Stratford grew by 33.1% (54 persons). Population declines occurred in Newtownmountkennedy, Dunlavin, and Laragh over the period. Closer analysis at ED level highlights that 11 EDs in the west of the county experienced population decline with Imael South being the highest at 27.22% accounting for a reduction of almost 100 people. The ED of Avoca in the south of the county declined by 18.62% (156 people). See Table 2 in Appendix 8 for total county population changes. Wicklow’s CDP (2010 – 2016) includes population projections for the county based on the Regional Planning Guidelines and suggests that the number of people living in the county will rise to 164,280 in 2016 and estimates a further increase of 10,000 by 2022.

### **2.2.2 Age Profile of Population**

As Wicklow’s population grows, it is necessary to examine the age profile within the county and to look at the changes which have occurred in the different age cohorts over the period as per table 3 below.

**Table 3 Changes in Age Profile**

<b>Age</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>% Change 1991 - 2011</b>
<b>0 - 14</b>	27,384	25,585	25,826	27,137	31,172	13.83
<b>15 - 24</b>	15,753	16,968	17,641	17,767	16,514	4.83
<b>25 - 44</b>	27,596	29,349	34,694	40,331	41,609	50.78
<b>45 - 64</b>	16,716	20,361	25,082	28,442	32,344	93.49
<b>65 years and over</b>	9,816	10,420	11,433	12,517	15,001	52.82
<b>Total</b>	97,265	102,683	114,676	126,194	136,640	40.48

Source: CSO, 2011

It is worth noting that while the overall population of the county grew over the period, the level of growth differed across the age cohorts. The number of people in the age category 45 – 64 grew by approximately 93.49% while the population in the age category 65 years and older increased by 52.82%. Given national trends, it is expected that Wicklow will see an increase in the 65 years and older cohort in the 2016 census.

In Wicklow, the total age dependency rate in 2011 was 51%, an increase of 5.2 percentage points between 2006 and 2011. This indicates that there is approximately one young or old person for every one person of working age in the county. This is due in large to increasing birth rates and people living longer. The increase in Wicklow was higher than that nationally, which experienced an increase of 3.5 percentage points to 29.3%. Table 4 below indicates that Wicklow has a higher youth dependency than both the Leinster region and the State.

**Table 4: Age Dependency Ratio**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Wicklow</b>	<b>Leinster</b>	<b>State</b>
Youth dependency 0-14 yrs	34.5%	31.5%	31.9%
Old age dependency 65 years plus	16.6%	15.8%	17.4%
<b>Total (all ages)</b>	<b>51.0%</b>	<b>47.3%</b>	<b>49.3%</b>

Source: CSO 2011

### **Traveller Community**

According to the 2011 Census, 29,573 Irish Travellers were enumerated (0.6% of the total population); 721 resided in Wicklow, accounting for approximately 2.4% of the total Irish Traveller population. Table 5 below outlines an Irish Traveller population of 81.7% living in the main urban centres in the county while 18.3% resided in rural areas. According to the Census, there were 180 members of the Travelling community living in Bray (approximately 25% of the county's total Traveller population). A further 139 live in Wicklow Town or its environs representing approximately 19.3% of the Irish Traveller population in the county.

**Table 5: Irish Travellers by Urban Area**

Area	White Irish Traveller	Total
Bray Legal Town and its Environs	180	31415
Baltinglass	24	2058
Greystones Legal Town and its Environs	31	17206
Enniskerry	14	1796
Arklow Legal Town and its Environs	49	12881
Wicklow Legal Town and its Environs	139	10244
Ashford	29	1443
Aughrim	3	1353
Kilcoole Table x: County Wicklow Population Change by Age Cohort 1991 – 2011	37	4015
Kilpedder	1	1281
Newtownmountkennedy	6	2397
Rathdrum	8	1586
Rathnew	56	2949
Roundwood	10	826
Newcastle	1	948
Carnew	10	1090

The 2011 Census of Population contains very little detail on the Irish Travelling Community at county level and therefore the following data is derived from national level. The CSO noted that Traveller unemployment rates had increased some 9.4% since the 2006 Census and the labour force participation rate for Irish Travellers was 57.3% compared to 61.9% for the population as a whole.

#### **Persons with a Disability**

The 2011 census highlighted a total of 17,617 persons with a disability in the county, highlighting an increase of some 6,040 persons with a disability from the 2006 Census. Wicklow has a disability rate of 12.9%; however, as Table 6 below highlights, of the 17,616 people in Co. Wicklow with a disability, 5,173 or 32.4% were aged 65 years or older.

**Table 6: Age Categories of Persons with a disability 2011**

Area	1-14 years	15 - 24	25 - 44	45 - 64	65 plus	Total
Wicklow	1,847	1,453	3,554	5,049	5,713	17,616

The labour force participation rate for people with a disability was 30% compared to 61.9% for the overall population. The unemployment rate for disabled people was 30.8% compared to 19% for the overall population.

#### **Lone Parents**

Census 2011 shows a population of pre-school children aged 0-4 of 356,329, an increase of 17.9% since 2006. The Census also shows that 15.4% resided in lone parent families. This figure represents an increase of pre-school children in the county living with a lone parent of 7.5% since 2006.

### **2.2.3 Nationality and Ethnicity**

In recent years, Ireland's population has become more ethnically and culturally diverse. Nationally, the number of non-Irish nationals increased from 224,261 to 419,733 between 2002 and 2006. However, growth slowed down during the 2006 to 2011 period with the number recorded at 544,357 nationally. A similar picture is evident in County Wicklow. In 2011, a total of 9,531 non-Irish nationals resided in Wicklow, representing 9.9% of the county's population, slightly below the national rate of 12% (CSO, 2011). The largest numbers of Wicklow's non-Irish nationals live in the Bray area (4,000), with approximately 55% of the county's non-Irish nationals from three different nationalities: UK (3,749 people), Polish (2,754 people), and Lithuanian (848 people). It is also worth noting that 10,067 (75.3%) of the non-Irish nationals living in Co. Wicklow at the time of the 2011 Census were from the EU.

### **2.2.4 Education**

Census 2011 shows that, of the population in the county aged 15 years and older whose full-time education had ceased, a total of 14.1% had no formal education or only primary education only. A further 54.1% had second level education, and the remaining 31.8% had a third level qualification. The majority of Wicklow residents attending third level institutions attend Dublin-based third level institutions - 77% of Wicklow's full-time students attend Dublin institutions, five per cent attend Carlow-based institutions, and four per cent attend Kildare and Waterford-based institutions respectively<sup>1</sup>.

Approximately 32% of County Wicklow's working population<sup>2</sup> have attained a third level education, which is marginally above the national rate of 30.6%. However, the inter-censal period between 2006 and 2011 saw a slight decline in the proportion of the county's population with a third level education with levels falling marginally, as a result of the economic recession which commenced within this period. The county has a number of adult Further Education and Training Centres located in the main settlements of Bray, Wicklow Town, and Arklow in the east with centres in Blessington and Baltinglass in the county's west. Enhancing further and higher education on offer in the county and promoting labour force development are important factors in terms of maintaining people's capacity to compete for employment opportunities and sustaining economic competitiveness.

The establishment of an Institute of Technology (IT) Carlow campus in County Wicklow (located on Wicklow County Council's Clermont Campus, Rathnew) is a significant addition to the county's education provisions, providing part-time third level courses in a varied range of undergraduate and post-graduate programmes in the areas of Business, Accounting and Law, Engineering, and Social Sciences and will facilitate further education participation, particularly amongst residents along the east and south-eastern parts of the county. The Clermont campus complements existing further education offerings in the county, including the Bray Institute for Further Education (BIFE), which is now one of the largest post-Leaving Certificate and further education providers in Ireland, providing courses to over 1,200 adults. Due to poor transport infrastructure, it is likely that the educational needs for persons in west and south Wicklow will likely continue to be largely met by institutions from outside of the county.

Matching skills and labour market needs is an important element in maintaining an economic dynamism within the county. However, since the economic crisis, a disparity in skills has become more prominent. Addressing skills shortages,

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<sup>1</sup> Based on school year 2014/2015 full-time third level students only

<sup>2</sup> CSO, POWSCAR, 2011

enhancing further education opportunities, and maintaining a skilled labour force are also key in getting persons from the live register into employment, or in providing training and education opportunities that will provide a route to employment.

### **2.2.5 Wicklow Deprivation Index**

The main measurement of affluence and disadvantage in Ireland is based on the Pobal HP Deprivation index. This index is based on three dimensions of affluence/disadvantage: demographic profile, social class composition, and labour market. The index provides two different statistical outputs: the Absolute Index score and the Relative Index score. The Absolute Index score is used when making a comparison over time, while the Relative Index score is used when discussing an area at a particular point in time.

Using data derived from the 2011 Pobal HP deprivation Index, Wicklow is the second most affluent local authority area within the Mid-East region, The Mid-East region itself is the second most affluent region nationally. Interestingly, the 2011 Pobal HP Deprivation Index Absolute Deprivation score shows the extent to which the county was impacted by the economic recession. The Absolute Deprivation score fell from 1.3 in 2006 to -5.9 in 2011, representing a decline of 7.2 points. This is greater than the national fall which was 6.6 and shows that the county was significantly adversely affected by the economic recession.

Wicklow's levels of deprivation at ED level are not characterised by extremes – there are no classifications of 'extremely affluent' or 'extremely disadvantaged' EDs. Rathmichael in Bray is the most disadvantaged ED in the county with a score of -15 and is classified as disadvantaged. Rathmichael is the only ED to fall into this classification. Forty-three of the EDs (52.4%) are classified as marginally below average, while 37 are classified as marginally above average, with Kilcoole ED classified as affluent.

It is worth noting that the most affluent areas in the county are located in the north east: Kilcoole, 10.2; Powerscourt, 9.9; Enniskerry, 9.6; Greystones, 9.4; and Delgany, 8.5. Analysis of the data shows a significant difference between the north of the county and the south.

However, the ED data hides many of the pockets of deprivation in the county and it is worthwhile looking at the Small Area statistics for a fuller picture. Similar to the ED level, the Small Area HP Deprivation scores shows that County Wicklow does not have areas that extremely affluent >30 or extremely disadvantaged >-30. It does, however, identify very disadvantaged areas which are not visible at ED level. Nine small areas are classified as very disadvantaged and 58 are classified as disadvantaged - this is clearly illustrated in the Deprivation Maps by Small Areas in Appendix 9. These areas will require a specific priority focus in order to address social and economic issues to be addressed through this strategy.

### *Labour Market*

#### **2.2.6 Unemployment**

The October 2015 CSO Live Register report indicated that the number of people in County Wicklow on the Live Register has fallen to 9,620. This represents a decrease of 1,182 people (10.9%) since October 2014. This decrease is similar to the national trend of 10.6% since October 2014. Profiling of unemployment in County Wicklow is problematic as Live Register data is only available on an Intreo Office basis. However, in Wicklow, people who live in certain parts of the south and west of the county are directed to register outside of the county in neighbouring counties i.e.: Dublin (Tallaght), Carlow (Tullow), and Wexford (Gorey). The figures available from

the Live Register are therefore incomplete although they are useful as an indication of unemployment levels.

Age	Area	Both sexes	Male	Female
<b>Under 25 years</b>	Wicklow County	1,224	735	489
	Arklow	385	241	144
	Baltinglas	159	93	66
	Bray	435	252	183
	Wicklow	245	149	96
<b>25 years and over</b>	Wicklow County	8,396	4,945	3,451
	Arklow	2,118	1,302	816
	Baltinglas	1,087	646	441
	Bray	3,622	2,031	1,591
	Wicklow	1,569	966	603
<b>All Ages</b>	Wicklow County	9,620	5,680	3,940
	Arklow	2,503	1,543	960
	Baltinglas	1,246	739	507
	Bray	4,057	2,283	1,774
	Wicklow	1,814	1,115	699

**Table 7:  
Live Register  
October 2015 by  
County and Local  
Office**

Source: Source October 2015 CSO Live Register report

**Table 8: Labour force participation rates according to Principal Economic Status, 2011**

	Dublin	Kildare	Meath	Wexford	Wicklow	State
Male participation rate	70.1	73.8	74.4	69.2	<b>70.6</b>	69.4
Female participation rate	57.3	57.7	57.5	51.4	<b>54.1</b>	54.6
Total participation rate	63.5	65.7	65.8	60.1	<b>62.2</b>	61.9

The 2011 census reported a female labour force participation rate in Co. Wicklow of 54.1 percent compared to 54.6 for the State.

*Economic Activity*

### 2.2.7 Employment

In 2011, the total number of persons aged over 15 in Wicklow was 105,468, of which 52,907 were employed and 11,885 were unemployed. Table 9 below outlines the principal economic status of people aged over 15 in Wicklow (number and percentage) and the State (percentage). A total of 11,687 Wicklow residents over the age of 15 were students while 789 were looking for their first regular job. Just over 10% of residents in the county were looking after home/family while 12,845 residents were categorised as retired. The principal economic status of Wicklow residents was similar to the State as a whole though the county has a higher proportion of unemployed people and people looking after home/family. Wicklow had a lower percentage of retired people and people unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability compared to the rest of the country.

**Table 9: Principal economic status of people aged over 15 (Wicklow and the State), 2011**

Principal economic status	Wicklow		State %
	Number	%	
At work	52,907	50.2	50.1
Looking for first regular job	789	0.7	0.9
Unemployed having lost or given up previous job	11,885	11.3	10.8
Student	11,687	11.1	11.3
Looking after home/family	11,064	10.5	9.4
Retired	12,845	12.2	12.7
Unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability	4,064	3.9	4.4
Other	227	0.2	0.4
Total	105,468	100.0	100.0

(Source: CSO)

Census 2011 indicated that 52,907 people were employed in the private and public sectors across a range of economic sectors (see Table 10 below). People in Wicklow were more likely to be working in Wholesale/retail, Information and communication activities, Financial and insurance activities, Professional, scientific and technical activities, and Arts, entertainment, and recreation.

**Table 10; Persons aged 15+ at work, classified by broad industrial group (Wicklow and the State), 2011**

Broad industrial group	Wicklow		State %	Percentage difference
	Number	%		
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	2,070	3.91	5.06	-1.15
Mining and quarrying	98	0.19	0.30	-0.11
Manufacturing	4,909	9.28	10.16	-0.89
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	349	0.66	0.63	0.03
Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	333	0.63	0.52	0.11
Construction	2,677	5.06	4.83	0.23
Wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	7,968	15.06	14.51	0.55
Transportation and storage	1,719	3.25	4.32	-1.07
Accommodation and food services activities	2,981	5.63	5.73	-0.09
Information and communication activities	2,545	4.81	3.79	1.02
Financial and insurance activities	3,477	6.57	5.14	1.44
Real estate activities	324	0.61	0.46	0.15
Professional, scientific and technical activities	3,172	6.00	5.14	0.86
Administrative and support services activities	1,809	3.42	3.36	0.06
Public administration and defence, compulsory social security	2,857	5.40	6.25	-0.85
Education	4,908	9.28	9.26	0.02
Human health and social work activities	5,171	9.77	10.92	-1.15
Arts, entertainment and recreation	1,345	2.54	1.70	0.85
Other service activities	1,274	2.41	2.17	0.24
Other/not stated	2,921	5.52	5.76	-0.24
Total	52,097	100%	100%	-

(Source: CSO)

Wicklow experiences a high incidence of people commuting out of the county for work purposes. Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, South Dublin, Fingal, Kildare, Carlow, and Wexford all play a large role in the economic life of Wicklow. In total, 21,050 residents from County Wicklow commute out of the county for employment. Thirty-two per cent (6,781 persons) of all those commuting out of the county work in the Information and Communication, Financial, and Real Estate sectors. Twenty one per cent respectively work in Education, Human Health and Social Work Activities, and Wholesale, Retail Trade, Transportation and Storage sectors. The creation of local employment opportunities will serve to improve the economy, reduce greenhouse gasses and work towards addressing Climate Change.

**Table 11; Number of Wicklow residents commuting out of the county for employment purposes and work locations**

<b>Locations</b>	<b>Numbers</b>
Carlow	477
Wexford	575
Kildare	995
Fingal	562
Dublin City	7,557
South Dublin	2,551
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown	7,856
All Other Areas	477
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,050</b>

Source: CSO

### **2.2.8 Wicklow Businesses Profile**

Data published by the 2011 Census on Wicklow's business demography indicates that the number of active enterprises in the county has declined from just over 14,000 in 2007 to 12,500 in 2011, a decline of 11 percent. A significant contributing factor to this decline was the sharp drop in the number of firms in the construction sector which fell from 1,844 in 2007 to 1,217 in 2011. Understandably, there was a drop in the manufacturing sector also which fell by nine per cent from 465 in 2007 to 424 in 2011. A strategically important category of ICT fell marginally from 321 to 312 in 2011. Decreases were also experienced in the transportation, storage, and administrative support services.

The wholesale and retail sector accounted for the largest number of active enterprises in the county with 1,289 in 2011, which represented a drop of five per cent. The next largest sector was in the Professional, scientific and technical activities area and stood at 1,040 businesses. Businesses involved in education grew in this period albeit from a small base of 174 in 2007 to 243 in 2011, accounting for an increase of 69%. The increase in this area was most likely in response to the decrease in the construction and manufacturing sectors as people looked to upskill and change career direction.

Sectors that showed gains in the number of active enterprises during 2007–2011 were accommodation and food service activities, indicating the potential for growth in these areas. Wicklow as a county is well placed to grow its food brand and there will be significant potential for future development through the Government's €15 million ring-fenced funding allocation to Agri-food measures managed jointly by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM). A solid base of quality

artisan food producers and associated services exist in the county, all of which will benefit from cluster marketing and branding to consolidate their efforts to date. Wicklow's LCDC have formulated a plan of action to strengthen the food sector of the county and intends to apply for additional funding under the agri-food measure. The promotion and advancement of Wicklow as a 'Good' food county will be enhanced by Wicklow's green image as the 'Garden County'.

Wicklow has a good stock of Industrial estates and business parks with immediate availability for business start-ups and expansions throughout the county.

### 2.2.9 Tourism

Tourism is of paramount importance to Co. Wicklow and constitutes an essential part of the county's economy contributing over €100 million in 2013. Wicklow's proximity to Dublin and access points to the country at Dublin Air and Ferry Ports and Wexford's Ferry Port are a strong advantage to the county. Wicklow's unique and beautiful landscape is a national treasured asset. See Wicklow County Tourism's industry audit 2015 in Appendix 10

However, overseas visitor numbers to the county declined by approximately five per cent between 2010 and 2013, according to data derived from Fáilte Ireland, with revenue down a similar proportion (approximately four per cent) over the same period (refer to Table 12 and 13 below). In 2013, 39% of all overseas visitors were from Britain, with 38% from mainland Europe, 17% from North America while all other visitors make up the remaining six per cent. Domestic visitor numbers increased by 15% in 2013, compared to 2010 figures while revenue increased by 17% over the same period indicating strong domestic market potential.

**Table 12: Overseas and Domestic Visitors by Numbers and Revenue in 2013**

	<b>Wicklow 2013</b>	<b>Britain</b>	<b>Mainland Europe</b>	<b>N<sup>o</sup> America</b>	<b>Other Areas</b>
Overseas Visitors	204,000	80,000	77,000	34,000	13,000
Overseas Revenue	€70 million	€19m	€30m	€12m	€10m
Domestic Visitors	194,000				
Domestic Revenue	€35m				

Source: Fáilte Ireland's Overseas and Domestic Visitors by Numbers and Revenue in 2013 Report

**Table 13: Overseas and Domestic Visitors by Numbers and Revenue in 2010**

	<b>Wicklow 2010</b>	<b>Britain</b>	<b>Mainland Europe</b>	<b>N America</b>	<b>Other Areas</b>
Overseas Visitors	215,000	90,000	85,000	32,000	9,000
Overseas Revenue	€73 million	€35m	€23m	€10m	€5m
Domestic Visitors	169,000				
Domestic Revenue	€30m				

Source: Fáilte Ireland (2014)

Fáilte Ireland published a list of the top visitor attractions in Co. Wicklow, based on a survey undertaken in 2013. Table 14 below shows the top six Co Wicklow attractions listed from Fáilte Ireland's paid Visitor Attractions Survey 2013, and the number of recorded visits to each.

**Table 14: Top County Wicklow Visitor Attractions**

<b>Wicklow Visitor Attraction</b>	<b>Number of Visitors 2013</b>
Powerscourt House and Gardens	208,916
National Sealife Centre	100,000
Glendalough Visitor Centre	80,922
Russborough House	80,000
Kilmacurragh Gardens	51,500
Mount Usher Gardens	28,000

Source: Fáilte Ireland's paid Visitor Attractions Survey 2013

In addition to the paid or ticketed visitor attractions, substantial tourism and recreation numbers visit these and other attractions across the county, including Wicklow Mountains National Park and other places of natural beauty along the coastline. Wicklow also has a large stock of built heritage in its historic houses and infrastructure of archaeological importance. Wicklow is positioned within Fáilte Ireland's new tourism initiative, 'Ireland's Ancient East' (IAE), which focuses on history and heritage in the eastern region. Wicklow's larger attractions, including Glendalough, Russborough House, Mount Usher Gardens, and Powerscourt Waterfall and Gardens will play a key role in this new branding proposition. Throughout the county, there is a strong cohort of small rural tourism businesses, many offering a unique and quality rural experience. Previous LEADER Programmes have innovated and supported such initiatives and there is potential to assist further expansion through cluster marketing and brand destination development drawing on the unique selling point for the area.

In addition to the bigger attractions, Wicklow also boasts a significant stock of community tourism products in more rural areas. Communities have played a very significant role in the development of historical and cultural aspects of the county and many amenities and recreational infrastructure are now in existence as a result of the efforts of the community and voluntary sector in Wicklow. Of significant importance is the development of the Blessington Greenway around the Blessington Lakes in west Wicklow. Phase one of this was developed through the efforts by numerous agencies and was driven by the local community with funding support through LEADER. The completion of this Greenway will see 40km of walking and cycling trail around this picturesque lake in west Wicklow and will create a significant product which could be compared to the success of the Western Greenway or Rutland Waterway in England.

Another notable area of community tourism development exists in the village of Tinahely in south Wicklow where the community has developed over 45km of integrated walking trails which include part of the old Dublin and South Eastern Railway Line. Strong partnership approaches and practices have enabled this area to establish its potential as a strong base for hill walking and it is attracting growing numbers. Communities across the county have demonstrated innovative tourism initiatives in the areas of heritage, folklore, environmental, and recreation. Strong potential for future development exists in the west of the county among the picturesque granite villages positioned around the Blessington Lakes with their strong linkages to stone masonry and traditional skills. In addition, the south of the county is largely underdeveloped in tourism terms, however the area is home to the historical Coolattin House and Estate. This famous estate, owned by the Fitzwilliams, has shaped the villages of Shillelagh, Carnew, Coolboy, and Tinahely in south Wicklow. The well documented Fitzwilliam Estate Clearance 1847 – 1856 saw thousands of people forced to emigrate to Quebec and New Brunswick in Canada. In 2013, as part of The Gathering, Wicklow County Council, in association with the Estate and local historians, ran a 'Canada Come Home' initiative. The success of this endeavour suggests that there is huge potential to attract the Collattin Estate diaspora. Currently, the estate's records - among the most comprehensive record collection in the country - are housed in the National Library and are not accessible to the public.

According to Fáilte Ireland (2015), Table 15 below reflects the current number and type of approved accommodation in the county. The draft LECP for Wicklow includes the following:

High Level Goal: Promote and direct the tourism development of the County in a sustainable manner that conserves, promotes, protects and enhances the county's natural, built and cultural heritage and derives optimal economic benefit from visitors to the county.

In addition, the following Local Action has been identified:

Carry out an assessment of the range, capacity, location and quality of accommodation that exists in Co. Wicklow to ensure that the county can facilitate increased visitor numbers and longer stay visitors. Actions and support under this LDS will be informed and directed by the outcome of this assessment.

**Table 15: County Wicklow Accommodation Capacity 2015**

<b>Accommodation Type</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Rooms</b>	<b>Beds</b>
Hotel 5 Star	2	345	848
Hotel 4 Star	4	282	650
Hotel 3 Star	12	647	1,636
Hotel 2 Star	4	62	129
Hotel 1 Star	2	33	72
<b>Hotel (All)</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>1,369</b>	<b>3,336</b>
Guesthouse	3	46	92
B&B	34	132	325
Self-Catering - Listed	-	23	111
- Group Registered	2	18	114
Caravan & Campsites	4	381 (pitches)	1,624
Hostels	3	-	228

Source: Fáilte Ireland (2015)

### *Film Tourism*

Wicklow has a long and successful involvement with the film sector. The Wicklow Film Commission was set up in 1992 and is the longest-running film commission in Ireland. Wicklow has competed successfully for international film and television productions, with blockbusters such as King Arthur, Braveheart, Reign of Fire, PS I Love You, Michael Collins and The Vikings among the film and television productions produced in the county. In addition to Wicklow's Film Trail, there is significant potential to grow business in this area in the future.

### *Outdoors*

According to Fáilte Ireland (2013), hill walking attracts the largest number of overseas visitors to Ireland (see Table 16 below). Similar research revealed that the domestic market is attracted by similar activities such as hill walking, water sports, and visits to National Parks with a strong affinity to heritage. The Economic Value of Trails & Forest Recreation<sup>3</sup> in Ireland was quantified by economic consultants Fitzpatrick Associates in 2005 in a report jointly commissioned by Coillte and the Irish Sports Council. It outlined that: 'The total annual direct economic impact of trail usage by Irish residents is estimated at €307 million, the total annual non-market (national wellbeing) value of trails is estimated at €95 million, and the total annual economic value of international walking and cycling tourism is estimated at €218 million'. Research carried out during the Wicklow Walking Festival in 2002 by the National Trails Office and reported in their 2007 strategy<sup>4</sup> highlighted that the festival generated €76,000 over the weekend in the local community.

Wicklow's proximity to Dublin Airport, coupled with its significant walking product, makes the county ideally placed to grow this market. Wicklow was the first county in Ireland to develop its own county specific Outdoor Recreation Strategy<sup>5</sup> in which it identified that Co. Wickow had a vibrant sustainable outdoor recreation culture based on partnership, trust, and mutual respect. The cycling product in the county is largely on public roads; however potential exists to grow this area in order to meet current and future demand.

<sup>3</sup> The Economic Value of Trails & Forest Recreation in Ireland. Fitzpatrick Associates (2005)

<sup>4</sup> National Trails Strategy. National Trails Office. 2007

<sup>5</sup> Co. Wicklow Outdoor Recreation Strategy (2009 - 2013)

**Table 16: Activities engaged in by overseas visitors**

<i><b>What activities did they engage in?</b></i>	<b>Overseas Participants (000s)</b>
Hiking/cross country walking	742
Cycling	241
Golf	204
Angling	127
Equestrian	99

Source: Fáilte Ireland (2013)

### **2.2.10 Social Enterprises**

In Ireland as a whole, the social enterprise sector employs between 25,000 and 33,000 people in over 1,400 social enterprises, with a total income of around €1.4 billion<sup>6</sup>. Many communities across Wicklow have developed innovative local approaches to loss of services, particularly in rural areas. Wicklow has a good stock of social enterprises at various levels of development and expansion, operating services such as community cafés, shops, training, and educational services and social and community care facilities.

Social Enterprises and social entrepreneurs present an opportunity to address social and environmental challenges in Wicklow and to impact positively on communities across the county. However, communities that identify solutions to societal problems require support in their endeavours to address gaps and work towards local interventions.

### **2.2.11 Agriculture**

Agriculture continues to play a significant and important role in Wicklow's economy with approximately six per cent of the people at work employed in the sector in 2011 (CSO, 2011). This is particularly true in the more rural areas of Wicklow (see Table 17). According to the Census of Agriculture (2010), there were 2,394 farms in the county with an average size of 42.3 hectares. The majority of the farms (30%) were engaged in beef production, with 23.9% in sheep production, 21.7% in mixed crops and livestock, and 8.4% in dairying, 6.4% in mixed field crops, and 5.5% in tillage. The average standard output was €36,891 compared to €30,726 for the State (Census of Agriculture, 2010). In 2010, the area in County Wicklow used for agriculture was 127,337 hectares, including 25,971 hectares of commonage. Wicklow has one of the highest amounts of land in commonage after Donegal, Kerry, and Mayo. According to the Teagasc National Farm Survey 2014, the average farm income stood at €26,974 at that time.

Due to the pressures on farm incomes, the number of farms decreased by 12.3% in Wicklow between 1991 and 2010. Many farm families have been supported under previous LEADER Programmes to diversify into tourism, food, and recreational businesses and Wicklow has many examples of successful farm diversification businesses such as Catherine Fulvio's Ballyknockan Cookery School, Wicklow Farmhouse Cheese, Tinahely Farm Shop, River Valley Holiday Park, and Wicklow Brewery. The Agriculture Census (2010) identified that 15% of all farms in the county reported gainful non-agriculture activity onsite. This figure represents a higher

<sup>6</sup> Social Enterprise in Ireland Sectoral Opportunities and Policy issues.

proportion than the national mean of 10% and is higher than the remaining counties in the Mid-East and Dublin Region.

The county is well positioned to grow its agri-food and beverage sector with significant potential for growth in the food tourism sector also. As indicated earlier and evident from the table below, farming plays a significant role in the more rural areas of the county, particularly in the south and west of the county.

**Table 17: Number of Farms and Area Farmed by Rural District**

<b>Rural District</b>	<b>No. of Farms</b>	<b>Area Farmed ha</b>
Rathdrum	959	43,695
Baltinglass No.1	769	31,784
Shillelagh	582	22,455
Rathdown No.2	84	3,433

Source: CSO Census of Agriculture, 2010

### **2.2.12 Forestry**

Wicklow is the most densely forested counties in Ireland with a total of 18% forest cover. Coillte owns or manages in excess of 30,000 hectares of forests and, together with the National Park, account for the majority of state-owned forestry in the county. However, there is substantial forestry in private ownership - 11,685 hectares - which represents 33% of the total forest area in the entire county (see map in Appendix 11). In 2009, County Wicklow Partnership (CWP) in association with Wicklow Private Woodland Owners Group, an established producers group, commissioned a study into the potential of the private timber sector in Wicklow to 2028.<sup>7</sup> This study found that there are 500 private woodland owners in Wicklow, the majority of which are on farms. The Irish Farmers' Association (IFA) estimates the value of forestry output from the county at circa €3.6 million. Broadleaf forests make up 33% of the total composition of species in the private woodland estate in Wicklow, which is considerably greater than the national average of 24%. Many of these forests are associated with old estates and apart from their value as timber producers, they contribute significantly to Wicklow's landscape, recreational resource, woodland biodiversity, and the presence of a forestry culture in the county.

Future tourism and outdoor recreation potential exists in such forests. Equally, the county possesses strong potential in the area of value-added timber output and products as a significant contribution to the profitability of the overall farm enterprise. The assistance for the development of forestry for timber biomass would support the local rural economy, promote greater renewable energy resources and reduced carbon footprint within the county.

### **2.2.13 Transport Infrastructure**

#### **Roads**

The principle transportation routes in the county are the N11/M11 which serve the eastern side of the county, and the N81 in the west of the county. The main routes

<sup>7</sup> County Wicklow Private Timber Production Forecast & Market Assessment (2010 – 2028). County Wicklow Partnership in association with Wicklow Private Woodland Owners Group

serving the east-west are the R756 and R759. The N11 is categorised by the National Spatial Strategy as a 'Strategic Radial Corridor' from Dublin to the south-east of the country. This flow through of traffic presents both a challenge and an opportunity for the county.

#### Rail and Bus Transport

The eastern coast of the county is served by the Dublin-Rosslare railway line while the north-east of the county, including Bray and Greystones, is served by the DART services (Dublin Area Rapid Transport). There are approximately 40 trains serving Greystones to Dublin city centre on a daily return basis. The Dart service to Bray includes approximately 79 weekday services. In addition, there are an additional five Iarnród Éireann trains serving Arklow, Rathdrum, Wicklow, Kilcoole, Greystones and Bray stations en route to Dublin.

The east of the county has a reasonable bus service provided by Bus Éireann, however some of these routes run on a less frequent basis. In particular, Route 132 which serves the west of the county offers only five return services per week. Areas in the south of the county have poor service with some services only running once per week. These areas are served by Wicklow's Rural Transport Initiative, however there are still communities with little or no access to regular travel. See more detail on RTI in Review of Key Services.

#### 2.2.14 Broadband

The 2011 Census data showed that 68.7% of Wicklow households had broadband connectivity compared with 63.8% nationally. High-speed broadband facilities are essential for the development of new IT-based services and are indispensable for the marketing of existing products and services. Wicklow benefits from its proximity to Dublin but there are large parts of the county with inadequate broadband facilities. The major towns along the east coast such as Bray, Greystones, Kilcoole/Newtownmountkennedy, Wicklow, and Arklow have access to high-speed broadband but service in areas around Tinahely and Baltinglass are more problematic. Low and dispersed population density in certain parts of the county poses a problem for broadband suppliers. See Map in Appendix 12 outlining fibre and cable-based broadband facilities in Wicklow.

In County Wicklow, the following locations have been identified as preliminary locations to be connected by fibre broadband as part of the State and commercial intervention under the National Broadband Plan (NBP). [This list is subject to revision upon completion of the comprehensive national mapping process that is currently underway by the Department of Communications, Energy, and Natural Resources]:

#### **County Wicklow locations identified under the NBP**

- |                    |                 |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Askanagap       | 2. Ballinglen   |
| 3. Ballyconnell    | 4. Ballycoog    |
| 5. Coolboy         | 6. Coolkenna    |
| 7. Glencree        | 8. Grange Con   |
| 9. Hollywood       | 10. Knockananna |
| 11. Knockanarrigan | 12. Moyne       |
| 13. Rathdangan     | 14. Redcross    |
| 15. Stratford      |                 |

### **2.3 Review of Key Services/Programmes**

Wicklow Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) as the LAG has in-depth knowledge of all programmes and services working in the areas of economic, environmental and social inclusion within the county of Wicklow. This knowledge has been recently updated through the in-depth Stakeholder/Agency consultation process as outlined in Section 3 of this plan. The LAG will ensure that high-level cross-programme coordination and knowledge transfer is facilitated across the statutory, community, and private sectors. Specific strategic actions developed in this LDS will have more relevance to some programmes, services, and supports and it is of paramount importance that efforts are co-ordinated and supports are maximised to achieve the best results from the available resources. The LAG recognises that information about services and supports is of great importance to individuals and communities. Signposting can be a very effective mechanism to ensure development and progression, therefore the importance of knowledge transfer between agencies is significant.

CWP as Implementing Partner has over 25 years' experience of working in partnership with a multiple of agencies and support programmes at local, regional, and national level. It is dedicated to this approach as a core LEADER specificity and as a highly successful process which leads to greater impact for individuals and communities. In addition, CWP understands the importance of avoiding duplication and strives to ensure that limited resources are channelled to the areas where the need is greatest.

The following is an outline of the key statutory and community service providers in Wicklow that relate to, and will support, the roll out and implementation of strategic LEADER actions and operations contained in this LDS.

#### **2.3.1 Wicklow County Council**

In Wicklow there is a strong history of the LEADER Programme working in partnership with Wicklow County Council (WCC) for the benefit of the county. Numerous partnership and collaborative actions have been undertaken within the economic, social and environmental sectors. CWP as the Implementing Partner has established strong co-operative connections and networks with WCC across all sections in the local authority. This partnership approach has resulted in many successful joint initiatives which have involved pre-development and analysis work right through to the roll out and implementation of projects through the county.

Partnership between the LCDC, CWP, and the Local Authority will facilitate greater cohesion and co-operation between the delivery of actions contained in both the LDS and those in the Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs). More co-ordination between LEADER supports and Local Authority grant schemes including Community/Heritage/Arts and Village Renewal/Amenity Grant Scheme will benefit communities. Co-ordination of such financial contributions will avoid duplication, maximise resources, and assist communities to deliver key projects which complement both the Wicklow LDS and the priorities of the Local Authority. The collective expertise of the membership of the LCDC will ensure greater connectivity and ensure supports to individuals and communities through community led local development (CLLD), particularly involving the following sections within the local authority:

- Community, Cultural and Social
- Social Inclusion
- Arts
- Heritage
- Environmental
- Planning
- Procurement

Technical and professional supports in the area of procurement, planning and regulations will be leveraged through this close working relationship which will help to achieve positive outcomes across the Wicklow's economic and community sector.

### **2.3.2 Local Enterprise Office (LEO)**

Wicklow's LEO commenced operations within Wicklow's Local Authority structure in April 2014 under a Service Level Agreement between the local authority and Enterprise Ireland. This LDS takes cognisance of the role of that the LEO plays in business development in the county. The LEO operates as a First Stop Shop and signpost to relevant agencies depending on the needs of individual businesses. LEOs have developed a number of short training courses and operate ongoing mentoring and advice services to new and expanding businesses. In 2014, the Wicklow LEO provided training supports to over 650 business people and assisted some 97 client companies with grant aid support.

All supports offered by the LEO were taken into consideration by the LAG when developing the Strategic Actions contained in this LDS. Wicklow's LCDC is confident that greater results and outputs will be achieved through a more co-ordinated approach ensuring increased economic development and job creation in the county.

### **2.3.3 Enterprise Ireland**

Enterprise Ireland is the government organisation responsible for the development and growth of Irish enterprises in world markets. Supports include funding, research and innovation, research and development, export advice, management and productivity support. Supports such as New Frontiers and Innovation Vouchers offered by Enterprise Ireland can complement the work that is done in the area of innovation under the LEADER Rural Development Programme.

In addition, signposting is essential to support the development of enterprises as their potential expands.

### **2.3.4 Rural Economic Development Zones (REDZ)**

The Commission for Economic Development of Rural Areas recommended the establishment of pilot REDZ zones/areas in its report, Energising Ireland's Rural Economy. These would "enhance the capacity for local communities to contribute to and take ownership of local economic development by creating local strategic economic development plans that will contribute to and align with local, regional and national economic plans" (CEDRA Report, Recommendation 5 [a], p.10). Arklow has recently been approved funding under the REDZ Pilot Initiative towards developments that will lead to economic and social improvements in the area.

The LAG is highly supportive of this new development, and a number of innovative co-operation projects involving the LEADER Programme have been identified for support.

### **2.3.5 Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP)**

The main aim of the SICAP Programme in Wicklow is to tackle poverty, social exclusion and long-term unemployment in targeted areas of disadvantage in the county. This is achieved through local engagement and partnership between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies. There are two SICAP Programmes operating in Wicklow: Bray Area Partnership manages the programme in the Bray and Greystones Municipal District Area, while CWP manages the programme in the Arklow, Wicklow and Baltinglass Municipal District Area. The upcoming LEADER Programme is committed under Priority 6 to promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction, and economic development in rural areas. Therefore, it is of paramount importance that both the SICAP and LEADER Programmes find innovative approaches and complement their collective efforts and ensure maximum impact for the county of Wicklow.

Targeted Actions developed under the Social Inclusion Theme within this LDS will complement the work of the SICAP Programme particularly in the harder-to-reach communities.

The LCDC has ensured strategic integration of both programmes these programmes in the development of this LDS. It is also cognisant that as the programme progresses and needs are identified there is provision to adjust the LDS through the Annual Implementation Plan to ensure that any gaps are addressed.

### **2.3.6 Fáilte Ireland**

Fáilte Ireland is responsible for supporting Ireland's tourism industry and sustaining Ireland as a high-quality and competitive tourism destination. In order to offer visitors a compelling motivation to visit the east of the country, Fáilte Ireland has recently developed an umbrella destination called Ireland's Ancient East. Wicklow is set to benefit from this new innovation as it is geographically located within this new brand destination. CWP as Implementing Partner has worked extensively with Fáilte Ireland in the past and will continue to build on this co-operative relationship through the implementation of this strategy.

This LDS recognises the importance of tourism as an economic driver for Wicklow and includes actions that will build the capacity of individuals and communities to take advantage of this new brand proposition. This strategy will work in conjunction with the Ireland's Ancient East capital fund in order to maximise the benefit for the county.

### **2.3.7 Wicklow County Tourism (WCT)**

Wicklow County Tourism (WCT) is a promotional body whose function is the collective marketing of Wicklow as a prime tourism location aimed at increasing Wicklow's tourism economy by attracting larger visitor numbers and spend in the county. Its main functions are to collate and centralise tourism information and make it accessible. WCT works in partnership with various partners at local, regional, and national level to provide marketing and promotional support to new and existing tourism enterprises in Wicklow. Both Wicklow's LCDC and CWP has a strong working relationship with WCT and, in addition to sitting on its Board, also has experience of working in partnership on many projects aimed at increasing capacity among tourism providers in the county.

The tourism actions as outlined in this LDS will complement and benefit the work carried out to date by WCT and will strengthen its offering under the 'Ireland's

Ancient East' brand proposition, particularly in the area of developing marketing through information and communications technology (ICT).

Research carried out by WCT highlighted the following trends indicating the importance of social media content as the most effective mechanism to securing the sale of a tourism product. See Appendix 10 for WCT Tourism Audit Report.

- 72% of consumers prefer to research their holidays online (edigitalresearch.com)
- 68% of smartphone owners use their device when travelling or planning their trip, while 70% of those preferred to use a mobile optimised site rather than an app (edigitalresearch.com).
- Web ireland.com reported 13.6 Million visitors in 2015 of which 37% accessed from a mobile device
- Fáilte Ireland to focus on social media and online marketing.

### **2.3.8 Teagasc**

The Agriculture and Food Development Authority is the national body providing integrated research, advisory and training services to the agriculture and food industry and rural communities. CWP as Implementing Partner has forged strong links with Teagasc particularly in the area of farm families and farm diversification enterprises in the area of food and tourism. Teagasc offers an 'Options' Programme which is designed to provide new thinking and to generate new ideas that will provide additional on- and off-farm income.

Recent discussions with Teagasc at local level have provided a greater understanding of how the LDS can support the diversification of the rural economy and contribute to environmental protection.

### **2.3.9 Bord Bia**

Bord Bia aims to promote sales of Irish food and horticulture on the domestic market and abroad and works with small and large producers. The Bord Bia Quality Assurance Schemes (Quality Mark) provides assurance to both consumers and trade buyers around standards. The work undertaken by Bord Bia will support the development of new and existing artisan food products in County Wicklow through research and innovation.

CWP as Implementing Partners has extensive experience of the work carried out by Bord Bia and will ensure that there is a strong co-operative relationship that results in more benefits for new and existing artisan food producer in the county.

### **2.3.10 Kildare/Wicklow Education & Training Board**

Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB) is the main provider of Further Education and Training (FET) in Wicklow. Training is offered through various programmes and services in locations throughout the county. KWETB embraces the concept of lifelong learning and personal development. A varied choice of programmes are offered at levels 1-6 on the National Framework of Qualifications. Hobby, certified and professional qualification courses are offered in ETB Schools, Colleges and Centres throughout Wicklow in Bray, Wicklow, Arklow, Blessington, and Baltinglass. In addition, the Community Education Services (CES) supports community groups to develop learning activities that respond to the needs of their members and their communities. The overall aim of the Community Education Programme is to support initiatives that tackle social exclusion and rural isolation.

KWETB is represented on Wicklow's LCDC ensuring complementarity of supports and interventions and non-duplication of training supports.

### **2.3.11 Wicklow's Rural Transport Initiative**

The Rural Transport Initiative (RTI) has been operating in Wicklow since 2003. The service provides bus routes which are designed to meet the needs of people in isolated rural areas of Co. Wicklow where state provision is low or non-existent. This allows people to access urban facilities such as national train and bus services, large shopping centres, leisure facilities, medical and health services, etc. In 2014, this service provided 4,665 services resulting in 45,049 passenger journeys. However, lack of transport still remains a huge issue in the county, particularly in rural areas. The relocating of certain services to urban and centralised sites has had an adverse effect on rural dwellers and must be addressed in future planning of transportation services. There is a need for a more joined-up approach in order to feed into the mainstream routes. 2016 will see the operational management of the Wicklow's RTI move to **Ring a Link** in Kilkenny ([www.ringalink.ie](http://www.ringalink.ie)). However, all indications are that services will be continued and expanded throughout the county in the future.

### **2.3.12 Coillte**

Coillte's core purpose is the innovative and sustainable management of natural resources. It manages its forests to deliver social, economic, and environmental benefits. One key area where Coillte has a positive, measurable impact is in the provision of public goods. These include contributing to national biodiversity, providing extensive recreation opportunities, protecting cultural heritage, and improved water quality. Coillte and the Irish Sports Council estimated that forest recreation has a public goods contribution of €97 million annually with a value of €5.40 per visit accruing to Coillte forest users<sup>8</sup>.

It is estimated that the economic activity generated by these visits is about €270 million annually – a significant contribution to rural economic development. Given the land ownership by Coillte in Wicklow (30,000 hectares), this key service provider is of paramount importance. Many community driven trails have been developed in partnership with Coillte and the Local Development Companies.

This LDS will continue working closely with Coillte to support the development of innovative tourism and recreation initiatives, environmental/habitat management and improvement which also supports climate change mitigation.

### **2.3.13 Wicklow Uplands Council**

Wicklow Uplands Council (WUC) is an independent, voluntary organisation which represents the shared interests of over 50 member groups and individuals. It takes a partnership approach to sustainable development and promotes projects which bring value to people who live and work in the Wicklow Uplands and those who use it for recreational purposes. WUC identified local needs and priorities within the uplands and continually seeks to provide a coordinated response to the issues and challenges facing the area. It also provides a common voice for people living, working and recreating in the area. Strategic priorities include: encouragement of rural employment, retention of rural population, collective promotion, sustainable recreation and best management of natural heritage, habitats and landscape. CWP as Implementing Partner has built up a strong working relationship with WUC and has supported its endeavours to strive for sustainable management of the Wicklow's Uplands.

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<sup>8</sup> Coillte Public Goods 2011

### **2.3.14 Wicklow Public Participation Network**

Wicklow's Public Participation Network (PPN) is an independent umbrella network which provides a voice for all community, voluntary and environmental groups in the county. Its main aim is to provide structures and processes to facilitate and enable people and organisations to express a diverse range of views and interests within local structures. Wicklow's PPN contributes to the wellbeing of current and future generations in Wicklow by:

- Bringing together all community and voluntary groups in the county ensuring that all groups are included and heard
- Providing representation on policy making boards and committees
- Sharing and acting as a hub for information and developing collaborative relationships
- Identifying and supporting training in relevant areas for groups and representatives

Currently Wicklow's PPN represents in excess of 130 member groups and is growing in strength. Wicklow's LCDC has developed a strong working relationship with the PPN. In addition, the Local Development Company in recognition of the importance of participative planning, worked closely with the PPN during the consultation and feedback phase of developing this LDS. This Forum will prove to be a valuable channel of consultation and communication during the LEADER 2020 Programme.

### **2.3.15 Wicklow's Tús Programme**

The Tús programme is an initiative of the Department of Social Protection (DSP). Tús aims to provide short-term quality work opportunities for those who are long-term unemployed. Currently, there are 220 participants on this programme in Wicklow working with some 160 communities. This work assists many communities to achieve various developments otherwise unobtainable due to lack of people and financial constraints. CWP manages this programme in Wicklow and this has helped to establish links with community and voluntary organisations across the entire county. Many local-based innovative approaches have been developed through this initiative, one of which is Wicklow's pilot Tourism Ambassador Programme which has been very successful.

These established links will play a significant part in the roll out of the new LEADER programme and will ensure that smaller more dispersed rural communities engage and participate and benefit in the development of their own areas in line with their particular needs.

### **2.3.16 Wicklow's Rural Social Scheme**

The Rural Social Scheme (RSS) commenced in Co. Wicklow in 2005 and has 20 places on the scheme. CWP manages the programme on behalf of the DSP. Similar to the Tús Programme, participants carry out work within communities. This work mainly entails the maintenance and upkeep of community and sporting facilities, village and countryside enhancement projects, the restoration and ongoing maintenance of cemeteries, and support for older people. Participants also work from time to time on trail development projects in co-operation with the CWP's Rural Recreation Officer (RRO), ensuring maximum co-ordination and support to the community and voluntary sector in Wicklow.

### **2.3.17 Wicklow's Walks Scheme**

The Walks Scheme was established in Wicklow in 2008 for a period of five years initially. The scheme is aimed at farmers/private landowners and landholders/users and involves the development, enhancement and maintenance of National Way Marked Ways and priority walks. It is a national scheme and was open to all landholders on National Waymarked Ways, Looped Walking Routes, and Heritage Routes that have been approved by the National Trails Office. The scheme was extended for a further five years up to 2018 on the approved trails. CWP manages the Walks Scheme in Wicklow and make total payments of €50,000 per year for maintenance on:

- The Wicklow Way
- Tinahely Loop Trails
- Glenmalure Zig Zag Route
- Kanturk Route
- Little Sugarloaf Route

The scheme was set up as a maintenance scheme as its core objective. However, as the scheme developed, Wicklow's landowners have become local tourism ambassadors to the many visitors to these trails. Many of the walks' scheme participants are actively involved in developing further tourism-related products and facilities and farm diversification ideas.

Strong linkages and collective models have been developed to date which will enhance any future developments in the area of walks development in Wicklow. The Wicklow Way Partnership is one collective model where private landowners have equal representation through Wicklow's RRO with members from Wicklow County Council, Coillte, National Parks and Wildlife Service, and Mountain Meitheal. All members of this Partnership are committed to the development of the Wicklow Way to the highest International standards.

CWP will continue to work closely to support and enhance the walking product in Wicklow as one of the county's unique selling points.

### **2.3.18 Co Wicklow Network for Older People**

Established in 2007, Co Wicklow Network for Older People (CWNOP) aims to give older people in Co. Wicklow a voice in the decision making processes at local, regional and national level, and promote diversity, participation, equality, dignity, independence, and self-fulfilment. The Network lobbies and advocates on relevant issues and strives to bring about meaningful changes that will ensure people maintain their quality of life as they grow old. Currently there are over 45 groups represented and 500 individuals on this Network.

This LDS seeks to ensure that its actions contribute to the overall aim of CWNOP for the benefit of older persons in Wicklow.

### **2.3.19 Foróige**

Foróige is the leading youth organisation in Ireland and has been working with young people since 1952. Wicklow currently has 10 clubs dotted around the county with a membership of in excess of 150. Their purpose is to enable young people to involve themselves consciously and actively in their own development and in the development of society. Foróige works with young people aged 10-18 through clubs and youth fora which encourages young people to take responsibility for themselves

and to be part of shaping the world around them while developing their talents, skills, and character.

This LDS has taken on board the work carried out by this organisation and acknowledges its achievements over the years in Wicklow. However, there is a recognition that there are young people that are harder to reach in the county and that new targeted approaches to re-engagement must be found in order to reach out and ensure a more inclusive society among Wicklow's young people.

### **2.3.20 Wicklow National Park & Wildlife Services**

Wicklow Mountains National Park was established by the Government in 1991 with an initial core area of 3,700ha (37 square km). The park has grown over the years through the acquisition of private land and the transfer of state-owned land to the park and now comprises some 20,000ha (200 square km). Much of the lands within the site are commonage (areas over which traditional communal land-use rights exist). These rights include grazing, turbary (turf collection) and estovers (e.g. wood collection). These rights are recognised and a liaison process with rights holders has been established to achieve the conservation objectives of the Park. Wicklow National Parks and Wildlife Services manage the park for the primary purpose of conservation of local biodiversity and landscape. The Park is also an invaluable recreational space for locals and visitors alike. Over one million visits are estimated to be made each year. The most visited area is the scenic Glendalough Valley where the ancient monastic settlement of St. Kevin is located. In addition, the National Parks and Wildlife Service runs a series of conservation educational programmes focused on the promotion of environmental friendly practices.

### **2.4 Area Needs Analysis**

County Wicklow possesses a number of distinctive sectors that offer significant potential for further economic, social, and environmental expansion and investment. Investing in these sectors will allow for new enterprise and employment opportunities to be created, the quality of people's lives to be improved, enhanced protection of the environment, contributing to sustainable rural development throughout the county.

Wicklow has a high incidence of commuting out of the county with 21,050 of its labour force travelling for work purposes. Therefore, local employment opportunities must be created and supported - the county's age dependency rate of one working person to one older or younger person is a key consideration. Increased employment in the county will have the added benefit of enhancing local community engagement among Wicklow's residents and contribute to a stronger sense of place and active citizenship.

The number of businesses in Wicklow fell from just over 14,000 in 2007 to 12,500 in 2011, a decline of 11%. A significant contributing factor to this decline was the sharp drop in the number of firms in the construction sector which fell from 1,844 in 2007 to 1,217 in 2011. This decline impacted significantly on Wicklow given its proximity to Dublin offering large building contracts and developments. However, in the same period, businesses in the area of accommodation and food service activities increased, indicating the potential for growth in these areas.

This LDS strategy acknowledges the potential that exists in Wicklow to address this decline in business through collaborative and innovative approaches in order to harness the county's potential to develop and grow its economy. Creating jobs locally and reducing the incidence of commuting will have positive knock-on effects and result in positive environmental and climate change benefits for the county.

Therefore, Wicklow must work towards innovation in this area and businesses seeking to develop new products, approaches, and collaborations must be supported to ensure improvement of the county's economy.

This strategy also acknowledges the need to provide supports to communities to help them grow and develop in line with their identified needs, thus ensuring a bottom-up approach and balanced regional development delivered through a CLLD approach. Communities in Wicklow must be supported to be active in local decision making, be inclusive and to engage fully and influence the scale and type of development within their own communities.

The central mountain chain in County Wicklow forms a key pillar of the county's territorial capital. Its location within the National Park and uplands landscape renders it a sensitive vulnerable environment which has to be managed and balanced in line with its huge attraction as a national tourism asset. Its very existence causes a physical east/west barrier and contributes to the considerable East-West divide that is experienced by people in the county. This dynamic that is further compounded by the county's administrative base and service provision on the east coast. There is potential through collaborative and partnership approach to work towards bridging this divide through the provision of products and services in more rural areas contributing to more balanced development. The Wicklow Mountains have presented and will continue to present environmental sustainability, navigational and economic challenges and opportunities for Wicklow into the future.

As evidenced by the demographics presented, over half of the county's population (57%) reside in the five main towns of Bray, Wicklow, Arklow, Greystones, and Blessington. These population trends have an impact on the existing and future infrastructure, services, planning, and employment requirements of the county. Economies of scale dictate that these areas possess the strongest infrastructure and services. However, other smaller towns and villages are lagging behind in terms of similar infrastructure and services. Some of Wicklow's towns have deteriorated visually and are in need of enhancement works in order to render them attractive options for business, tourism, and residents.

As evidenced, there has been a population decline in 11 EDs in the west and south of the county. These rural places need to be attractive for people to live, work, and spend leisure time in - specific capacity interventions will be required in these hard-to-reach communities. However, significant population increases have taken place in the towns of Blessington, Stratford, and Baltinglass on the west. Service and facility provision in these areas have not matched these increases and the negative impacts of this are now being experienced on the ground which will need a targeted approach to address.

In addition, Wicklow needs to provide social and economic opportunities for the county's young people; facilities must be designed in line with the needs of the entire community including young people to ensure full engagement and resilience for all. This LDS, utilising a CLLD approach, has the potential to bridge this gap and work towards achieving more balanced development, leading to vibrant communities in these harder-to-reach communities.

Small Area Statistics for the county identify areas classified as very disadvantaged that are not evident at ED level. Nine small areas in Wicklow are classified as very disadvantaged and 58 are classified as disadvantaged. These areas are harder to reach and present a challenge which will require a specific targeted focus under this strategy in order to address social and economic issues among within these areas.

The ethnic and cultural diversity of Wicklow has enhanced the county in many ways through the influx of new skills, talents, and approaches. The 2011 Census showed a total population of 9,531 non-Irish nationals living in Wicklow, a figure that has increased in the intervening period. Many have married into the Irish population and now have families that enjoy both cultures. The county is home now to many new residents and communities play a key role in ensuring integration for all. This LDS will work towards supporting integrated and vibrant sustainable communities. Opportunities exist that build on the county's cultural activities, events, and festivals as a way to celebrate diversity, promote inclusiveness, and attract visitors.

As a result of reduction or loss of key services, some communities across the county have developed innovative responses to local unmet needs. Many of these social enterprises are in their infancy and are experiencing pressure points due to the demand on volunteers. However, the social and economic impact of such initiatives cannot be underestimated as in many cases their very existence provides a lifeline to the most vulnerable, marginalised and isolated in the county. This LDS will support existing and new social enterprises and will seek to develop a social entrepreneurial environment through raised awareness and models of good practice as a mechanism to achieve social and economic benefits in rural areas. Wicklow's LCDC has adopted the Fórfas definition for Social Enterprise as follows:

A social enterprise is an enterprise:

- i. That trades for a social/societal purpose
- ii. Where at least part of its income is earned from its trading activity
- iii. Is separate from government
- iv. Where the surplus is primarily re-invested in the social objective

Tourism is a strong economic driver for the county and a mechanism to create jobs and increase Wicklow's economy through increased visitor numbers and spend in the county. Wicklow has an established 'outdoor' brand identity and has grown in strength in this area. Collaborative approaches have ensured that there is a strong bedrock of walking product throughout the county. These developments have been established through mutual respect for all and with environmental protection as a core principle. In order to consolidate the works completed to date, support is required to package and promote Wicklow as a walking destination for all.

Given Wicklow's wealth of heritage, folklore, and archaeological infrastructure, the county is well placed to take advantage of the Ireland's Ancient East heritage brand proposition. This strategy will put supports in place to help animate, build capacity, and ensure that individuals and communities in Wicklow are equipped to maximise potential from this culturally curious market segment. Attractive destination offerings will be supported in non-traditional tourism areas in the south and west of the county in order to relieve pressure on some of the county's 'honeypots' and spread the economic gain into less developed areas. Key strategic long distance walking and cycling trail linkages between Wicklow's towns and villages will be encouraged and supported as a mechanism to extend the visitors' stay in the county and to expand the economic gain. Wicklow's rurality as a county, comprising mainly towns and villages with the absence of a city, presents a valuable and attractive proposition that will appeal to the culturally curious visitor who wants to drill down and engage in a rural holiday experience.

There is potential for growth in the artisan food and food-tourism market. Wicklow has a variety of very strong artisan food producers, however work is needed in the area of branding and cluster marketing. New entrants to the marketplace need to be

supported through this strategy to broaden the overall food proposition. Wicklow's rugged and unspoiled landscape presents a 'green' image for the county, giving rise to opportunities in the area of eco-tourism, outdoor pursuits, and recreation. There are many examples of strong enterprises in this area, however there is scope for innovation and flagship projects in this sector.

Wicklow's coastal location and favourable sailing conditions offers potential for the development of the marine tourism sector. Wicklow's ports and harbours present significant potential in terms of coastal and marine tourism, a sector that is currently under-developed in the county. Marine leisure contributes considerably to the Irish economy, and Fáilte Ireland estimated that the marine tourism industry contributed €5.8 billion to the Irish economy in 2010<sup>9</sup>. Facilities exist for Wicklow to develop marine-related activities; however, the current infrastructure needs to be assessed to ensure the correct infrastructure is available to support expansion of the sector. Opportunities exist for a wide range of marine leisure users such as coastal heritage, leisure sailing, fishing, canoeing/kayaking/paddle boarding, and launch slipways. Wicklow's long coastline and connectivity present significant potential for the development of a Blueway, creating a network along the east coast and joining with counties Wexford and Waterford.

As a result of developments driven by Wicklow's community and voluntary sector, a number of flagship amenities and recreational areas have been developed. Many communities in Wicklow have demonstrated their capacity to innovate, negotiate, and collaborate in order to achieve success in these areas. Given Wicklow's sensitive environment, communities must be supported to undertake future developments that are based on environmental best practice thus ensuring public goods. It is essential that smaller less developed and harder-to-reach rural communities receive specific targeted support in order to address challenges and build capacity to ensure more balanced regional development across the entire sub-regional area.

As the most afforested county in Ireland, Wicklow holds great potential for 'adding value to local timber products'. There is a need for more local pulpwood in the marketplace<sup>10</sup> which can be met through first thinnings. Private forest owners need to be organised to achieve economies of scale through combining and packaging this renewable energy product for the market. In addition to adding value to timber products, given Wicklow's above-average coverage of Broadleaf forest estates (33%), there is considerable interest in recreational opportunities in private forests in Wicklow. Such developments will need financial support if they are to realise their full potential in terms of tackling climate change and add to the overall outdoor recreation product offering in the county. In addition, innovative and new approaches to renewable sources of energy must be explored and supported in the county in order to address climate change and assist in meeting reductions of greenhouse gases as Ireland moves towards 2020 targets.

Although the county's broadband access is above the national average rate of 68.7% of households having broadband connectivity, there are large areas, particularly in rural areas, where there is inadequate broadband facilities due to the population density and economics. A number of rural areas in the county have been identified as preliminary locations to be connected to fibre broadband as part of the NBP roll out. Given the size and scale of the investment, LEADER 2014-2020 is not expected to have a role in the provision of infrastructure to assist the roll out of broadband.

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<sup>9</sup> Ireland's Ocean Economy 2010, Socio Economic Marine Institute, NUIG

<sup>10</sup> County Wicklow Private Timber Production Forecast & Market Assessment (2010-2028)

However, communities need to be assisted to develop and improve their ICT skills in order to take full advantage of this technology.

The Area and Socio-Economic Profiles, coupled with the identification of Key Services as presented here has dictated the roadmap and bedrock for the development of this strategy for County Wicklow.

The analysis of the information presented in the Area Profile assisted in the identification of economic, community and environmental trends and highlighted priority areas of need, all of which have fed into and influenced the prioritisation and design of actions and interventions to be undertaken through this strategy.

This strategy contains action that will address social, environmental, and economic development within the county in line with the strategic objectives and Priority 6 of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. In order to achieve these interventions, a CLLD approach will be undertaken that seeks to conserve the county's social, natural, built and cultural heritage. This plan provides for collaboration and adding value to the work of other relevant programmes in order to benefit individuals, businesses and communities in Wicklow.

Finally, this LDS represents the most appropriate area-specific plan for the county of Wicklow based on needs and available resources.

## Section 3 Participative Planning

Wicklow's LDS has been designed around the needs identified by communities and stakeholders throughout the entire LDS area. CLLD approaches and methodologies were used to engage with the maximum number of citizens within the 'community' of the sub-regional area. As key decision makers are integral to both the design and implementation of the LDS, this 'community' formed the cornerstone of each stage of the LDS design.

Through this consultative process, 'the 'community' of Wicklow has been facilitated to shape and develop its own 'Strategy' in line with its own specific 'Needs', rendering the plan to be most relevant and representing the strongest potential to address the challenges and needs on an '*area specific*' basis. The overarching aim of this strategy is to support balanced sustainable development throughout the entire county of Wicklow.

Through years of working closely with both the community and business sector, the LAG and CWP as Implementing Partner have built up strong linkages countywide. Direct connections and paths of communication are in place which enabled a widespread and in-depth layered consultation process to be undertaken in populated and isolated areas throughout the county. These linkages and experience proved to be invaluable to the process. Wicklow's LDS has been designed in line with the principle that people who work and live in the area are best placed to decide what social, economic, and environmental supports they need to facilitate the development of their areas.

### 3.1 Public and Stakeholder Consultation

The following consultation events and methods were used to engage the community of Wicklow in the design and development of this LDS.

**Table 18: Number and type of consultation events/approaches**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Consultation Event/Approach</b>
1	Flagship - Launch of Public Consultation Process
5	Public Meetings - Countywide
25	Relevant Stakeholder Consultations
6	Focus Groups Consultations
1	SWOT Analysis
30	Submissions to LECP
1	PPN Representative Submission Countywide
2	Targeted Workshop (Young People/Service Users)
20	Interviews
5	Workshops
	Desk Research

#### 3.1.1 Launch of 'Consultation Process' Event

The LAG organised an event on 21 September 2015 in Glendalough to launch the 'Consultation Process'. The main objective was to animate and create awareness in advance of the countywide public meetings and ultimately engage with the maximum number of people possible. Representatives were asked to 'spread the word' locally and encourage maximum participation in the upcoming public consultation process. A Briefing Document was prepared in order to set the context and highlight the

emerging 'Themes and 'Sub-Themes under the Programme (see Appendix 13). This event was well supported and received significant media coverage thus achieving its objective

### 3.1.2 Public Consultation Meetings

Five public consultation meetings were held around the county ensuring a strong geographical spread (see poster and photographs of launch and public consultation workshop in Appendix 14).

**Table 19: Details of public consultation meetings and attendances**

Location	Date	Total Attendance	Representing Groups
Newtownmountkennedy (North East)	24/09/15	36	20
Blessington (North West)	29/09/15	27	18
Aughrim (South)	1/10/15	48	33
Wicklow Town (East)	6/10/15	55	32
Baltinglass (West)	8/10/15	31	21
Total		197	124

The public consultation process was undertaken in a partnership approach involving the following:

- LCDC Committee Reps (LAG)
- Local Authority Staff
- CWP Board Members (Implementing Partner)
- CWP Staff (Implementing Partner)
- PPN Staff
- PPN Committee Members

All available databases were used to ensure that the maximum number of groups and individuals received direct invitations to these meetings and this consultative process. In addition, local networks, papers, social media, posters, and radio were used to spread the word as widely as possible. In particular, the PPN Network proved to be invaluable to this process as it helped to encourage maximum participation and representation throughout the county.

The format of these meetings was organised in a method ensuring maximum input from attendees. Briefing sessions were carried out with all facilitators and scribes in advance of each meeting. The format for these public consultation meetings was as follows:

- Briefing document circulated to all in attendance
- Short presentation delivered in order to set the context and highlight potential areas that could be addressed through the LEADER themes
- Briefing on three cross-cutting themes – innovation/climate change/environment
- Round table discussions in 'world café style'
- Collection of all input and feedback
- One-to-one sessions following group discussions to ensure all people had a suitable platform for engagement in the process

Effective methods, tools, and models were used in order to ensure maximum engagement in these discussions. All input and feedback was recorded in detail.

These meetings attracted large attendances and communities engaged extensively in the process, providing strong feedback and direction for the design of this LDS. This was ensured by experienced and well-informed facilitators. All information was collated and summarised under the various LEADER themes and sub-themes. Information gathered on mainstream needs, challenges, and priorities were fed back into the LECP consultation process in order to maximise feedback from the consultation process.

### 3.1.3 Stakeholder Consultation

In order to deepen the learning and to avoid duplication, relevant stakeholder consultation was undertaken. The main objective was to become familiar with strategic plans to be undertaken by various agencies/organisations in the LDS area with a view to ensuring complementarity and avoiding duplication with the proposed LDS Actions in this strategy.

Following these meetings, some amendments and alterations to the proposed draft LDS Actions were undertaken in order to achieve better value for resources. Stakeholder consultation involved: focus groups, presentations, discussion groups, meetings, focused interviews, submissions, and workshops. Relevant stakeholders were grouped under the LEADER Programme themes/sub-themes and cross-cutting themes as a mechanism to ensure their relevance and to maximise economic and social potential for Wicklow's LDS. See the following tables for national/regional and local stakeholders who were consulted as part of the development of this LDS. In some cases, targeted focus groups and workshop sessions were carried out particularly involving young people and those experiencing social inclusion.

**Table 20: Stakeholders consulted under Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation and Cross-Cutting Themes**

<b>Agency/Organisation/Programme</b>
➤ Wicklow Local Enterprise Office
➤ Kildare Wicklow Education & Training Board
➤ Fáilte Ireland
➤ Teagasc
➤ Wicklow County Tourism
➤ Wicklow Heritage Forum
➤ Micro-Finance Ireland
➤ Clann Credo
➤ Chamber of Commerce
➤ Arklow REDZ Group
➤ Wicklow Private Woodland Owners Group
➤ Wicklow IFA
➤ Bord Bia
➤ Wicklow Farm Families Committee
➤ Wicklow PPN

**Table 21: Stakeholders consulted under Social Inclusion and Cross-Cutting Themes**

<b>Agency/Organisation/Programme</b>
<b>Hard-to-Reach Communities</b>
➤ SICAP Programme – County Wicklow Partnership
➤ SICAP Programme – Bray Area Partnership
➤ Co Wicklow’s Older Person’s Network
➤ Wicklow Heritage Forum
➤ Wicklow Rural Transport Initiative
➤ Rural Social Scheme
➤ Citizen Information Centres
➤ Wicklow PPN
➤ Community, Culture & Social Development Section – Wicklow County Council
➤ Wicklow’s Arts Officer

**Table 22: Stakeholders consulted under Rural Youth and Cross-Cutting Themes**

<b>Agency/Organisation/Programme</b>
➤ Kildare/Wicklow Education & Training Board – Youth Officer/Community Education Officer
➤ Macra na Feirme
➤ Foróige
➤ Comhairle na nÓg
➤ Wicklow Local Sports Partnership
➤ Service User Group Arklow
➤ Bray Area Partnership (SICAP)
➤ County Wicklow Partnership (SICAP)

**Table 23: Stakeholders consulted under Rural Environment and Cross-Cutting Themes**

<b>Agency/Organisation/Programme</b>
➤ Wicklow Uplands Council
➤ Coillte
➤ National Parks & Wildlife Service
➤ Rural Recreational Office (CWP)
➤ Wicklow Heritage Forum (Biodiversity Plan)
➤ Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
➤ Environmental Section Wicklow County Council
➤ Heritage Council
➤ Tús Programme
➤ Wicklow PPN
➤ Pure Mile Project

### **3.1.4 LECP/LDS Submissions**

As the LECP consultation process was underway at the same time as the LDS consultation, a total of 30 submissions and feedback to the LECP were taken into account to broaden the consultation for the purposes of developing this LDS. The participative planning phase also included drawing on the input from the service providers through the LECP stakeholder consultation process as carried out by

Wicklow County Council. In addition, a number of submissions were made directly to the LDS process. In order to consolidate the findings, an in-depth desk research element was undertaken, the findings of which fed into this strategy to ensure a comprehensive and well-rounded process.

Building on the in-depth consultation phase which led to the design of this LDS, Wicklow LCDC and County Wicklow Partnership as the Implementing Partner will maintain and ensure that there is on-going engagement with individuals, target groups and communities throughout the lifetime of the Programme.

The following practices will be used to ensure this engagement:

- 1) Regular calls for Applications (publicised widely)
- 2) Themed Information Workshops, Presentations & Seminars
- 3) On-going Animation of the Programme
- 4) Sectoral Clusters and Issue Based - Sub-Groups
- 5) Website, Radio, Print & Social Media
- 6) Publications, Forms, Newsletters, Information Sheets
- 7) Close linkages with Groups i.e.; PPN, Community Fora's, etc.
- 8) LCDC Board and CWP Board Representation

### **3.1.5 Summary of the Key Findings**

Having carried out an inclusive and comprehensive countywide consultation process, the partners collated the following key findings under the LEADER Programme themes/sub-themes:

#### *General Issues*

- A resounding call for greater inter-agency collaboration was voiced throughout the entire consultation phase, particularly in the area of enterprise development, youth, and community supports.
- A recurring demand for new and improved transportation. Such an improved transport service would significantly influence a wide range of social and socio-economic related subjects, including access to education, training and employment services particularly for young people, and access to health and recreational services, particularly for vulnerable groups.
- Significant perceived east-west divide in terms of service provision in the county.

### ***Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation***

#### *Rural Tourism*

- Future potential in the tourism sector has the ability to provide substantial employment and enterprise opportunities.
- Given Wicklow's proximity to Dublin and to the two major entry points at Dublin and Wexford (Rosslare Port), coupled with its topography and unique landscape, the county is well placed to take advantage of growth within its tourism sector.
- Insufficient spend on marketing and promotional activities in the county.
- Being promoted as being on Dublin's 'doorstep' results in day visitors/trips only.
- Wicklow is renowned for its strong walking product. However, the county must find ways to extend the duration of the visitors' stay in the county.

- Competing with other flagship brands e.g. Wild Atlantic Way.
- Need for greater co-ordination and interaction between County Council, local organisations, and tourism bodies.
- Wicklow's coastal and marine tourism is underdeveloped
- Calls for a more commercial approach to tourism within Wicklow in areas such as infrastructure, road signage, tourism information, public transport, parking, traffic management, etc.
- Wicklow must ensure that all future developments are environmentally sustainable.
- Wicklow has the potential to maximise economic gain from Fáilte Ireland's brand, Ireland's Ancient East, but will require capacity building and support to do so.
- Many amenities have been developed through community initiatives which support the private tourism sector.
- Communities in Wicklow have the potential to play a huge role in attracting visitors to the county and should be supported in their endeavours.
- New and innovative tourism products have the ability to attract visitor numbers.
- Rural towns and villages need to look at how they will gain from the Ireland Ancient East brand proposition.
- Wicklow should grow its eco-tourism brand as a mechanism to increase market share and environmental awareness.
- There is a need for each area to 'tell its story'.
- Products/areas need to be packaged and sold as destinations with a unique offering.
- Wicklow needs to strengthen its product offering in the area of outdoor pursuits.
- Food tourism presents strong potential.
- Social media content is one of the best ways to attract visitors to an area.
- There is a need for hostel accommodation in the county.
- The county needs a few flagship tourism attractions to encourage people to extend their stay in the county.
- South Wicklow is well positioned to develop its own heritage destination centred on the Coolattin Estate involving the villages of Carnew, Tinahely and Shillelagh.
- West Wicklow's traditional rural villages present an opportunity as hidden gems.
- The Blessington Greenway presents huge potential in west Wicklow and should be supported to achieve its full potential.
- Potential to develop packages and destination holidays.
- There is a variety of strong community tourism projects in the county.
- Collation and branding of the walking product is necessary and will attract more visitors.

#### *Enterprise Development*

- Need for more job creation in the county which will help to reduce incidence of out-commuting for work and reduce county carbon footprint.
- Potential to grow Wicklow's Good Food Brand and businesses.
- Innovation and innovative approaches should be supported.
- Significant potential to grow Wicklow's renewable energy sector.
- Most forested county in Ireland, signifies potential to grow renewable energy business.
- Mentoring support at start-up stage.

- Need for co-ordination of information and advice of supports and services.
- Technical support and advice required for innovation.
- Social enterprises present viable options in terms of economics and service provision.
- Wicklow needs to promote an entrepreneurial environment.
- Potential within Wicklow's film industry to grow.

### *Rural Towns*

- Town enhancement projects will improve civic pride and attract visitors.
- Wicklow is rich in heritage but significant work is needed to make it accessible and to interpret it correctly.
- Improved recreational spaces help to increase social capital.
- There is a need for more collaborative work and inter-agency work to support rural communities.
- Young people need to be involved in decision making about town developments.
- Poor streetscapes and derelict retail units in some of Wicklow's towns are a big disadvantage to attracting new business and residents to these areas.
- Well-thought out towns plans that are carried out in consultation with the entire community would help to increase the profile of Wicklow's towns
- There is need in some areas to improve community facilities so that they become functional multi-user spaces/hubs.
- There are varying levels of capacity across Wicklow's communities.
- Some of Wicklow's towns lack a 'centre' meeting place i.e. a focal point.
- Town environmental projects will benefit the area visually and can be beneficial for positive mental health for all ages.
- Rural towns need to provide employment for the town and surrounding hinterland.

### **Social Inclusion**

Basic services targeted at hard-to-reach communities

- Awareness needs to be raised within communities to enable them to be more inclusive – proof their activities in order to promote a better understanding of the importance an inclusive community/society.
- 'Shed'/amenity projects were highlighted as having the potential to engage people and improve their overall quality of life.
- Support is needed to promote active citizenship and re-engagement.
- Communities on the west of the county are distanced from services and are disadvantaged due to their geographical location.
- All communities should have access to community space/hub within their own area in order to engage socially within their own community.
- The need for countywide mapping of services was raised as an action point.
- Wicklow needs to reach out to its 'harder to reach' communities.

### *Young people*

- There is a need for a young persons' re-engagement programme in West Wicklow to improve quality of life both socially and economically.
- Some young people are disillusioned with their career path and would benefit from short bespoke courses that provides them with an opportunity to understand and learn more about their particular areas of interest.

- Poor mental health among young people was highlighted as a major concern.
- Lack of availability of support services in rural areas came across strongly.
- The provision of outdoor amenity areas has positive effects on young people, providing for physical activity and building social skills.
- Capacity building for young people so that they can engage within their communities and shape future developments at local level.
- The advantages of intergenerational work and co-operation was highlighted as being very beneficial for the mental health of people, both young and old.
- Lack of jobs and career opportunities was highlighted as a major concern.
- Important to promote entrepreneurship among young people.
- Poor infrastructure can lead to isolation.
- The potential for young people to get involved in social enterprises was highlighted.
- Personal development courses for young people would assist them to move forward, both in their career and socially within their community.

### *Rural Environment*

#### Protection and sustainable use of water resources

- Wicklow's environment is unique and attracts large numbers, however that resource must be protected for future generations to enjoy.
- Support for water butts and rainwater harvesters.
- Use of grey water can be problematic, technical support will be required to overcome the lack of knowledge about possible solutions to this issue.

#### *Protection and Improvement of local biodiversity*

- Significant potential for development of local projects that will enhance the local area and make them more attractive to visitors.
- Protecting and sustaining local biodiversity must be considered in all developments.
- There is a need for awareness creation among groups involved in Tidy Towns' initiatives and town development groups.
- People need to be aware of the environmental and reduced carbon benefits of such projects.
- Environmental projects can form the basis of strong intergenerational and positive mental health initiatives.
- Best practice must be adhered to in all initiatives.

#### *Development of Renewable Energy*

- The creation of renewable energy businesses represents significant potential for innovation in Wicklow.
- Wicklow is the most forested county in Ireland – high timber 'added value' potential.
- Clustering represents a viable means of progress for forest owners.
- Analysis and Development (A&D) will be required to ensure success of renewable energy businesses.
- Proximity to large urban market and distribution channels is strong advantage.

- There is a need to present potential solutions to communities for use in building projects.
- Bigger solar power projects present future potential; farmers and landowners will need technical advice and support to ensure good decisions.
- Grant aid supports should prioritise renewable energy solutions within community buildings.
- Wicklow has a 'green' image and is well placed to develop in this area.
- Wicklow would benefit from an energy agency.
- It is vital that Wicklow contributes to the reduction of greenhouse gasses and works towards 2020 targets.

### 3.2 SWOT Analysis

This SWOT analysis has been developed in order to identify internal and external factors facing the county of Wicklow. Inclusions have been informed by the culmination of the Area Profile and the widespread public and stakeholder consultation phase of Wicklow's LDS design. In addition, the SWOT was further proofed by the LDS Sub-Committee which comprised expertise across a multiple of relevant economic, social and environmental sectors. The following numbers participated in the development of the SWOT analysis.

**Table 24: SWOT Analysis Participants**

Consultation Event	Numbers	Representing
Countywide Public Consultation	197 Individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 124 of which represented groups.</li> </ul>
LECP Stakeholder Consultation Workshops (3)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dept. of Social Protection</li> <li>• HSE (All Age Groups Represented)</li> </ul>
Workshop 1 Social & Community Services	42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kildare/Wicklow Education Board</li> <li>• TUSLA</li> </ul>
Workshop 2 Education, Support and Training	38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bray Area Partnership</li> <li>• Wicklow Campus (Carlow IT)</li> <li>• Local Enterprise Office</li> <li>• Citizen Advice Services</li> </ul>
Workshop 3 Social Innovation, entrepreneurship and Local Development	44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wicklow County Council</li> <li>• Wicklow Local Development Company</li> <li>• SICAP Programme</li> <li>• Community</li> <li>• Youth Projects</li> <li>• Social Enterprises</li> <li>• Local Representatives</li> </ul>
LDS Stakeholder Consultation	44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representing all Themes/Sub/Themes and Cross Cutting themes of LEADER 2020 Programme</li> </ul>
LDS Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LCDC Board</li> <li>• LCDC Executive Staff</li> <li>• LDC Board</li> <li>• LDC Staff</li> </ul>	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism</li> <li>• Social Inclusion</li> <li>• Community Development</li> <li>• Enterprise Development</li> <li>• Environmental</li> </ul>
<b>Total</b>	<b>377</b>	

## Wicklow's LDS SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Population Growth</p> <p>Proximity to Dublin</p> <p>High quality environment including unique geological, flora and fauna composition</p> <p>Distinctive and attractive geographical characteristics including coastline and Wicklow Mountains</p> <p>Natural, built and cultural heritage</p> <p>Communities linkages and social capital</p> <p>Strong local governance structure</p> <p>Established working partnerships</p> <p>Strong outdoor recreation brand</p> <p>Rural town and village composition</p> <p>People</p> <p>Strong farming and forestry potential</p> <p>High quality road corridor along the eastern side of the county</p> <p>Models of good practice</p> <p>Wealth of local biodiversity</p>	<p>Level of out-commuting for work</p> <p>Poor broadband connectivity in parts of the county, particularly in rural areas</p> <p>Poor or no public transport in some rural communities leading to barriers accessing commercial services, education and employment opportunities</p> <p>Restricted public transport connectivity between the west and east of the county</p> <p>Not attracting overnight visitors</p> <p>Many visitors travel directly from Dublin City to south, western or northern regions and do not explore the east region</p> <p>More hostel-type accommodation required</p> <p>Poor signage and tourist service facilities</p> <p>Lack of cohesiveness in the tourism sector</p> <p>Hard to reach communities</p> <p>Youth dis-engagement in some areas</p>	<p>Create employment, reduce level of out-commuting leading to more connected communities Proximity to Dublin and national and international access routes increases potential for investment and tourism and employment opportunities</p> <p>Greater support for the development and growth of indigenous start-up enterprises and micro-enterprises and SMEs will create new employment opportunities</p> <p>Investment in agri-food sector</p> <p>Support for farm diversification businesses</p> <p>Build and improve capacity of communities</p> <p>Development and investment in film and television industry</p> <p>Existing offshore wind development offers opportunity to further develop and expand this renewable energy</p> <p>Existing ports and harbours facilitate opportunities for enterprise and tourism initiatives</p> <p>Funding for Arklow under the Rural Economic Development Zone (REDZ)</p> <p>Ireland's Ancient East tourism initiative is an opportunity to develop tourism sector</p> <p>Potential to collaborate on a regional basis with other counties within the initiative</p> <p>Opportunities to harvest natural energy supplies</p> <p>Provision of broadband access county-wide (under NBP) will facilitate increased spatial distribution of enterprise development</p> <p>Completion of major water services infrastructure projects including Arklow Wastewater Treatment Plant will facilitate increased development within the County</p> <p>Blueway development potential with Wexford and Waterford</p> <p>Potential to develop a tourist destination for west and south Wicklow</p> <p>Harness day visitors and encourage more overnight visitors</p> <p>Review current capacity and range of visitor accommodation</p> <p>Improvement of tourism signage</p> <p>Expand the Rural Transport Initiative</p>	<p>Low level of service provision in some rural areas</p> <p>Under-performance of town centres</p> <p>Increasing costs of housing</p> <p>Lack of or deficient broadband infrastructure in parts of the county</p> <p>Suspension of unprofitable bus routes that connect rural areas to larger settlements</p> <p>Insufficient public transport linkages and reliance on private transport usage to access education, employment and economic opportunities.</p> <p>Environmental pollution may threaten the tourism sector, e.g. reduction in number of Blue Flags awarded to Wicklow beaches owing to inadequate water quality</p> <p>Untreated wastewater entering rivers and seas</p> <p>Fall in tourism numbers</p> <p>Burn out of volunteers</p>

### **3.3 LDS Priorities**

The following agreed LDS priorities have been developed as a result of the compilation of a comprehensive socio-economic profile for County Wicklow coupled with the feedback gathered through the countywide consultation process and the outcome of a county specific SWOT analysis and desk research.

#### **3.3.1 Process for reaching agreement on local LDS priorities**

The information gathered from the processes outlined above was presented to the LDS sub-committee which comprised representatives and expertise from the following:

- LCDC Board
- LCDC Executive Staff
- CWP Implementing Body Board
- CWP Staff representing the following areas:
  - Social Inclusion
  - Community Development
  - Enterprise Development
  - Tourism
  - Finance

Taking cognisance of all the established relevant factors and based on the findings and outcomes of the consultation process and county profile, the sub-committee concluded that the following themes/sub-themes would be prioritised for Wicklow. This decision was based on the fact that interventions under these particular themes and sub-themes represent the best opportunity to achieve area-specific, balanced regional development throughout the county of Wicklow in line with the CLLD approach to development.

#### **3.3.2 Theme 1: Economic Development, Enterprise Development, and Job Creation**

##### ***Sub-Theme - Rural Tourism***

Landscape, heritage, culture, and outdoor activities are Wicklow's main assets that attract visitors, therefore the tourism sector presents significant potential for further development.

Given Wicklow's sensitive and unique landscape, it is paramount that any developments are carried out with environmental protection principles to the forefront of all actions. Wicklow has an established 'Great Outdoors' identity, however ways must be found to extend the visitor stay and increase spend in the county. Capital, animation, feasibility, and marketing support will be required to ensure that the potential of this area is realised as a significant economic driver for the county. Product marketing and packaging of existing recreational amenities will help to consolidate developments undertaken in this area to date.

Food and marine tourism is underdeveloped and must receive priority for investment and support. Fáilte Ireland's new brand proposition – Ireland's Ancient East - presents important potential for the county, however supports will need to be concentrated on local heritage and folklore as a mechanism to engage the 'culturally curious' visitor and deliver on this brand promise.

In addition, heritage tourism is a potential area of growth in some areas, particularly the south and west of the county. Communities and businesses also need to be

supported to take full advantage of social media as a sales and marketing tool to attract visitors and increase market share. Communities need to be supported to develop amenity and recreational projects that enhance the lives of locals and attract visitors to an area whilst ensuring Wicklow's unique landscape and environment is protected. Cluster marketing and destination development will strengthen individual businesses, ensuring that Wicklow is a strong player and offers a strong proposition to the domestic and overseas market.

### ***Sub Theme - Enterprise Development***

Wicklow needs to create more job opportunities within the county. The scale and effect of out-commuting for work purposes is a drain on communities, the environment and the economy.

Wicklow's proximity to a large urban market and distribution potential is an advantage. The county's micro- and SME business sector must be supported through collaborative and innovative interventions.

Huge potential lies in developing artisan food businesses in the county; branding and clustering of producers will help to raise the profile of the county as a 'Good Food' county. Professional mentoring already in place will ensure the success of new and expanding businesses. Analysis and development is required to support early stage innovative enterprises, in addition funding support towards capital and marketing will contribute to the success of this sector. Greater co-ordination across agencies will assist this process.

Social Enterprises represent significant potential and can be a key player in the social and economic fabric of Wicklow's communities. Awareness creation and capacity building is needed to strengthen these enterprises so that they can identify creative and local solutions to local problems, particularly in rural areas where services and facilities have been lost or reduced. Support for such enterprises will help to build social capital.

### ***Sub Theme - Rural Towns***

Wicklow's rural towns and villages are unique but many would benefit from enhancements to ensure that they are attractive places to live, work, and spend leisure time in. Excessive out-commuting has rendered some Wicklow towns as dormitory towns. Civic pride must be reinstated in these areas and social capital must be developed and enhanced. Capacity building and animation support will help to engage active citizenship in order to embark on a holistic whole-town approach.

Many of these towns and villages are home to significant heritage and potential recreational/amenity areas, and environmental considerations will have to form part of any future developments. The development of multi-user facilities and spaces will ensure inclusiveness for all the community. There is a need for more collaborative inter-agency work to realise the potential of Wicklow's rural towns and villages. Proper inclusive planning will strengthen these communities and help them to develop resilience into the future and ensure that Wicklow's town centres are vibrant and attractive places.

### ***Sub Theme - Broadband***

The broadband sub-theme, although considered of significant importance to the county, was not identified as a key area for action under this LDS for the following reasons:

- The size and scale of the investment required
- The approved financial provision (€2.5 billion) under the NBP towards the provision of high speed broadband countrywide by 2020
- The limited budget resources available in Wicklow through the LEADER Programme
- Existing provision of ICT training in the county

This LDS acknowledges that the availability of high speed quality broadband throughout the entire county of Wicklow is a critical aspect of the county's infrastructure, and will influence the future enterprise and employment development potential of the county. This sentiment was echoed throughout the LDS consultation process. This LDS also acknowledges the Government's NBP and its aim to provide high speed broadband access to all premises nationally, and to address the 'digital divide' by 2020. It is also understood that the NBP will play the primary role in the provision of relevant infrastructure to support this development and has a ring-fenced budget to support this plan. In addition, given the number of ICT training opportunities available throughout the county of Wicklow offered by various bodies such as the Education & Training Board/TUSLA etc. and coupled with the available budget, this sub-theme has not been identified as an LDS priority action area. This LDS will allow for annual adjustments as needs arise.

### **3.3.3 Theme 2: Social Inclusion**

#### ***Sub Theme - Basic Services***

Wicklow has communities that are hard to reach, and specific supports and interventions are required to build capacity so that these communities can engage with and benefit from support programmes. The benefits of inclusion need to be highlighted in order to promote a better understanding of its importance as a core principle in community development.

Smaller areas also need help to develop action and implementation plans for their areas in order to achieve balanced development across the sub-regional area. The county experiences an east-west divide in terms of service provision and there is a lack of connectivity. Targeted animation and interventions are needed in order to bridge this gap. In particular, the promotion of activities involving environmental and intergenerational engagement as a contributor to positive mental health needs to be supported. Cross-agency collaboration will ensure that resources are applied appropriately and positive outcomes are achieved.

#### ***Sub Theme - Rural Youth***

Wicklow must strive to ensure that its young People are reaching their full potential socially and economically. Given the population settlements, there is a heavier concentration of support programmes and interventions in the east of the county where the larger population base exists. However, the needs in the west and the south of the county are unmet through the current level of supports.

Young people need to be included in decision making and their confidence and capacity must be raised in order to help them become active citizens in their own areas. For many, poor career advice and opportunities have impacted negatively on their potential to date. Short-term interventions will provide an opportunity for young people to gain a greater understanding of their areas of interest, creativity and skills and will help with individual progression.

Communities must be supported to develop 'Hub' spaces for young people that enable them to develop socially and economically. Wicklow's young people are creative and have the potential to create enterprises/social enterprises that meet unmet needs and address gaps in the marketplace. Significant animation, training, and capital investment will be required to address the needs of Wicklow's young people to ensure they reach their full potential.

### **3.3.4 Theme 3: Rural Environment**

#### ***Sub Theme - Protection and Improvement of Local Biodiversity***

Wicklow needs to build awareness and capacity within communities around the benefits of protecting and enhancing local biodiversity. Tidy Towns' and town development groups need support to carry out works that enhance the local biodiversity of their area. Community gardens have the ability to provide training in the area of biodiversity and build capacity through intergenerational projects. There is huge potential to develop river walks, woodland, and bog amenity areas as areas of high nature value and as protected amenity sites to attract more visitors to rural areas and contribute to public environmental goods.

Technical support will be required to ensure compliance and protection of our precious landscape. Models of good practice are required and should form the basis of developments in this area. Flagship projects like Greenways and Blueways have the potential to attract visitors to the county for longer durations.

#### ***Sub Theme - Protection and Sustainable use of Water Resources***

Communities and businesses in Wicklow acknowledged the importance of incorporating good practice in water conservation. Awareness needs to be raised in relation to best practice and solutions in this area. Rain water harvesting and the use of grey water will benefit the environment and also assist community facilities to become more sustainable. Innovative approaches will require support and technical and feasibility work will play a vital role in ensuring that communities are supported to address pressure on valuable water reserves.

#### ***Sub Theme - Renewable Energy***

There is a need for awareness raising and training within both Wicklow's community and business sector of the importance of the use of renewable sources of energy. Technical assistance is paramount to promoting good practice. Wicklow communities need support to investigate and implement renewable energy options in community building projects as a mechanism to reduce costs and carbon footprint. As the most forested county in Ireland, Wicklow has strong potential to grow this renewable sector and to create employment in the timber value-added sector. Animation and co-ordination is required to assist collective marketing in this area to ensure that Wicklow can compete effectively in this marketplace. Upcoming solar energy incentives will present opportunities to farmers and landowners in Wicklow, however technical advice will be required to ensure best practice. New and innovative approaches will require feasibility studies in order to determine viability and ensure that Wicklow strengthens its renewable energy businesses.

## **Section 4 LDS Action Plan**

### **4.1 Vision Statement**

**Wicklow LCDC has developed the following Vision Statement which encapsulates** the positive impact that Wicklow's Local Development Strategy will strive to achieve.

***To effect positive change by supporting the social, cultural, economic, and environmental wellbeing of individuals, families, groups, and communities throughout the entire county of Wicklow***

Wicklow's LCDC is committed to the above vision and believes that this LDS represents the most appropriate area-specific targeted plan for the county. The interventions and actions contained in this LDS have the ability to impact positively on the social, cultural, environmental, and economic aspects of the county.

Wicklow's LCDC seeks to achieve an inclusive society for all and will strive to help Wicklow's young people reach their full potential. Actions within this plan will encourage active citizenship and improve local decision making through CLLD approaches. This strategy provides for specific targeted interventions in order to build capacity and encourage communities to engage and benefit from the LEADER Programme through a bottom-up approach.

The economy of Wicklow will be improved through this plan and local businesses will be strengthened, providing additional employment locally as a result of funding support under this programme. Wicklow's tourism sector, which plays an integral role in the county's economy, will be further enhanced in line with environmental sustainability considerations.

Wicklow's LCDC is cognisant of the sensitivity of the county's landscape and will strive to ensure that all developments are in line with environmental best practice. In addition, communities and businesses in the county will build their awareness and capacity in relation to environmental policies and practices as a core objective of this plan.

Wicklow's rural towns will receive a particular focus and will be improved and enhanced through this strategy, rendering them more attractive propositions for businesses to re-locate to and for people to live in. These interventions will help to build social capital in towns which will result in additional benefits to the surrounding hinterlands, therefore impacting positively on the wider community and economy. The county's carbon footprint will be reduced as a result of environmental actions and supports for renewable energy businesses within this plan. Wicklow's LCDC is committed to realising this vision for the county and is confident that the actions contained in this plan will help them to achieve this goal.

Specifically, this LDS has identified eight local objectives which will be addressed through 20 targeted Local Actions as follows.

**Table 25: Summary of Local Objectives, Strategic Actions and associated budgets**

Local Objective (LO)	Strategic Actions	Budget €	
<p>(LO1) Rural Tourism To strengthen Wicklow’s private and community tourism sector and build capacity within the sector to increase economic benefits and job creation, working individually and collectively to improve the overall product offering, marketing, networking, and capacity whilst ensuring that Wicklow's unique environment is protected through the actions supported in this LDS.</p>	<p>Strategic Action 1.1 – To support the growth of the tourism sector in Wicklow by improving and expanding the quality and range of tourism products on offer.</p>	<p>Capital Marketing A &amp; D</p>	<p>900,000 50,000 50,000</p>
	<p>Strategic Action 1.2 – Build the capacity of Wicklow’s rural communities and tourism providers to be prepared to take advantage of Fáilte Ireland’s IAE brand and expand market share.</p>	<p>Training Animation</p>	<p>80,000 10,000</p>
	<p>Strategic Action 1.3 – To animate and develop the heritage tourism potential of South Wicklow’s Fitzwilliam Coolattin Estate as a co-operative approach to destination development and an economic driver for the villages and towns of Shillelagh, Coolboy, Carnew &amp; Tinahely.</p>	<p>Animation A &amp; D Marketing Training</p>	<p>30,000 20,000 20,000 10,000</p>
	<p>Strategic Action 1.4 – To animate and develop the unique and traditional village settlements of West Wicklow as a driver of heritage tourism through a cooperative approach aimed at destination development as a mechanism of stimulating economic activity in the area</p>	<p>Animation A &amp; D Marketing Training</p>	<p>30,000 10,000 10,000 10,000</p>
	<p>Strategic Action 1.5 – Assist</p>	<p>Training</p>	<p>70,000</p>

	Wicklow's tourism providers and rural communities to benefit from social media as an effective marketing tool to attract visitors.	(countywide)	
<b>Total Budget for LO 1</b>		<b>€1.3 million</b>	
(LO2) Enterprise Development & Job Creation – Improve Wicklow's economy and increase job creation locally through support for LEADER - type new and existing innovative enterprises.	Strategic Action 2.1 - Support and expand LEADER-type micro/SME and social enterprises in Wicklow providing capital, marketing, and Analysis and Development support where needed as a stimulus to creating an entrepreneurial environment linked to job creation and service provision in the county.	Capital Marketing A & D	550,000 100,000 100,000
	Strategic Action 2.2 - Support and facilitate the development of social enterprises and social entrepreneurs in Wicklow, as key contributors to local employment creation and the provision of much needed services and products.	Capital Animation Training	150,000 30,000 30,000
	Strategic Action 2.3 - Strengthen the capacity of start-up and existing LEADER-type businesses in Wicklow	Training	30,000
<b>Total Budget (LO2)</b>		<b>€990,000</b>	
(LO 3) Rural Towns - Regenerate and strengthen Wicklow's towns ensuring that they are attractive places to visit, live, and do business in.	Strategic Action 3.1 – Deliver a community buildings and social capital regeneration programme in specific towns in Wicklow to improve the social aspects of these areas.	Capital	220,000
	Strategic Action 3.2 – Facilitate community planning through the development of four integrated Town Enhancement/Renewal Plans	Animation A & D	20,000 60,000
	Strategic Action 3.3 - Wicklow's Town Enhancement/Renewal Capital Programme	Capital Marketing	350,000 50,000
<b>Total Budget (LO3)</b>		<b>€700,000</b>	
(LO4) Basic Services for Hard-to- Reach Communities - To build the capacity of those excluded or at risk of social	Strategic Action 4.1 - Targeted animation/capacity building and capital programme to support 'hard-to-reach'	Animation Capital	50,000 200,000

exclusion among Wicklow's hard-to-reach communities and support the development of social and recreational infrastructure in these areas in line with needs identified.	communities in rural villages/areas as an initiative to improve balanced regional development across the county.		
	Strategic Action 4.2 - Support facilities/Hubs/projects that enable engagement/participation among individuals experiencing social and geographical exclusion.	Animation Capital	20,000 230,000
<b>Total Budget (LO4)</b>		<b>€500,000</b>	
(LO 5) Rural Youth - Improve pathways for young people in Wicklow to ensure that they are positively engaged and reach their full potential through maximising social and economic opportunities that improve their quality of life	Strategic Action 5.1 - Provision of bespoke, flexible and creative pathways to learning for young people enabling them to progress both socially and economically in line with their own specific needs and interests and to reach their full potential.	Animation Training	5,000 45,000
	Strategic Action 5.2 Develop and deliver a rural youth re-engagement programme in West Wicklow.	Animation Training	30,000 20,000
	Strategic Action 5.3 Support provision of social infrastructure for young people in specific areas where the need is greatest.	Capital	127,411
<b>Total Budget (LO5)</b>		<b>€227,411</b>	
(LO6) Protection and sustainable uses of Water Resources - Protect Wicklow's local water resources through awareness creation and appropriate local water conservation solutions among communities and businesses.	Strategic Action 6.1 – Support communities and individuals to investigate and develop solutions and contribute to the conservation of our valuable local water resources	Capital A & D Training	20,000 20,000 10,000
<b>Total Budget (LO6)</b>		<b>€50,000</b>	
(LO7) Protection of Local Biodiversity – Enhance and protect Wicklow's unique local biodiversity ensuring increased awareness, enjoyment and protection for the future.	Strategic Action 7.1 - Improve local biodiversity awareness and protection among communities in Wicklow	A & D Training	50,000 10,000
	Strategic Action 7.2 - Improve recreational access to areas of	Capital Marketing	600,000 100,820

	high nature value, ensuring protection of local biodiversity		
<b>Total Budget (LO7)</b>		<b>€760,820</b>	
(LO8) Development of Renewable Energy - Support for renewable energy initiatives and businesses as a mechanism to reduce Wicklow's carbon footprint and improve the economy through increased employment in the sector.	Strategic Action 8.1 - Strengthen the development and quality of Wicklow's renewable energy businesses	Animation Capital A & D	30,000 120,000 50,000
<b>Total Budget (LO8)</b>		<b>200,000</b>	
<b>Overall Budget</b>		<b>€4,728,231</b>	

## 4.2 Local Objectives and Strategic Actions

### 4.2.1 Local Objective 1: Rural Tourism

Local Objective 1	
Rural Tourism	
Title of Local Objective	To strengthen Wicklow's private and community tourism sector and build capacity within the sector to increase economic benefits and job creation, working individually and collectively to improve the overall product offering, marketing, networking, and capacity whilst ensuring that Wicklow's unique environment is protected through the actions supported in this LDS.
LEADER Theme Sub Theme:	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation Rural Tourism
Rationale	<p>As outlined in Section 2, Wicklow's image as the 'Garden of Ireland' with its mountainous landscape and coastline and its close proximity to the country's main access points and a large urban market on the doorstep presents significant potential for the county to grow its tourism sector. The county has already established a very strong outdoor recreation brand and a renowned walking product. The Wicklow Way traverses 130km through some of the most scenic parts of the county and represents a key hook for attracting visitors. Eco-tourism opportunities exist, with the Wicklow Mountains a key local and national asset. Research has shown that hillwalking and outdoor pursuits are the main reasons that overseas and domestic visitors visit the county. Consolidation of work in this area through auditing, packaging, destination, and mapping will help to grow the sector as a strong economic driver for the county.</p> <p>As highlighted in Section 2, Wicklow's high incidence of out-commuting for work means the county must strive to increase market share and create jobs locally. Investment in new products will further enhance Wicklow's product offering and encourage innovation in the tourism area.</p> <p>Successive LEADER programmes have worked in partnership with individuals and communities to build new and innovative niche products and there are models of good practice to assist learning. Clustering and network approaches will help to develop new and emerging destinations, particularly in the west and the south where tourism is under-developed. Local approaches will lead to innovations in line with the CLLD approach.</p> <p>The Ireland's Ancient East (IAE) brand proposition represents potential for growth in the heritage tourism market. Given Wicklow's wealth of natural, built, and social heritage, it is well placed to maximise benefits in this area. Specific training will build the capacity of communities and businesses in Wicklow to delivery on this brand promise.</p> <p>Research in Section 2 has highlighted the fact the under-development of Wicklow's marine and coastal tourism sector. There is a significant opportunity for product development and marketing in this area. Priority will be given to innovative projects that seek to develop tourism around this natural asset to help sustain and create local jobs in the sector in line with environmental considerations.</p> <p>All actions under this theme will seek to support the cross-cutting themes of innovation, environment and climate change</p>
Link to Draft	High Level Economic Goals

LECP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and direct the tourism development of the county in a sustainable manner that conserves, promotes, protects, and enhances the county's natural, built, and cultural heritage and derives optimal economic benefit from visitors to the county.</li> <li>• Realise the potential benefits of the county's maritime assets.</li> </ul> <p>The LEADER Programme has been identified as a partner in the following Draft Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a county strategy for tourism, building on Ireland's Ancient East, to encourage greater economic benefits to Wicklow, in collaboration with neighbouring counties</li> <li>• Engage with local communities in developing community led tourism initiatives</li> <li>• Seek funding opportunities that will support the development of the county's tourism, recreation, maritime, culture and heritage sectors</li> <li>• Develop Greenway and Blueway trails to create greater interlinkage of towns, villages, and rural areas</li> <li>• Develop and promote dedicated themed tourism trails to include film, food, and spiritual trails</li> <li>• Support capacity building for SMEs in developing tourism related enterprise</li> <li>• Develop a <i>Marine Tourism Action Plan</i> to promote marine leisure activities, allowing for collaborations with national and international tourism agencies to promote the county's marine assets and liaise with local businesses and communities in creating complementary marine-related activities</li> <li>• Develop and promote urban trails and heritage assets within the county</li> <li>• Incorporate the food and beverage brand into a food-related tourism initiative which can be marketed nationally and internationally</li> <li>• Support and promote new and existing festivals</li> <li>• Expand maritime leisure activities and develop and actively promote international maritime tourism links</li> </ul>
Financial Allocation	€1.3 million
No. of Strategic Actions	5

Strategic Action 1.1	
Title of Strategic Action	To support the growth of the tourism sector in Wicklow by improving and expanding the quality and range of tourism products on offer
Description	Fund innovative new and existing tourism products in Wicklow that maximise Wicklow's unique resources in the area of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Eco-Tourism</li> <li>- Food &amp; Beverage Tourism</li> <li>- Heritage Tourism (Ireland's Ancient East Brand)</li> <li>- Coastal and Marine Tourism</li> <li>- Activity based tourism</li> <li>- Community based Trails/Cycle paths/Parks</li> <li>- Specialised Accommodation (criteria</li> <li>- Craft Tourism</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Added Value to Strategic Actions</b></p> <p>:: Support Programme complemented by Wicklow's LEO providing professional mentoring as a support to the sector, ensuring quality business development models and complementarity of resources.</p> <p>:: Co-operate with Wicklow County Tourism as a mechanism to create awareness and market new tourism initiatives.</p> <p>:: Support tourism initiatives in Wicklow's REDZ areas to further improve and enhance areas identified for development under REDZ pilot areas.</p> <p>:: Strengthen Wicklow Community Tourism sector in conjunction with Wicklow's Heritage Forum and Wicklow PPN strategies/plans.</p> <p>:: Complement the strategic direction of Wicklow's Outdoor Recreation Strategy Committee and Wicklow Way Management Committee and work closely with Wicklow's Outdoor Recreation Officer as a mechanism to assist development and to improve Wicklow's 'Great Outdoors' offering.</p> <p>:: Build on the work completed under the FLAG South East Group to date and complement future plans in this area.</p> <p>:: Draw on the findings of the Audit Report of Coastal Facilities. completed by the FLAG SE Group.</p> <p>:: Build on Fáilte Ireland's IAE brand initiative working with smaller rural heritage products to complement the larger heritage sites supported by Fáilte Ireland and provide the visitor with an 'off-the-beaten track' rural experience.</p>	
Target Group (s)	New and existing tourism providers and rural community groups	
Geographical Area	All of Wicklow	
Type of Call	2 x Time-Specific Calls	
Timeframe for Delivery of Action	1 <sup>st</sup> Call - Q3/2016 - Closing Q1/2017 2 <sup>nd</sup> Call – Q3/2017 – Closing Q1/2018	
Delivery Organisation	County Wicklow Partnership on behalf of LAG	
Collaborating Organisations	<p>Wicklow County Council (REDZ), Wicklow County Tourism, Wicklow LEO, Wicklow Heritage Forum, community organisations, PPN, Wicklow Outdoor Recreation Committee, Wicklow Way Management Committee, Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland</p> <p>Potential for co-funding with LEO may be permitted for private projects that demonstrate a clear benefit to the community.</p> <p>Potential for funding with REDZ zones</p> <p>Potential for funding under Fáilte Ireland - IAE Capital Fund</p>	
Projected Outputs/Indicators and Targets	Projects Funded - New	10
	Projects Funded - Existing	10
	Job Creation	10 FT, 10 PT, 30 Seasonal
	Jobs Sustained	15 FT, 15 PT, 20 Seasonal
Projected No. of each type of initiative funded	Activity/Adventure Tourism	6
	Culture and Heritage Tourism	5
	Eco-tourism	2
	Marine and Water-based Tourism	5
	Agri-Food Tourism	2

Number and Value of Funding	Capital x 20 Marketing x 15 Analysis & Development x 10	€900,000 €50,000 €50,000
Projected Number of Visitors	90,000 PA	

Strategic Action 1.2		
Title of Strategic Action	Build the capacity of Wicklow's rural communities and tourism providers to be prepared to take advantage of Fáilte's Ireland's IAE brand and expand market share.	
Description	<p>Delivery of storytelling, guiding and heritage training to equip tourism providers and communities to interpret their area by 'telling their unique story' to maximise potential under IAE brand proposition.</p> <p><b>Added Value to Strategic Action</b>  :: Deliver on the IAE brand proposition by unveiling Wicklow's unique story to support this brand promise and bring our heritage alive.  :: Assisting Wicklow County Tourism to effectively market the county and attract the culturally curious market segment through the promotion of storytelling and heritage information.  :: Strengthen the capacity of tourism providers in line with the IAE brand promise.</p>	
Target Group(s)	Tourism providers, individuals, and rural communities	
Geographical Area	Countywide flagship training initiative	
Type of Call	Time-Specific Call (2 Calls)	
Timeframe for Delivery of Action	Develop Project Proposal/ Procurement Q3/2016 Delivery Q1/2017	
Delivery Organisation	County Wicklow Partnership on behalf of LAG	
Collaborating Organisations	Fáilte Ireland, Wicklow County Tourism, Wicklow's PPN, Wicklow's Heritage Forum, Wicklow's historical societies, community tourism groups	
Projected Outputs/Indicators and Targets	Number of people trained	100
Number and Value of Funding	Training Courses x 4 Animation Project x 1	€80,000 €10,000

Strategic Action 1.3		
Title of Strategic Action	To animate and develop the heritage tourism potential of South Wicklow's Fitzwilliam Coolattin Estate as a co-operative approach to destination development and an economic driver for the villages and towns of Shillelagh, Carnew, Coolboy and Tinahely	
Description	Deliver a programme of supports including animation, training, technical assistance, and marketing within the community and tourism provider sector in the under-developed tourism area of South Wicklow, identifying key strengths including those arising from the Fitzwilliam Coolattin Estate and Canadian diaspora connection with a view to developing a heritage tour destination and trail as an economic driver for the area.	

	<b>Added Value to Strategic Action</b> :: Aligns with Fáilte Ireland's IAE brand proposition with potential to leverage funding under IAE Capital Funds :: Builds on the work undertaken by Wicklow County Council for The Gathering in 2013. :: Complements the work of Wicklow's Heritage Forum and Heritage Council of Ireland. :: Aligns with CEDRA Report regarding the benefits of a variety of supports for destination development. :: Animates energy towards digitising the Coolattin records (currently in storage in the National Library) :: Stimulates interest for investment and job creation in the area. :: Potential to develop inter-territorial or trans-national project to leverage additional funding and ensure cross learning and best practice.	
Target Group(s)	Communities and tourism providers in the villages of Tinahely, Shillelagh, Coolboy, Carnew, and Coolattin Estate (south Wicklow)	
Geographical Area	South Wicklow	
Type of Call	Time-Specific Call	
Timeframe for Delivery	Development of brief and procurement Q4/2016 Roll out Q1/2017	
Delivery Organisation	County Wicklow Partnership on behalf of LAG	
Collaborating Organisations	Wicklow Heritage Forum, Wicklow County Tourism, Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland, National Library of Ireland, local historical societies, Tinahely Arts Centre Committee, Shillelagh Courthouse Committee, Heritage Council of Ireland, Coolattin House Committee	
Projected Outputs, Indicators and Targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cultural and heritage tourism</li> <li>- Promotion of area as destination</li> <li>- Cluster/network to tourism businesses and communities</li> </ul>	1 1 1
Number and Value of Funding	Animation x 1 A&D x 1 Marketing x 1 Training x 1	€30,000 €20,000 €20,000 €10,000

Strategic Action 1.4	
Title of Strategic Action	To animate and develop the unique rural traditional village settlements of West Wicklow as a driver of heritage tourism through a cooperative approach aimed at destination development as a mechanism of stimulating economic activity in the area.
Description	Deliver a programme of supports including animation, training, technical assistance and marketing among the lakeside communities and tourism provider sector of West Wicklow, identifying key strengths including those arising from the traditional village settlements, landscape, and wealth of skills/crafts that are synonymous with the area with a view to developing a village heritage and craft destination tour/trail as an economic driver for the area.  <b>Added Value to Strategic Action</b> :: Aligns with Fáilte Ireland's IAE brand proposition with potential to leverage funding under IAE Capital Funds.

	<p>:: Aligns with CEDRA Report regarding variety of support for destination development.</p> <p>:: Stimulates interest for investment and job creation in the area.</p> <p>:: Consolidates ongoing development of the Blessington Greenway Trail (45km walking and cycling trail around the Blessington Lake) and prepares lakeside communities and tourism providers to take advantage of the completion of this flagship product by introducing a heritage tourism destination product rendering the area more attractive for extended holidays.</p> <p>:: Presents potential to develop inter-territorial or trans-national project to leverage additional funding and ensure cross learning.</p> <p>:: Helps to balance benefits across the county and helps to spread visitor numbers from 'honeypots'.</p>		
Target Group(s)	Blessington lakeside communities and tourism providers		
Geographical Area	West Wicklow		
Type of Call	Time-Specific Call		
Timeframe for Delivery	Development of brief and procurement Q1/2017 Roll out Q2/2017		
Delivery Organisation	County Wicklow Partnership on behalf of LAG		
Collaborating Organisations	ESB, Birdwatch Ireland, Heritage Forum, Wicklow County Tourism, Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland, Lakeside Heritage Group, local historical societies, Heritage Council of Ireland. Hollywood Fair Committee, Blessington Greenway Committee, Blessington Forum & Lakeside Consortium		
Projected Outputs, Indicators and Targets	Number of each type of initiative funded <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cultural &amp; Heritage Tourism</li> <li>- Promotion of area as destination</li> <li>- Cluster/Network of Tourism Businesses &amp; Communities</li> </ul>		1 1 1
Number and Value of Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animation</li> <li>• A&amp;D</li> <li>• Marketing</li> <li>• Training</li> </ul>	1 1 1 1	€30,000 €10,000 €10,000 €10,000

Strategic Action 1.5	
Title of Strategic Action	Assist Wicklow's tourism providers and rural communities to benefit from social media as an effective marketing tool to attract visitors.
Description	<p>Deliver a training programme for tourism providers and rural communities that specifically develops their practical skills in the creation of quality social media content as an effective tourism marketing tool to attract tourism.</p> <p><b>Added Value to Strategic Action</b></p> <p>:: This practical training initiative will complement the social media training provided by the LEO.</p> <p>:: Assist Wicklow County Tourism to market County Wicklow effectively through the promotion and use of quality social media content as a mechanism to attract visitors to the county.</p>

	:: Aligns with IAE brand proposition, 'telling our story' through social media. :: Provides Tourism Ireland with quality promotional material	
Target Group(s)	Tourism Providers, individuals, and rural communities	
Geographical Area	Countywide	
Type of Call	Time-Specific Call	
Timeframe for Delivery	Develop project proposal and procurement Q3/2016 Delivery Q1/2017	
Delivery Organisation	County Wicklow Partnership on behalf of LAG	
Collaborating Organisations	Wicklow County Tourism, Wicklow LEO, Wicklow Film Commission, Wicklow Heritage Forum, Tourism Ireland, Fáilte Ireland.	
Projected Outputs/Indicators and Targets	Number of people trained	50
Number and Value of Funding	Training x 2	€70,000

#### 4.2 Local Objective 2: Enterprise Development and Job Creation

Local Objective 2	
Enterprise Development and Job Creation	
Title of Local Objective	Improve Wicklow's economy and increase job creation locally through support for LEADER-type new and existing innovative enterprises.
LEADER Theme/Sub Theme	Theme: Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation - Enterprise Development
Rationale	<p>Based on the needs analysis in Section 2's socio-economic profile and feedback from the public and stakeholder consultation, Wicklow must find ways to increase jobs in the county. High levels of out-commuting has a draining effect on the economy and community life and is a contributor to climate change.</p> <p>As outlined, Wicklow's age dependence rate is one-to-one, so it is vital that the county can create employment to support this rate.</p> <p>The downturn in the economy, especially in the construction sector, impacted strongly on Wicklow given its proximity to Dublin and the availability of substantial building contracts. The development of new innovative businesses will help to address some of this impact.</p> <p>Wicklow's proximity to a large urban market distribution is an advantage and its green image as the 'Garden of Ireland' make it well placed to take advantage of enterprise development, particularly in the area of artisan food production and eco-tourism.</p> <p>Availability of industrial and business units in the east and west of the county.</p> <p>Closer linkages with Carlow IT through the Claremont Campus provides for innovation for collaborative R&amp;D projects with businesses on the Carlow IT site. In addition, early stage innovative projects will benefit from R&amp;D funding support.</p> <p>Existing businesses in the county need support to allow for expansion and the creation of additional jobs locally.</p>

	<p>Building Wicklow's enterprises will have a knock-on effect on other supportive industries and services locally and will contribute to the multiplier effect across a range of sectors.</p> <p>There are a number of social enterprises in the county, however there is a great need for capacity building and support if these enterprises are to become sustainable and contribute to the rural economy. As identified in the area profile, Wicklow has an imbalance in terms of service delivery. Social enterprises and social entrepreneurs can address some of the shortfall through innovative approaches, particularly in rural areas.</p> <p>All actions under this theme will seek to support the cross-cutting themes of innovation, environment, and climate change.</p>
Link to Draft LECP	<p><b>High Level Economic Goals</b>  Harness the county's existing assets and encourage collaborative opportunities and business engagement amongst sectors to develop new markets and initiatives, maximising opportunities for business development and employment creation.</p> <p>The LEADER Programme has been identified as a partner in the following Draft Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and promote enterprise development and expansion in sectors that are distinctive to the county</li> <li>• Promote existing enterprise within the rural economy, providing support services and creating rural enterprise network collaborations</li> </ul> <p><b>High Level Goal</b>  Support the development of micro-enterprises and SMEs within the county and stimulate expansion of micro-enterprises and SMEs that facilitate the growth of economic activities, development of innovative sectors, promotion of business engagement and creation of new employment opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support capacity building for micro enterprises and SMEs</li> </ul> <p>Support the rural economy and promote rural economic diversification.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and promote agri-related entrepreneurship and micro-enterprise development and management through targeted strategies, and support agriculture diversification.</li> </ul>
Financial Allocation	€990,000
No. of Strategic Actions	3

Strategic Action 2.1	
Title of Strategic Action	Support and expand LEADER-type micro/SME and social enterprises in Wicklow providing capital, marketing, and Analysis and Development support where needed as a stimulus to creating an entrepreneurial environment linked to job creation and service provision in the county.
Description	Provide funding for relevant LEADER-type business to develop and expand through R&D, capital investment, and marketing supports leading to increased job

	<p>creation and service provision in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Micro enterprise</li> <li>• SME enterprises</li> <li>• Social enterprises</li> </ul> <p><b>Added Value of Strategic Actions</b></p> <p>:: Align with Wicklow LEO's mentoring, training and funding supports for businesses. Work with LEO's Online Trading Vouchers and potential for co-funding.</p> <p>:: Work in conjunction with Enterprise Ireland – Innovation Trading Vouchers.</p> <p>:: Tailored package for social enterprises particularly in rural and REDZ areas as a mechanism to regenerate rural areas, towns and their hinterlands and leverage additional funding.</p> <p>:: Support the work of Irish Social Enterprise Network Ireland through networking and peer-to-peer learning.</p>	
Target Group(s)	New and existing businesses and social enterprises	
Geographical Area	Countywide	
Type of Call	2 x Time-Specific Calls	
Timeframe for Delivery	1 <sup>st</sup> Call – Q4/2016 – Closing Q2/2017 2 <sup>nd</sup> Call – Q4/2017 – Closing Q2/2018	
Delivery Organisation	County Wicklow Partnership on behalf of LAG	
Collaborating Organisations	Wicklow County Council, Wicklow LEO, Enterprise Ireland, Microfinance Ireland, REDZ, Irish Social Enterprise Network, Ireland Chamber of Commerce.	
Projected Outputs/Indicators and Targets	Projects Funded – New	12
	Projects Funded – Existing	4
	Jobs Created - New	15 FT, 10 PT, 10 Seasonal
	Number of Jobs Sustained	10 FT, 5 PT, 5 Seasonal
Number of enterprises funded in each sector	– Agricultural Diversification	2
	– Food and Beverage	4
	– Marine Diversification	3
	– Creative Industry	4
	– Social Enterprise	3
Number and Value of Funding	Capital x 16	€550,000
	Marketing x 10	€100,000
	A&D x 10	€100,000

Strategic Action 2.2	
Title of Strategic Action	Support and facilitate the development of social enterprises and social entrepreneurs in Wicklow, as key contributors to local employment creation and the provision of much needed services and products.
Description	<p>Animation and training programme to create awareness and nurture the development and support of existing and expansion of new social enterprises in Wicklow.</p> <p><b>Added Value to Strategic Action</b></p> <p>:: Work in conjunction with REDZ areas and Arklow pilot.</p> <p>:: Work in conjunction with Wicklow's LEO and the WCC Social and Cultural</p>

	Section on actions contained in the draft LECP. :: Complement and work with Social Enterprise Network Ireland. :: Support the work of the SICAP Programme.	
Target Group(s)	Communities and individuals, particularly in areas where local services have been reduced or lost	
Geographical Area	Countywide	
Type of Call	Time-Specific Call	
Timeframe for Delivery	Develop proposal/procurement Q2/2017 Roll out Q3/2017	
Delivery Organisation	County Wicklow Partnership on behalf of LAG	
Collaborating Organisations	Wicklow County Council, Wicklow LEO, Wicklow PPN, Social Entrepreneurs Ireland, Microfinance Ireland, Clann Credo.	
Projected Outputs/Indicators and Targets	Projects Funded – New Projects Funded – Existing Number of Jobs Created- New Number of Jobs Sustained	6 6 4 FT, 6 PT, 10 Seasonal 4 FT, 8 PT, 15 Seasonal
Number of enterprises funded in each sector	Social Enterprises	12
Number and Value of Funding	Capital Animation x 1 Training x 1	€150,000 € 30,000 € 30,000

Strategic Action 2.3		
Title of Strategic Action	Strengthen the capacity of start-up and existing LEADER-type businesses in Wicklow.	
Description	Develop and deliver needs-driven bespoke training to new and existing LEADER-type enterprises in Wicklow in line with needs identified.  <b>Added Value to Strategic Action</b> :: Complement the suite of training offered by the LEO. :: Work in conjunction with REDZ areas and Arklow pilot. :: Complement economic actions of Wicklow draft LECP. :: Complement Teagasc 'Options' Programme. :: Complement the work of local Chamber of Commerce.	
Target Group(s)	New and existing LEADER-type businesses in Wicklow	
Geographical Area	Countywide	
Type of Call	Rolling Call	
Timeframe for Delivery	Develop proposal/procurement Q4/2016 Roll Out – Q1/2017	
Delivery Organisation	County Wicklow Partnership on behalf of LAG	
Collaborating Organisations	Wicklow County Council Economic Unit, Wicklow LEO, Microfinance Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, Teagasc.	
Projected Outputs/Indicators and Targets	Number of people trained	40
Number and Value of Funding	Training x 1	€30,000

### 4.3 Local Objective 3: Rural Towns

Local Objective 3	
Rural Towns	
Title of Local Objective	Regenerate and strengthen Wicklow's towns ensuring that they are attractive places to visit, live, and do business in.
LEADER Theme/Sub Theme	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation - Rural Towns
Rationale	<p>As identified in Section 2, some of Wicklow's towns are lagging behind and in need of revitalisation and enhancements. Wicklow's high incidence of out-commuting for work purposes has drained the economy and communities. Some towns have become dormitory towns. Wicklow's towns must be supported to become attractive propositions for businesses and people to live in. Business must be attracted back into town centres to support the economy and create employment for the town itself and the surrounding hinterland as a hub.</p> <p>Integrated Town Plans will provide the necessary best practice guidelines in terms of visually enhancing Wicklow's towns in line with environmental best practice and will help to build social capital. This LDS will support Wicklow's towns to become more visually attractive and to enhance their distinctive character making them more attractive to locals and to visitors alike.</p> <p>This LDS will support Wicklow's towns to become more visually attractive and to enhance their distinctive character making them more attractive to locals and to visitors alike.</p> <p>All actions under this theme will seek to support the cross-cutting themes of innovation, environment and climate change.</p>
Link to Draft LECP	<p>High Level Economic Goal Promote and direct tourism development in the county in a sustainable manner that conserves, promotes, protects, and enhances the county's natural, built, and cultural heritage and derives optimal economic benefit from visitors to the county.</p> <p>High Level Economic Goal Support and promote the development of co-operatives and food markets in the county</p> <p>The LEADER Programme has been identified as a partner in the following Draft Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the reinvigoration of the county's towns and villages and enhance the overall attractiveness of the streetscape, public realm and civic and recreational facilities and strengthen the link between town centre living and shopping (See Action 4 Retail and Town Centres)</li> </ul> <p>Draft Community Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build and expand on the REDZ Pilot Initiative in Arklow</li> <li>• Provide capacity and skills training for community activists to partake in decision making and access funding</li> </ul>
Financial Allocation	€700,000
No. of Strategic Actions	3

Strategic Action 3.1		
Title of Strategic Action	Deliver a community buildings and social capital regeneration programme in specific towns in Wicklow to improve the social aspect of these areas	
Description	<p>Small-scale refurbishment of multifunctional community buildings that offer space for HUB activity i.e. social/cultural/educational activity in specific targeted areas (applications capped).</p> <p><b>Added Value to Strategic Action</b>            :: Complement the work of the SICAP Programmes.            :: Complement the work of Wicklow's Network for Older People.            :: Support the work of Fóroige in Wicklow.</p>	
Target Group(s)	Programme targeted towards harder-to-reach communities that have not benefited from LEADER funding support in the past and where the need is greatest.	
Geographical Area	Countywide	
Type of Call	Time-Specific Call	
Timeframe for Delivery	Q3/2016 (1 <sup>st</sup> Call) Q3/2017 (2 <sup>nd</sup> Call)	
Delivery Organisation	County Wicklow Partnership on behalf of LAG	
Collaborating Organisations	Wicklow Local Authority (Social & Cultural), Wicklow PPN, SICAP, ETB, community groups	
Projected Outputs/Indicators and Targets	Number of Projects Funded	11
Populations in Towns Receiving Funding	15,000	
Number of Projects funded by type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development of recreational spaces</li> <li>- Maintenance/Restoration/Upgrading of built environment in towns</li> </ul>	5 6
Number and Value of Funding	Capital x 11	€220,000

Strategic Action 3.2		
Title of Strategic Action	Facilitate community planning through the development of four integrated Town Enhancement/Renewal Plans	
Description	<p>Development of four integrated Town Enhancement Plans as a mechanism to involve communities in identifying key challenges and opportunities for future development of their area in line with best practice.</p> <p><b>Added Value to Strategic Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work in association with the relevant municipal districts and the Local Authority's Planning and Environmental Sections</li> <li>- Contribute to the work of the Town Chambers.</li> <li>- Contribute to Fáilte Ireland IAE branding.</li> </ul>	
Target Group(s)	Communities and businesses in targeted towns	
Geographical Area	Targeted Towns – Wicklow and environs/Baltinglass/Carnew/Arklow (1 <sup>st</sup> Call)	
Type of Call	Time-Specific Call	
Timeframe for Delivery	Q3/2017 (1 <sup>st</sup> Call) Q3/2018 (2 <sup>nd</sup> Call if required)	

Delivery Organisation	County Wicklow Partnership on behalf of LAG	
Collaborating Organisations	Wicklow Local Authority - Planning and Environmental Sections, Chamber of Commerce, Tidy Towns Groups, and Town Development Groups	
Projected Outputs/Indicators and Targets	Number of Projects funded	4 Town Development Plans
	Population in Towns receiving funding	26,517 (2011 Census)
Number of Projects funded by Type	Streetscape Enhancement	4
Number and Value of Funding	Animation x 4	€20,000
	Analysis & Development x 4	€60,000

Strategic Action 3.3		
Title of Strategic Action	Wicklow's Town Enhancement/Renewal Capital Programme	
Description	<p>Fund four towns to implement key enhancement recommendations arising from the supported Town Development Plans as a mechanism to regenerate both social and economic activity in line with best practice guidelines.</p> <p><b>Added Value for Strategic Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>:: Align with REDZ Pilot Project in Arklow and leverage additional funds.</li> <li>:: Align with Community and Economic Actions of LECP.</li> <li>:: Complement Fáilte Ireland's IAE brand initiative.</li> <li>:: Work with relevant municipal districts.</li> <li>:: Work with the Government's Town and Village Plan as announced at the National Ploughing Championship 2015 to leverage greater supports for the towns in greatest need to ensure that Wicklow has strong revitalised towns.</li> </ul>	
Target Group(s)	Communities and businesses in targeted towns	
Geographical Area	Targeted Towns – Wicklow and environs/Baltinglass/Carnew/Arklow (1 <sup>st</sup> Call)	
Type of Call	Time-Specific Call	
Timeframe for Delivery	Q3/2017 – Q3/2019	
Delivery Organisation	County Wicklow Partnership on behalf of LAG	
Collaborating Organisations	Wicklow County Council Planning Section, Chamber of Commerce, Town Development Associations, Tidy Towns Groups	
Projected Outputs/Indicators & Targets	Number of Projects Funded	4
	Number of Jobs Created - New	20
Projected Outputs/Indicators & Targets	Number of Jobs Sustained	30
	Population in Towns receiving funding	26,517 (2011 Census)
Number of Projects funded by Type	– Streetscape Enhancements	4
	– Tidy Towns	4
	– Maintenance/Restoration/Upgrading of built environment in town	4
	– Development of Recreational Spaces	4
	– Development of Markets	2
	– Developments of Festivals	2
Number & Value of Funding	Capital x 4	€350,000
	Marketing x 4	€50,000

<b>Local Objective 4</b>	
Basic Services for Hard-to-Reach Communities	
Title of Local Objective	To build the capacity of those excluded or at risk of social exclusion among Wicklow's hard-to-reach communities and support the development of social and recreational infrastructure in these areas in line with needs identified.
Theme/Sub Theme	Social Inclusion – Sub Theme Basic Services Targeted at Hard to Reach Communities.
Rationale	<p>As highlighted, not all areas and communities in Wicklow have developed at the same rate, some communities are lagging behind. There is a variety of capacity levels across the LDS region. Communities that are harder to reach will need a more targeted approach to assist them to build their capacity in line with CLLD approaches.</p> <p>Wicklow experiences an east-west divide and the balance of power is perceived to lie on the east. This had led to a disconnection between communities. In addition, services in the more rural areas have been reduced or lost in some incidences.</p> <p>Some communities and individuals are at risk of isolation and exclusion, but social and recreational projects and infrastructure can help to break this isolation and lead to engagement. Positive environments for both social and environmental activities are hugely beneficial for such areas.</p> <p>Community involvement in decision making builds social capital and helps communities to develop in line with their specific needs. Such developments can help to stimulate innovative solutions to local problems.</p> <p>All actions under this theme will seek to support the cross-cutting themes of innovation, environment, and climate change.</p>
Link to Draft LECP	<p>High Level Economic Goal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and promote the development of co-operatives and food markets in the county.</li> </ul> <p>High Level Community Goal</p> <p>Urban regeneration and rural development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide training and support for community engagement in regeneration and development</li> </ul> <p>High quality integrated services available to all communities, in particular disadvantaged communities and vulnerable groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address gaps in service delivery in West Wicklow</li> </ul>
Financial Allocation	€500,000
No. of Strategic Actions	2

#### **4.4 Local Objective 4: Basic Services for Hard-to-Reach Communities**

Strategic Action 4.1	
Title of Strategic Action	Targeted animation/capacity building and capital programme to support 'hard-to-reach' communities in rural villages/areas as an initiative to improve balanced regional development across the county.
Description	Deliver an Animation Programme to build the capacity of specific small communities to improve the quality of life of those at risk of social exclusion through the development of small-scale community led local action plans and the implementation of these plans and support for local development projects.

	<b>Added Value to Strategic Action</b> :: Support the work of the SICAP Programmes. :: Support the work of Wicklow's Network for Older People. :: Work in association with KWETB in relation to community education interventions. :: Build social capital in areas where the need is greatest.		
Target Group(s)	Village communities that have not accessed funding in the past (criteria)		
Geographical Area	Countywide		
Type of Call	Time Specific Call		
Timeframe for Delivery	Develop proposal/procurement Q4/2017 Roll Out Q2/2018		
Delivery Organisation	County Wicklow Partnership on behalf of LAG		
Collaborating Organisations	Wicklow Local Authority (Social and Cultural, Planning sections), SICAP Programmes (2), Wicklow Network for Older People, Wicklow PPN, community groups		
<b>Projected Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets</b>			
Number of Projects funded and type of service	Social Amenities		2
	Recreational/Physical Amenities		2
Number of projects funded and target groups	Older People		✓ All Groups
	People with a disability		
	Children		
	Young People		
	Travellers		
	Migrants/New Communities		
	Unemployed People		
	People Living Alone		
Number and Value of Funding	Animation	1	€50,000
	Capital	4	€200,000

Strategic Action 4.2			
Title of Strategic Action	Support facilities/Hubs/projects that enable engagement/ participation among individuals experiencing social and geographical exclusion.		
Description	Support social and recreational projects in targeted communities as a means of engagement and encouraging community involvement among groups experiencing exclusion e.g. Sheds/community gardens/environmental and intergenerational projects.  <b>Added Value to Strategic Action</b> :: Support positive mental health projects throughout the county through community gardens and environmental projects. :: Support the work of Wicklow's Network for Older People. :: Support the work of the Tús and RSS programmes.		
Target Group(s)	Older persons, lone parents, rural men, smallholders, people living in disadvantaged communities, unemployed and underemployed, young people not in education or employment (NEETs), Travellers, new communities/residents		
Geographical Area	Countywide		
Type of Call	Time Specific Call		

Timeframe for Delivery	Q4/2017 – Q4/2019	
Delivery Organisation	County Wicklow Partnership on behalf of LAG	
Collaborating Organisations	Wicklow Local Authority Environmental Section, Wicklow PPN, community garden groups, Sheds groups, SICAP, Wicklow Network for Older People	
Projected Outputs/Indicators and Targets		
Number of Projects funded and type of service	Social Amenities	4
	Recreational Amenities	4
Number of projects funded and target groups	Older people People with a disability Children Young people Travellers Migrants/New Communities Unemployed people People living alone	✓ All Groups
Number and Value of Funding	Animation x 1	€20,000
	Capital x 4	€230,000

#### 4.5 Local Objective 5: Rural Youth

Local Objective 5	
Rural Youth	
Title of Local Objective	Improve pathways for young people in Wicklow to ensure that they are positively engaged and reach their full potential through maximising social and economic opportunities that improve their quality of life
Theme/Sub Theme	Social Inclusion - Rural Youth
Rationale	<p>Young people in Wicklow must be supported to reach their full potential in line with their own area of interest and skills. Some young people have become disengaged from social, economic and educational activity. This has led to poor mental health among some young people. This LDS seeks to address this through tailored local interventions.</p> <p>As highlighted, there is a need to introduce a targeted approach of animation in order to encourage re-engagement. Through the consultation process, West Wicklow has been identified as a particular area in need of such interventions. Although the need is great on the east of the county, the concentration and availability of youth services is more evident on the east.</p> <p>Through offering a variety of training initiatives across a broad spectrum of areas of interests, young people will be provided with an opportunity to progress socially and move towards additional education or economic activity.</p> <p>Through the provision of suitable social and recreational infrastructure, young people can develop and build their capacity within their communities and become active citizens and part of the decision-making process.</p> <p>All actions under this theme will seek to support the cross-cutting themes of innovation, environment and climate change.</p>
Link to Draft LECP	High Level Community Goal High quality integrated services available to all communities, in particular

	disadvantaged communities and vulnerable groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Address gaps in service delivery in West Wicklow particularly youth services</li> </ul>
Financial Allocation	€227,411
No. of Strategic Actions	3

Strategic Action 5.1	
Title of Strategic Action	Provision of bespoke, flexible and creative pathways to learning for young people enabling them to progress both socially and economically in line with their own specific needs and interests and to reach their full potential.
Description	Provide bespoke creative training opportunities for young people in specific targeted areas in line with needs identified as a mechanism for young people to progress socially and economically and reach their full potential.  <b>Added Value to Strategic Action</b> :: Work with the KWETB Youth Officer and inter-agency group. :: Complement Pathways Programme. :: Complement the work of the SICAP Programmes. :: Contribute to an entrepreneurial environment among young people.
Target Group(s)	Youth groups/young people
Geographical Area	Countywide
Type of Call	Time-Specific Call
Timeframe for Delivery	Develop proposal/procurement Q4/2017 Roll Out – Q1/2018
Delivery Organisation	County Wicklow Partnership on behalf of LAG
Collaborating Organisations	Wicklow Local Authority, Kildare/Wicklow ETB, local youth consortiums, SICAP Programmes (2), inter-agency group
Projected Outputs/Indicators and Targets	No of Projects Training Courses funded      3
Projects funded by Type	Youth entrepreneurship      1 Arts      1 Youth development      1
Nature of Service Provided	To enhance participation/outcome of a service through tailored support & training      3
Number of Young People directly participating	50
Number and Value of Funding	Animation x 1      €5,000 Training x 3      €45,000

Strategic Action 5.2	
Title of Strategic Action	Develop and deliver a rural youth re-engagement programme in West Wicklow.
Description	Provision of a targeted Animation/Re-engagement Programme in West Wicklow to address the specific needs of rural youth in the area who have

	dis-engaged from educational, social, and economic activities with a view to enabling them to maximise their full potential.	
	<b>Added Value to Strategic Action</b> :: Work in association with the Schools Completion Officer. :: Support the work of the KWETB Youth Officer. :: Work with the west Wicklow inter-agency group. :: Complement the work of the SICAP Programme.	
Target Group(s)	Young people	
Geographical Area	West Wicklow, including Blessington/Dunlavin/Baltinglass	
Type of Call	Time-Specific Call	
Timeframe for Delivery	Develop proposal/procurement Q4/2016 Roll Out – Q1/2017	
Delivery Organisation	County Wicklow Partnership on behalf of LAG	
Collaborating Organisations	Wicklow County Council, Kildare/Wicklow ETB, West Wicklow Youth Consortium, SICAP Programme, Blessington Forum, inter-agency group	
Projected Outputs/Indicators and Targets	Number of Projects Funded	3
Projects funded by Type	Youth Development	3
Nature of Service 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)	3
Number of Young People directly participating	40	
Number and Value of Funding	Animation x 1 Training x 2	€30,000 €20,000
<b>Strategic Action 5.3</b>		
Title of Strategic Action	Support provision of social infrastructure for young people in specific areas where the need is greatest.	
Description	Fund facilities/amenities/hubs that specifically meet the social needs of young people in targeted areas in Wicklow.	
	<b>Added Value to Strategic Action</b> :: Support the work of the SICAP Programmes :: Work in association with the youth inter-agency group. :: Support the work of Foróige and youth groups. :: Build more inclusive societies.	
Target Group(s)	Community groups/youth groups/sport groups	
Geographical Area	Countywide based on criteria	
Type of Call	Rolling Call	
Timeframe for Delivery	Q4/2016 – Q2/2020	
Delivery Organisation	County Wicklow Partnership on behalf of LAG	
Collaborating Organisations	Wicklow County Council, SICAP, youth groups and consortiums, Wicklow PPN	
Projected Outputs/Indicators and Targets	Number of Projects Funded	6

Projects funded by Type	Youth Clubs/Cafes	2
	Sports/Recreational	2
	Arts	1
	Environmental	1
Number of Young People directly participating	500	
Number and Value of Funding	Capital x 6	€127,411

#### 4.6 Local Objective 6: Protection and Sustainable Use of Water Resources

Local Objective 6	
Protection and Sustainable use of Water Resources	
Title of Local Objective	Protect Wicklow's local water resources through awareness creation and appropriate local water conservation solutions among communities and businesses.
Theme/Sub Theme	Rural Environment - Protection and Sustainable Uses of Water Resources
Rationale	<p>Wicklow businesses and communities must find sustainable ways to conserve local water resources.</p> <p>Community environmental schemes can help to sustain water and also contribute to the sustainability of community facilities and activities.</p> <p>This LDS will work in association with the Local Agenda 21 Environmental Partnership Grants Scheme to leverage more support for community water conservation projects.</p> <p>Awareness creation and capacity building in this area will help to develop local solutions and plans and enable communities and businesses to introduce conservation measures through harvesting and re-use of grey water.</p> <p>Technical support is needed to assist communities to identify relevant solutions to suit their particular project in line with best practice.</p> <p>All actions under this theme will seek to support the cross-cutting themes of innovation, environment, and climate change.</p>
Link to Draft LECP	<p>High level Community Goal That County Wicklow is low carbon and climate resilient, has reduced energy dependence, is sustainable in the use of resources, and has a vibrant green economy</p> <p>High Level Economic Goal Support the development of a renewable energy and low energy future for Wicklow.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness raising and training programmes</li> <li>• Developing and supporting communities in sustainable development projects</li> </ul>
Financial Allocation	€50,000
Number of Strategic Actions	1
<b>Strategic Action 6.1</b>	
Title of Strategic	Support communities and individuals to investigate and develop solutions

Action	and contribute to the conservation of our valuable local water resources	
Description	Provide training and technical support to communities and businesses to help them develop practical solutions to conserving local water resources.  <b>Added Value to Strategic Action</b> :: Complement funding on Local Agenda 21 Environmental Partnership Grants :: Contribute to the overall sustainability of community facilities. :: Complement the work of Wicklow County Council's Environmental Section.	
Target Group(s)	Tidy Towns Groups, Town Development Associations, all community groups and private promoters	
Geographical Area	Countywide	
Type of Call	Rolling Call	
Timeframe for Delivery	Q4/2016 - Q4/2017	
Delivery Organisation	County Wicklow Partnership on behalf of LAG	
Collaborating Organisations	Wicklow County Council Environmental Section, SEAI, Irish Water, Local Agenda 21 Environmental Partnership Grants	
Projected Outputs/Indicators and Targets	Number of Projects Funded – New	6
Type of Projects Funded	Local co-ordination initiatives	2
	Technical co-operation	2
	Energy Other	2
Number and Value of Funding	Capital	€20,000
	A&D x 6	€20,000
	Training x 2	€10,000

#### 4.7 Local Objective 7: Protection of Local Biodiversity

Local Objective 7	
Protection of Local Biodiversity	
Title of Local Objective	Enhance and protect Wicklow's unique local biodiversity ensuring increased awareness, enjoyment, and protection for the future
Theme/Sub Theme	Rural Environment - Protection and Improvement of Local Biodiversity
Rationale	<p>Wicklow has a unique and precious environment and all efforts must be made to ensure that healthy eco-systems are maintained. The county must strive to balance the protection of this environment with the pressures of increased visitors to sensitive areas of the county.</p> <p>Many communities in Wicklow have built their capacity in developing amenity and recreational spaces. Projects involving high nature value areas will have to be carried out with the appropriate technical advice and best practice plans to ensure protection of natural environments and habitats.</p> <p>Development of cycleways and walking trails can serve to enhance the social and economic aspect of rural environments, which are attractive amenities for locals and visitors.</p> <p>All actions under this theme will seek to support the cross-cutting themes of innovation, environment, and climate change.</p>
Link to Draft LECP	High Level Community Goal

	That County Wicklow is low carbon and climate resilient, has reduced energy dependence, is sustainable in the use of resources, and has a vibrant green economy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness raising and training programmes</li> <li>• Developing and supporting communities in sustainable development projects</li> </ul>
Financial Allocation	€715,000
No. of Strategic Actions	2

Strategic Action 7.1		
Title of Strategic Action	Improve local biodiversity awareness and protection among communities in Wicklow	
Description	Deliver local biodiversity awareness training and support communities to undertake specific required technical studies to achieve best practice in developing local projects.  <b>Added Value to Strategic Action</b> :: Contribute to Wicklow Local Biodiversity Plan. :: Complement the work of Wicklow County Council's Environmental Section. :: Projects will seek to impact positively on climate change. :: Support the work of the National Tidy Towns Competition.	
Target Group(s)	Tidy Towns Groups, Town Development Associations, all community groups and private promoters	
Geographical Area	Countywide	
Type of Call	Rolling Call	
Timeframe for Delivery	Q3/2018 – Q3/2019	
Delivery Organisation	County Wicklow Partnership on behalf of LAG	
Collaborating Organisations	Wicklow County Council - Environmental and Planning Sections, Wicklow Heritage Forum, Wicklow Uplands Council	
Outputs/Indicators and Targets	Number of Projects Funded – New	8
Type of Projects Funded	Impact Assessment	3
	Technical Co-operation	3
	Education & Awareness Programme	2
Number and Value of Funding	A&D	€50,000
	Training x 2	€10,000

Strategic Action 7.2		
Title of Strategic Action	Improve recreational access to areas of high nature value, ensuring protection of local biodiversity	
Description	Support communities to develop and upgrade Greenway and Blueway walkways, cycleways, and amenity areas where access is improved and local biodiversity is protected.  <b>Added Value to Strategic Action</b> :: Contribute to Wicklow Local Biodiversity Plan. :: Enhance the work of Wicklow's Pure Mile Project.	

	:: Complement the work of Wicklow Uplands Council. :: Work in association with Wicklow's Rural Recreation Officer and complements the branding developed through Wicklow's Outdoor Recreation Strategy.	
Target Group(s)	Town Development Associations, Tidy Towns Groups, environmental groups, community groups and private promoters	
Geographical Area	Countywide	
Type of Call	Rolling Call	
Timeframe for Delivery	Q3/2016 – Q2/2020	
Delivery Organisation	County Wicklow Partnership on behalf of LAG	
Collaborating Organisations	Wicklow County Council, Rural Recreation Officer (Walks Scheme), Tús Programme, RSS Programme, Tidy Towns Groups, Wicklow Heritage Forum, Wicklow Uplands Council, Birdwatch Ireland	
Projected Outputs/Indicators and Targets	Number of Projects funded – New	8
	Number of Projects funded – Existing	4
Type of Projects Funded	Local co-ordination initiatives	6
	Nature conservation initiatives	6
Number and Value of Funding	Capital	€600,000
	Marketing	€100,820

#### 4.8 Local Objective 8 : Development of Renewable Energy

Local Objective 8	
Development of Renewable Energy	
Title of Local Objective	Support for renewable energy initiatives and businesses as a mechanism to reduce Wicklow's carbon footprint and improve the economy through increased employment in the sector.
Theme Sub Theme	Rural Environment – Development of Renewable Energy
Rational	<p>Ireland has signed up to the EU Agreement to achieve 20 per cent reduction in greenhouse gases by 2020. As the most forested county, wood energy presents significant potential to work towards reductions. Wood energy is home grown and is an efficient renewable, sustainable, secure, and carbon-neutral source of energy. Ireland's own target is to achieve 16 per cent of its energy sources from renewable sources by 2020<sup>11</sup>. This strategy seeks to support businesses that provide renewable solutions.</p> <p>Given Wicklow's green image as the 'Garden County' and its proximity and access to a large urban market, it is well placed to develop business in new technologies utilising renewable energy sources and creating more jobs locally.</p> <p>Existing timber producer groups will be strengthened through achieving economies of scale through collaborative and cluster activities, which will benefit the wider rural community. This also represents significant additional farm income as first thinnings become available.</p> <p>In advance of upcoming Government interventions in the area of large-scale solar energy, farmers and landowners require technical advice and support.</p>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.swsforestry.ie/why-plant/renewable-energy/> accessed on Friday, December 4, 2015

	All actions under this theme will seek to support the cross-cutting themes of innovation, environment, and climate change.
Link to Draft LECP	<p>High Level Economic Goal Support the development of a renewable energy and low energy future for Wicklow.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the promotion and development of the renewable energy sector, and explore funding opportunities for the sector</li> <li>• Support the development of agricultural training and business management initiatives in the county to improve skills, productivity and innovation within the sector</li> </ul> <p>High Level Community Goal That County Wicklow is low carbon and climate resilient, has reduced energy dependence, is sustainable in the use of resources, and has a vibrant green economy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build on models such as the Ballynagran Energy Plus Project</li> <li>• Explore the potential of the green economy and of wood-related business, local food production, business potential based on natural resources, local food banks, community bio-digesters</li> </ul>
Financial Allocation	€200,000
No. of Strategic Actions	1

Strategic Action 8.1		
Title of Strategic Action	Strengthen the development and quality of Wicklow's renewable energy businesses	
Description	<p>Support communities and private businesses to develop renewable energy projects through a variety of supports including animation, training, feasibility, and capital as a method to reduce Wicklow's carbon footprint and create employment locally.</p> <p><b>Added Value to Strategic Action</b>  :: Support the Government's 2020 targets.  :: Work in support of SEAI.  :: Work in conjunction with work of Wicklow County Council's Environmental Section.</p>	
Target Group(s)	Community/producer groups and private promoters	
Geographical Area	Countywide	
Type of Call	Rolling Call	
Timeframe for Delivery	Q3/2017 – Q3/2019	
Delivery Organisation	County Wicklow Partnership on behalf of LAG	
Collaborating Organisations	Wicklow County Council's Environmental Section, SEAI	
Timeframe for Delivery and Type of Call	Q3- 2016 – Q3- 2018	
Projected Outputs/Indicators and Targets	Number of Projects funded - New	2
	Number of Projects funded – Existing	2
	Number of Jobs – Created	2 FT, 1 PT
	Number of Jobs - Existing	2 FT, 2 PT
	Number of Jobs - Sustained	5 FT, 2 PT,

		5 Seasonal
Type of Projects Funded	Energy Other	2
	Local co-ordination initiatives	1
	Technical co-operation	1
Number and Value of Funding	Animation	€30,000
	Capital	€120,000
	A&D	€50,000

## **Section 5 Strategic Integration**

### **5.1 Cross-Cutting Objectives**

In order to ensure a well-balanced and innovative economy for Wicklow, this LDS has been developed with the three cross-cutting objectives of (1) Innovation, (2) Environment, and (3) Climate Change as core underlying principles.

The consultation process was undertaken with these core principles to the forefront of this process. Communities were challenged to debate issues and input with these three cross-cutting objectives in mind. As part of the consultation and planning process, relevant stakeholders were consulted in relation to the cross-cutting themes. In addition, actions have been designed and proofed against these core principles. The following understanding was central to the planning and development of the Wicklow Local Development Strategy.

#### **5.1.1 Innovation**

As a county, Wicklow must encourage innovation and innovative approaches in order to develop its economy and its social capital. Wicklow's LCDC, through this LDS, will support small businesses to develop and grow through product innovation as a pathway towards growth and increasing market share leading to job creation locally. Equally, communities will be encouraged and supported to develop unique and creative solutions to local problems and to pilot innovative area-based approaches. New models and flexible ways of delivery will be supported within 'hard to reach' communities in order to achieve sustainable development. Cross learning and effective models of delivery and practices from other regions will energise creative thinking at local level. This strategy contains actions and approaches that seek to provide a positive bedrock for innovation and will prioritise interventions that seek to find creative solutions to local problems.

#### **Strategic Innovation Actions as part of this LDS include:**

- New area-based/destination and collaborative approaches
- Innovative use of existing resources
- Horizontal integration of cross-cutting themes
- Analysis and Development for innovation and pilot
- Support for new products, services, and technologies
- Support for social innovation and entrepreneurs as solutions to local problems and gaps in the marketplace
- Innovative approaches to development/animation to reach out
- Cross-regional and territory learning

#### **5.1.2 Environment**

Wicklow's beautiful unique landscape, with a National Park at its centre and large areas designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), and Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) is considered to be a national asset and treasure. The value of Wicklow's unique environment is recognised as a major driver in terms of its ability to contribute to the county's economic development and environmental outputs. However, the need to ensure that this precious environment is protected is of great importance.

Through this LDS, greater awareness will be created in order to ensure Wicklow's landscape and natural environment are protected in line with increasing visitor numbers. Enhancement of the county's natural resources and heritage sites will stimulate greater historical and environmental awareness. Wicklow's social and cultural environment will also be protected to ensure its continuance into the future.

The actions contained in this strategy will ensure that Wicklow's environment is protected through expert knowledge, advice, and best practice guidance towards sustainable development.

As the most afforested county in Ireland, Wicklow's supply of sustainable local renewable energy source presents local employment opportunities through biomass and added-value timber products.

**Strategic Environmental Actions as part of this LDS include:**

- Development and implementation of best practice guidelines across built, social, and natural heritage
- Analysis & Development ensuring correct technical support
- Adherence with all the relevant additional Government heritage guidelines
- Sustainable development
- Capturing of historical, social, and cultural folklore for future generations
- Environmental goods accruing for local renewable energy timber resources

### **5.1.3 Climate Change**

Wicklow's LDS seeks to contribute towards the reduction of the county's carbon footprint and acknowledges that there is a need for awareness raising and capacity building in this area. Building practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions will be encouraged and supported within Wicklow's business and community sector. Businesses that seek to exploit renewable sources of energy will be prioritised as Ireland grows closer to its 2020 greenhouse gases reduction target. In addition, this LDS acknowledges that climate change and biodiversity are inextricably linked and that biodiversity itself can support efforts to reduce the negative effects on climate change through conserved habitats. Communities in Wicklow will be supported to develop local biodiversity projects in line with best practice sustainable development.

**Strategic Climate Change Actions as part of this LDS include:**

- Support for feasibility in the area of new technologies
- Support for renewable energy businesses
- Prioritisation for renewable energy sources in buildings
- Support for renewable sources of energy in community buildings
- Support for local biodiversity and trails yielding public good outputs
- Target to reduce incidence of out-commuting through the creation of local jobs
- Prioritising eco-tourism projects
- Promote and support Wicklow's 'green' and 'Garden of Ireland' image through environmental sustainable activities and projects

### **5.2 Policy Context**

For the purposes of demonstrating strategic alignment of the objectives of this LDS, relevant regional, national, and EU strategies and plans have been consulted and included. As one of a number of strategies targeted at local development in rural areas, it is vital that this LDS complements and feeds into a more strategic and integrated approach to rural development.

In recognition of reduced resources, interventions will be targeted to ensure that there is no duplication of resources and actions have been designed to complement and build on efforts to date and to address gaps where they exist. Wicklow's in-depth Stakeholder Consultation has ensured that this risk has been greatly reduced and that there is joined-up thinking in relation to addressing the sustainable development of rural areas.

Wicklow's LCDC has ensured that this LDS has taken on board the most relevant economic, community, and environmental plans in order to maximise outcomes and to ensure its commitment to a more co-ordinated approach to local development. This policy review has also taken cognisance of the three cross-cutting themes of innovation, environment, and climate change. In addition, the draft Wicklow LECP has formed the cornerstone of the development of this LDS to ensure integration at county level.

For the purposes of developing this plan the following Reports/Policies were deemed to be the most relevant.

### **5.2.1 Europe 2020**

The European Union is working towards economic recovery and seeks to find ways to create a more competitive economy with increased jobs. The Europe 2020 strategy is working towards growth that is (1) smart, (2) sustainable, and (3) inclusive. This strategy has five goals:

- Employment
- Innovation
- Education
- Poverty Reduction
- Climate/Energy

This LDS seeks to mirror the objectives of Europe 2020 through its various interventions in the Wicklow Sub-Regional Area. Strategic actions have been designed and tailored to address the five goals under the LEADER programme's themes and sub-themes. Innovative and area-specific approaches will form a large part of the work of this strategy which will lead to economic benefits such as employment and poverty reduction. Targeted animation work will ensure an increased level of capacity and appropriate training will be delivered to those who are in most need.

Projects will be proofed and scored against their ability to contribute positively towards reducing carbon footprint and initiatives that seek to develop innovative and local renewable sources of energy will be prioritised for support. This LDS will strive to work towards economic recovery and strive towards creating a more inclusive society for all of Co. Wicklow's communities.

### **5.2.2 Energising Ireland's Rural Economy (CEDRA)**

This LDS has a strong vision for economic recovery in Wicklow through enterprise development and job creation. The LAG recognises the significant role that can be played by small enterprises in rural areas and acknowledges the challenges that such enterprises face. The LEADER Programme 2014–2020 has the ability to address some of these challenges and to work closely with new and expanding enterprises. Various approaches, methodologies, and criteria will be applied across the LDS area in order to maximise the potential of economic growth for the county.

This is an objective echoed by the report undertaken by the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) titled 'Energising Ireland's Rural Economy':

"... job creation and enterprise development is dependent on all economic sectors and all parts of Ireland contributing to growth and development. If rural areas are to contribute to, and participate in, national economic

recovery, the potential of these areas must be efficiently, effectively and innovatively activated ...” (CEDRA, 2013, p.12)<sup>12</sup>.

In addition, this LDS is cognisant of the various levels of capacity that exists across the sub-regional area. Differences exist in terms of both physical and natural infrastructure and social capital. Some areas have strong experience and history of development and have achieved vibrant communities both socially and economically. However, the LAG is aware that there are many communities across the region that have not developed at the same rate - these communities will require more targeted support to build capacity at a pre-development level. Specific actions have been included in this strategy to address this imbalance.

The CEDRA report also acknowledges this dynamic and highlights this diversity of capacity across rural areas:

“Rural areas are increasingly diverse and there are distinct spatial patterns and differing capacities evident throughout rural Ireland. These patterns reflect the variation in the endowment and scale of human, physical, and natural and capital resources available within each area. They reflect the past developments and contemporary economic and social profiles. As a consequence, rural areas will differ in their capacity to respond to both external and internal stimuli” (CEDRA, 2013, p.13)<sup>13</sup>.

This LDS seeks to address these imbalances by targeting areas and communities that are ‘hard to reach’ and recognises the need for different approaches to be undertaken in order to support communities to shape their future both socially and economically.

This plan understands the necessity to adopt a variety of tailored approaches to development within the LDS area and is in agreement with the CEDRA Report. According to CEDRA (2013):

“... many of the approaches taken to date have been hampered by a one size fits all orientation where the system and processes are prescribed from a centralised perspective and not tailored to meet the specific territorial needs of a given population or community” (CEDRA, 2013, p.17).<sup>14</sup>

CEDRA recommended the piloting of a select number of Rural Economic Development Zones (REDZ) to enhance the capacity for local communities to contribute to and take ownership of local economic developments by creating local strategic economic development plans that will contribute to and align with local, regional, and national economic development plans. The town of Arklow has recently been approved funding of €56,000 towards regenerating and revitalising the town as a hub for the town itself and the surrounding area as a pilot REDZ. A number of co-operation projects have been identified as part of this initiative and are reflected in this LDS for action.

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<sup>12</sup> CEDRA. ‘Energising Ireland’s Rural Economy’. 2013. Section 1,1.1. p.12

<sup>13</sup> CEDRA. Energising Ireland’s Rural Economy. 2013.

<sup>14</sup> CEDRA. Energising Ireland’s Rural Economy. 2013.

### **5.2.3 People, Place and Policy Growing Tourism to 2025**

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport acknowledged the importance of the role played by local communities in contributing to Ireland's tourism product and experience in its 2015 report, 'People, Place and Policy Growing Tourism'<sup>15</sup>.

The Gathering in 2013 was one such example - primarily a community led initiative, it was hugely successful because it combined people and place and had a clear policy objective. Communities across Wicklow demonstrated that they had the ability to deliver in this area. There is a clear understanding of the economic and social benefits that such developments bring to an area.

Wicklow's local communities have contributed hugely to tourism and played a central role through organisations such as Tidy Towns, heritage, festival, and community development groups. Many areas now boast tranquil amenity parks and recreational spaces with in-depth interpretation of the sites. Wicklow is also synonymous for its walking product, with many of these trails developed by communities in co-operation with relevant landowners and stakeholders e.g. Blessington Greenway and Tinahely Walking Trails. These developments have provided amenities for local people and acted as catalysts to attract visitors to an area. The LAG has recognised the important role played by communities in terms of the rural economy through such interventions and seeks to further support these initiatives.

### **5.2.4 Ireland's Ancient East Brand Policy**

Fáilte Ireland, the national tourism development authority, was established in 2003 to guide and promote tourism as a leading indigenous component of the Irish economy. Nationally, the tourism and hospitality industry employs an estimated 200,000 people and generates over €3.5 billion in overseas revenue a year<sup>16</sup>.

In order to offer visitors a compelling motivation to visit the east of the country, Fáilte Ireland has developed an umbrella destination package called Ireland's Ancient East. Wicklow is positioned within this new destination and is set to benefit from this new destination policy. The Ireland's Ancient East brand is geared towards maximising the history and heritage of the region and bringing it to greater international attention. To do this, the new initiative will offer visitors a personal experience of 5,000 years of history through a relaxing journey of discovery in the beautiful landscape which will be illuminated by stories from the best local storytellers in the world. The Ireland's Ancient East destination stretches from Newgrange in County Meath to Cork. This brand proposition is intended to mirror the success experienced through the Wild Atlantic Way brand proposition in the West. Based on comprehensive research in overseas markets, the initiative is aimed at particular market segments overseas who have indicated they would be more likely to come to Ireland to explore new landscapes, history, and culture or simply to take time out from their busy lives and careers to connect with local heritage and nature and their own place within.

Wicklow's overseas visitors numbers declined by approximately five per cent between 2010 and 2013. According to Fáilte Ireland, Wicklow's tourism revenue decreased proportionally during the same period<sup>17</sup>. Tourism forms an essential part of Wicklow's economy, so it is essential that all efforts are made to sustain and grow this economy in the future.

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<sup>15</sup> Department of Transport, Tourism, and Sport. People, Place and Policy Growing Tourism. 2015

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.failteireland.ie/Footer/Media-Centre/Ministers-Donohoe-Ring-launch-%E2%80%98Ireland%E2%80%99s-Ancient-E.aspx/> Accessed December 9, 2015

<sup>17</sup> Fáilte Ireland's Tourism Facts 2013

Given Wicklow's unique rurality and wealth of history, it is well placed to maximise the benefits and bring this new brand to life and tell its story. Actions contained in this LDS take cognisance of the potential and importance of meeting the visitor's expectation of this new brand and acknowledge the potential of same as an important economic driver for Wicklow.

### **5.2.5 County Development Plan (2010-2016)**

The most recently published County Development Plan for Wicklow (2010-2016)<sup>18</sup> highlights the fact the Wicklow is a county with its own unique challenges in the context of developing within a spatial planning framework.

"The Wicklow Mountains effectively divide the County, with the eastern and western areas having complementary but different functions in terms of the role played by Wicklow in the GDA [Greater Dublin Area]. The eastern parts of the County form part of the Dundalk – Dublin – Waterford strategic corridor and benefit from good linkage to air and sea international transport connections. While the western part of the County plays a complementary but slightly different role given its more rural characteristics, but its importance in the region for agriculture, tourism and recreation is recognised" (Wicklow County Council, 2010, p.4)<sup>19</sup>.

This LDS strategy recognises that this dynamic contributes to economic and social imbalances within the county. The positioning of the mountain range has created a socio-cultural habitus of east, west, and south which causes real challenges for the identity of Wicklow as a single county. Many people in the western region of the county are physically closer to the large towns of Nass and Carlow and consider themselves to be disadvantaged by distance from the eastern administration capital of Wicklow Town. The same disadvantage is evident in the south of the county. This feeling of disconnect is further compounded by the requirement on rural dwellers in the south and west of the county to register in adjoining counties in order to access many mainstream public services. This requirement causes further problems in terms of obtaining a true picture when statistically quantifying needs and service provision in the county. This LDS is very cognisant of this dynamic and seeks to achieve balanced regional development throughout the entire LDS area, therefore targeting and prioritising of specific under-developed and geographically disadvantaged areas has been central to the development of this strategy.

### **5.2.6 Draft Local Economic Community Plan (LECP)**

Wicklow's LECP Plan will support and steer the social and economic development of the county over the next six years. And it is an integrated plan to guide developments in the area of Economic, Community, Cultural, Sporting and Recreation through collaborative and partnership approaches.

The draft plan has identified the following high-level goals; the strategic alignment between these goals and the LDS is highlighted in order to demonstrate the complementarity between the two strategies. This collaborative approach will help to ensure a more collaborative and co-ordinated approach which will ensure better use of resources and stronger impacts on the ground where they are needed most.

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<sup>18</sup> Wicklow County Council. Wicklow County Development Plan (2010–2016)

<sup>19</sup> Wicklow County Council. Wicklow County Development Plan (2010-2016).

## LECP - Community Goals

**Goal 1** - Develop community capacity especially in disadvantaged communities and engage in urban regeneration and rural development.

**Strategic alliance with LDS**

**LDS Action 3.2** Support Town Enhancement Plans as a mechanism to revitalise towns

**LDS Action 3.3** Support the implementation of the above Town Plans in specific towns

**LDS Action 4.1** Animation programme to build capacity within harder-to-reach communities

**LDS Action 4.2** Support facilities/hubs within communities experiencing exclusion

**Goal 2** - Promote active citizenship and public participation to improve governance, transparency and enrich decision making.

**Strategic alliance with LDS**

**LDS Action 4.1** Animation programme to build capacity within harder-to-reach communities to equip them with the necessary skills to be involved in decisions and developments that affect their communities

**LDS Action 5.2** Targeted re-engagement programme for young people in West Wicklow who have disengaged from education, social, and economic activities. This programme will enable them to become active and engage with their community and be part of the decision-making process within their areas

**Goal 3** - Develop targeted and integrated supports for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

**Strategic alliance with LDS**

**LDS Action 5.2** Targeted re-engagement programme for young people in West Wicklow who have disengaged from education, social and economic activities

**LDS Action 4.1** Animation programme to build capacity within harder-to-reach communities

**Goal 4** - Support local communities in innovation, entrepreneurship, micro-enterprise and social innovation.

**Strategic alliance with LDS**

**LDS Action 1.1** Fund innovative new and existing tourism enterprises in Wicklow that maximise the county's unique landscape and resources

**LDS Action 1.2** Delivery of storytelling and heritage training to ensure communities maximise their full economic potential under the Fáilte Ireland – Ireland's Ancient East brand

**LDS Action 1.3** Develop a programme of animation and technical support among communities in the underdeveloped tourism area of south Wicklow with a view to developing a unique heritage tourism product/trail/destination which will result in economic gain and job creation in the area

**LDS Action 1.4** Develop a programme of animation and technical support among lakeside communities in the underdeveloped tourism area of West Wicklow with a view to developing a destination/hub based on the wealth of traditional skills and craftsmanship of the area

**LDS Action 1.5** Develop a programme of activities for individuals and rural communities that specifically develops their practical skills in the creation of quality social media content as a practical marketing tool

**LDS Action 2.1** Provide funding for relevant businesses to develop and expand through research and development, capital investment, and marketing supports leading to innovation and job creation in the areas of micro/SMEs and social enterprises

**LDS Action 2.2** Provide an animation programme to increase awareness and nurture the development of social entrepreneurs and social enterprises

**LDS Action 2.3** Develop needs driven bespoke training opportunities to build the capacity of new and expanding LEADER-type businesses

**Goal 5** - Support training and labour activation measures based on an analysis of employment trends and the skill needs of employers.

**Strategic alliance with LDS**

**LDS Action 5.1** Provide bespoke creative training opportunities for young people to help them progress socially and economically

**Goal 6** - Support a shift towards low carbon and climate resilient economic activity, reducing energy dependence, promoting sustainable use of resources, and leading in the Smart Green Economy.

**Strategic alliance with LDS**

**LDS Action 6.1** Deliver local biodiversity training and technical support to communities to enable them to develop projects in line with best practice

**LDS Action 6.2** Support communities to develop and upgrade amenities within areas of natural beauty ensuring that the local biodiversity is protected for public good

**LDS Action 7.1** Support communities and individuals to investigate and develop solutions that contribute to the conservation of our valuable water resource

**LDS Action 8.1** Support communities and private businesses to develop renewable energy projects/businesses that help to reduce our carbon footprint

**Goal 7** - Harness efficiently the full resources of the county and reduce duplication and unnecessary overlaps

**Strategic alliance with LDS**

This LDS have been designed in consultation with a variety of relevant agencies. Changes and amendments have been made as result of these consultations. In addition, a number of future collaborative approaches and initiatives have been included as part of the work plan to deliver on this strategy

**LECP – Economic Goals**

High Level Goal - Promote and direct the tourism development of the county in a sustainable manner that conserves, promotes, protects, and enhances the county's natural, built, and cultural heritage and derives optimal economic benefit from visitors to the county

High Level Goal - Realise the potential benefits of the county's maritime assets

**LDS Action 1.1** To support the growth of the tourism sector in Wicklow by improving and expanding the quality and range of tourism products on offer

**LDS Action 1.2** Build the capacity of Wicklow's rural communities and tourism providers to be prepared to take advantage of Fáilte Ireland's IAE brand and expand

market share
<b>LDS Action 1.3</b> To animate and develop the heritage tourism potential of South Wicklow's Fitzwilliam Coolattin Estate as a co-operative approach to destination development and an economic driver for the villages of Shillelagh, Carnew, Coolboy, and Tinahely
<b>LDS Action 1.4</b> To animate and develop the unique rural traditional village settlements of West Wicklow as a driver of heritage tourism through a co-operative approach aimed at destination development as a mechanism of stimulating economic activity in the area
<b>LDS Action 1.5</b> Assist Wicklow's tourism providers and rural communities to benefit from social media as an effective marketing tool to attract visitors

High Level Goal - Support the development of a renewable energy and low energy future for Wicklow.
<b>LDS Action 8.1</b> Support communities and private businesses to develop renewable energy projects through a variety of supports including animation, training, feasibility, and capital as a method to reduce Wicklow's carbon footprint and create employment locally

High Level Goal – Harness the county's existing assets and encourage collaborative opportunities and business engagement amongst sectors to develop new markets and initiatives, maximising opportunities for business development and employment creation.
High Level Goal - Support the development of micro-enterprises and SMEs within the county and stimulate expansion of micro-enterprises and SMEs that facilitates the growth of economic activities, development of innovative sectors, the promotion of business engagement and the creation of new employment opportunities.
High Level Goal - Promote the concept of social enterprise throughout the county and support the development of new and existing social enterprises.
High Level Goal - Support the rural economy and promote rural economic diversification.
High Level Goal - Maximise the economic development in the county through improved and strategic branding and marketing.
<b>LDS Action 2.1</b> Provide funding for relevant LEADER-type businesses to develop and expand through R&D, capital investment, and marketing supports leading to increased job creation and service provision in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Micro enterprise</li> <li>• SME enterprises</li> <li>• Social enterprises</li> </ul>
<b>LDS Action 2.2</b> Animation and training programme to create awareness and nurture the development and support of existing and expansion of new social enterprises in Wicklow
<b>LDS Action 2.3</b> Develop and deliver needs-driven bespoke training to new and existing LEADER-type enterprises in Wicklow in line with needs identified
<b>LDS Action 3.3</b> Fund four towns to implement key enhancement recommendations arising from the supported Town Development Plans as a mechanism to regenerate both social and economic activity in line with best practice guidelines

### **5.2.7 Sharing Our Future 2025**

Forfás' Strategic Policy Requirements for Enterprise Development Report stated that:

“The quality of life of an individual depends on both the quality of society and on factors that are specific to an individual's circumstances. The material assets of a society and its ability to provide jobs and income are of paramount importance.....” (Forfás, 2009, p.6).<sup>20</sup>

In addition, the quality of the social culture, the environment, and infrastructure are also impacting factors. This report highlights that there has been a reduction in people's quality of life as a consequence of the economic downturn, a factor which has affected areas within this sub-regional area. Demands on scarce resources have impacted on some communities more than others that have experienced a reduction in services and amenities and have little or no job opportunities in the local area. This LDS seeks to address this quality of life issue in terms of availability of employment potential and access to services and amenities, particularly in areas where they have been most adversely effected.

### **5.2.8 Rural Poverty and Social Exclusion on the Island of Ireland – Context, Policies and Challenges**

Many factors contribute to social exclusion, including low income, poor housing, low level of education or skills, geographical isolation, and poor access to basic services and amenities. These conditions lead to a person being distanced from society and economic activities which leads to exclusion. The agreed Government definition of poverty and social exclusion in Ireland is set out in the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion (2007-2016):<sup>21</sup>

“People are living in poverty if their income and resources (material, cultural and social) are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living, which is regarded as acceptable by Irish society generally. As a result of inadequate income and resources, people may be excluded and marginalised from participating in activities, which are considered the norm for other people in society” (Department of Social and Family Affairs, 2016, p.20).

This strategy provides for awareness raising of the importance and benefits of inclusive communities. In addition, strategic actions contained in this plan are targeted towards communities that are 'hard to reach' in acknowledgment that rural poverty is difficult to identify. Specific collaborative approaches will be tailored to address unmet needs and there will be a prioritisation of facility and amenity provision in such areas. Young people must be encouraged to be part of decision making and developments within their own areas. Wicklow communities have become more culturally diverse and must develop ways to include all residents as active members within their new community.

### **5.2.9 Better Outcomes Brighter Futures**

The national policy framework for children and young people 2014 – 2020<sup>22</sup> identified five national interconnected outcomes for children and young people as follows:

- Active and healthy, physical and mental wellbeing

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<sup>20</sup> Forfás. Sharing Our Future 2025. 2009

<sup>21</sup> Department of Social and Family Affairs. National Action Plan for Social Inclusion. 2016

<sup>22</sup> Department of Children and Youth Affairs. Better Outcomes Brighter Futures. 2014

- Achieving full potential in all areas of learning and development
- Safe and protected from harm
- Economic security and opportunity
- Connected, respected and contributing to their world

This national policy for children and young people presents the following vision:

“Our vision is for Ireland to be one of the best small countries in the world in which to grow up and raise a family, and where the rights of all children and young people are respected protected and fulfilled; where their voices are heard and where they are supported to realise their maximum potential now and in the future” (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014, p.6).<sup>23</sup>

This LDS aspires to both this vision and to the identified outcomes for young people in Wicklow. Strategic actions have been designed to provide training and animation opportunities for young people, particularly those in need of extra supports to move on with their lives. Youth facilities and amenities will be prioritised to ensure that Wicklow’s young people have access to social and economic opportunities within their local area. Young people will be encouraged to be more involved in decision making within their communities and to become active citizens in the development of their areas.

#### **5.2.10 Social Enterprise in Ireland – Sectoral Opportunities and Policy Issues**

There are many examples of social enterprises in Wicklow; however, many are now aware that they are operating as a social enterprise. Many are operating in a difficult environment and are dependent on funding supports and lack the necessary skills and supports to help them develop into sustainable businesses.

The Forfás report, titled ‘Social Enterprise in Ireland – Sectoral Opportunities and Policy Issues’ (2013) acknowledged these difficulties experienced by social enterprises and highlighted that the majority of such enterprises wished to be more self-sustaining and derive a higher proportion of their income from the market rather than from direct government funding.

This LDS makes provision for interventions in this space that will help social enterprises reduce their dependency on grants and to build more sustainable income streams. This will be achieved through targeted collaborative actions that will address Wicklow’s social enterprises at various levels of development whilst ensuring that social entrepreneurial environment is created and supported.

#### **5.2.11 County Wicklow’s Biodiversity Action Plan (2010-2015)**

As outlined in the area profile, Wicklow has a unique and precious landscape which is considered to be a national asset. The county has many and varied eco-systems which must be protected and sustained to ensure the continuation of the associated benefits for our quality of life, climate, recreation, and tourism purposes. According to the County Wicklow Biodiversity Action Plan (2010–2015), the main factors affecting biodiversity in Wicklow is a combination of settlement, lifestyle and land management:

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<sup>23</sup> Department of Children and Youth Affairs. Better Outcomes Brighter Futures. 2014

“These impacts have increased dramatically in recent decades with increased infrastructure, transport and more intensive land management. Our native species and habitats are now being affected by a wide variety of impacts, from direct loss due to development through to land use changes and recreational pressure. This has resulted in habitats being lost and species becoming extinct. Impacts on our species and habitats include those resulting from fragmentation and degradation of habitats, direct loss of habitats, and decline and loss of species through land use change” (Wicklow County Council, 2010, p. 20).<sup>24</sup>

This LDS has been designed in line with the objectives of the county’s biodiversity plan which are

- To have a better understanding of biodiversity in Wicklow
- To raise awareness of biodiversity in Wicklow, its value and the issues facing it
- To conserve and enhance habitats and species in Wicklow, taking account of national and local priorities
- To foster active participation to help biodiversity in Wicklow, encouraging a partnership approach to help our species and habitats

In addition, the following reports and policies have been consulted as part of the desk research work undertaken during the development of this LDS. These reports will be used as strategic direction and guiding reference points throughout the lifetime of this LDS. New and emerging policies and thinking will also be incorporated at strategic levels throughout the lifetime of this strategy.

- National Spatial Strategy
- Harvest 2020
- Food Wise 2025
- Agenda 21
- Rural Economic Development in Ireland - Teagasc
- The Economic Benefits from the Development of Bioenergy in Ireland to meet 2020 Targets
- National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016
- Action Plan for Jobs (2015)
- Pathways to Work (2013)
- National Women’s Strategy 2007-2016
- Wicklow Outdoor Recreation Strategy
- Wicklow County Tourism Strategic Report
- The National Landscape Strategy (NLS)
- National Strategy on Children and Young People’s Participation in Decision Making
- Avondale Report
- Delivering our Green Potential – Government Policy Statement on Growth and Employment in the Green Economy
- County Wicklow Private Timber Production Forecast & Market Assessment (2010- 2028)

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<sup>24</sup> Wicklow County Council. County Wicklow Biodiversity Action Plan 2010-2015. 2010

## Section 6 Networking and Co-operation

### 6.1 Networking Activities

Wicklow has a strong history of working in partnerships based on mutual respect. Both the LCDC and the LDC as Implementing Partner have built up strong network linkages at local, regional and national level.

Many initiatives achieved to date in the county have been reached as a result of strong collaboration between relevant agencies. There are many examples of successful projects made possible as a result of co-operation between the community, private, statutory, and non-statutory bodies at various levels. Partnership projects include playgrounds, trails, and multi-user games areas throughout the county. The ground-breaking Blessington Greenway is a headline example of collective and collaborative methods of working. Wicklow's Outdoor Recreation Committee draws all relevant partners together in the pursuit of sustainable recreation development and management.

This strong base of working collectively will be continued through the work of this LDS. As outlined in Section 1, the collective membership of the LCDC offers immediate access to a wide network of representatives from the community, economic, and environmental pillars through their respective networks, departments, programmes and communities, representing a robust joined up approach.

This LAG recognises that effective and targeted networking provides an opportunity for greater dissemination of information, enables peer-to-peer learning, stimulates innovation, and promotes good practice. Wicklow LCDC representatives and its partners will participate in the following local, regional, national, and international networking structures to ensure shared learning and good practice in relation to the roll out of the 2014-2020 LEADER Programme. In addition, thematic clusters will be formed as programme animation gets underway and networks at county, local, and higher levels will emerge organically. Wicklow's LCDC intends to participate fully in relevant networks to ensure cross-learning and models of good practice are part of the work of this LDS.

#### 6.1.1 Participation on existing and new networks Locally

##### *Tourism:*

- Wicklow County Tourism
- South Wicklow Tourism Destination Consortium
- West Wicklow Tourism Destination Consortium
- Outdoor Recreation – Outdoor Recreation Strategy Committee
- Wicklow Way Management Committee

##### *Enterprise:*

- Local Enterprise Office (LEO)

##### *Community Fora*

- PPN
- Social Inclusion Networks

##### *Environmental Networks*

- Wicklow Uplands Council

##### *Relevant Business Networks*

- Food/tourism/craft/etc.

##### *Rural Youth*

- Comhairle na nÓg

- West Wicklow Rural Youth Consortium  
*Renewable Energy*
- Wicklow Private Woodland Owners Group  
*Other*
- LAG Evaluation Committee
- Wicklow County Heritage Committee
- Wicklow's Network for Older People
- Wicklow Rural Transport Initiative
- Various SICAP Networks involving – women/youth/new residents/etc.
- Wicklow's emerging Social Enterprise Network
- Wicklow's RSS Scheme and Tús Programme
- Various inter-agency groups

**Regionally:**

- Ireland's Ancient East LEADER Regional Network (to be established)
- Various inter-territorial and trans-national networks that may be required
- Rural Development Officers Regional Network (Wicklow/Carlow/Wexford/Laois/Kildare)
- LA Regional Assembly

**Nationally:**

Participation on networks at national level serves as effective channels through which rural policy development can be influenced. Wicklow's LCDC together with CWP fully understand the importance of this role and representation on such networks on behalf of the LCDC. Wicklow LCDC will participate on relevant networks in order to effectively participate, share, and learn from this cluster approach.

- National Rural Network (NRN)
- Irish Local Development Network (ILDN)
- Department of Environment, Community and Local Government Operating Rules Working Group
- Various Department clusters/networks/sub groups
- Various sectoral networks as relevant to the work of the LDS

In addition, the LCDC as a cross-sectoral representative body will be in a position to influence national policy through its engagement in policy discussions, submissions and participation in various inter-departmental groups.

**Internationally:**

- European LEADER Association of Rural Development (ELARD): Potential to be involved with this network of 1,075 LAGs from 23 countries
- Transnational Partners/Networks – This network will be formed as a result of trans-national projects and will have effective clusters where new innovative area-based approaches and models of best practice can be shared and disseminated among the partners

## **6.2 Potential Co-operation Projects 2014- 2020**

### **6.2.1 Co-Operation**

Wicklow's LCDC believe strongly that this LDS will be greatly enhanced through co-operation projects as a mechanism to expand future learning. Such projects will help

to increase competitiveness and capacity development through sharing and disseminating of new skills, approaches and know-how through CLLD approaches. This activity is an important aspect of the LEADER methodology, supporting both the LAG and Project Promoters to engage with their partners by exchanging knowledge and understanding, leading to best practise being developed and adopted, and collaborative actions identified and animated.

There are a number of strategic actions contained in this LDS that would benefit greatly from an inter-territorial or trans-national partnership as a mechanism to learn from mistakes, broaden local views, and improve local strategies and approaches and help achieve common goals through critical mass.

### ***Potential Inter-Territorial Co-operation Project***

Ireland's Ancient East inter-territorial Project with neighbouring counties including Carlow Wexford and Kildare

#### *Rationale and relevance to this LDS*

Fáilte Ireland are predicting that this new brand initiative has the potential to deliver an extra 600,000 overseas visitors, which equates to growth of more than 20% in the region with an associated revenue increase of almost 25% to €950 million in total by 2020<sup>25</sup>. Speaking at the recent Industry launch at the RDS in Dublin, Minister for Tourism Paschal Donohoe, said: "While appealing to a different type of a visitor, I am confident that Ireland's Ancient East will prove as effective and popular as the Wild Atlantic Way and will, when brought to the overseas markets by Tourism Ireland and the tourism trade, deliver significant additional numbers of visitors, revenue and jobs to the region".<sup>26</sup>

Tourism businesses and communities in Wicklow need to ensure that they are well-prepared to take advantage of this increase. Working in co-operation with neighbouring counties within the brand will strengthen Wicklow as a destination. Tour operators will offer packages to the larger sites such as Newgrange, Jerpoint Abbey, Glendalough, and the Rock of Cashel. The LEADER Programme must work towards strengthening the offering among the more rurally dispersed smaller attractions and sites so that they can compete with the larger honeypots attractions. Sub-packages and destination clustering will present the visitor an opportunity to drill down and provide an opportunity to engage 'off the beaten track' and experience the heritage, folklore, and traditions of rural Ireland.

Strategic Actions contained in this plan will complement any co-operation project and will strengthen the overall offering and contribute to the economy of Wicklow and create more locally based jobs in the county.

### **Coastal Communities – Wicklow/Wexford and Waterford**

#### *Rationale and relevance to LDS*

According to the Fishery Local Action Group South East, there is scope for an inter-territorial project involving Wicklow, Wexford, and Waterford<sup>27</sup>. A number of co-operative initiatives exist particularly in the area of marine tourism including marine heritage, coastal tours, and water-based activities. This LDS has highlighted that the

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<sup>25</sup> [www.merriionstreet.ie/en/allaboutjobs/Features-Articles/New\\_tourism\\_initiative\\_for\\_south\\_and\\_east\\_launched.html](http://www.merriionstreet.ie/en/allaboutjobs/Features-Articles/New_tourism_initiative_for_south_and_east_launched.html) Accessed 9 December 2015

<sup>26</sup> [www.failteireland.ie/Footer/Media-Centre/Ministers-Donohoe-Ring-launch-%E2%80%98Ireland%E2%80%99s-Ancient-E.aspx/](http://www.failteireland.ie/Footer/Media-Centre/Ministers-Donohoe-Ring-launch-%E2%80%98Ireland%E2%80%99s-Ancient-E.aspx/) Accessed 9 December 2015

<sup>27</sup> Fishery Local Action Group South East. Strategy for Fishery Dependent Communities. 2013

marine tourism sector in Wicklow is underdeveloped, thus involvement in a cluster would serve to improve Wicklow's prospects in this area. Learning and sharing between regions would provide an opportunity for innovation and new approaches to be considered in a Wicklow context. Equally, Arklow has a strong Maritime Heritage Museum and models of good practice can be shared among the partners.

In addition, County Wicklow Partnership has gained valuable experience through its participation on the South East Fishery Local Action Group (FLAG East) as implemented by Bord Iascaigh Mhara. This involvement has facilitated valuable insight into the needs of 'small fishery communities'. This information together with the audit completed by this group in consultation with BIM titled 'An Audit of Coastal Facilities in the South East, (Wicklow, Wexford and Waterford 2015) will serve to inform the LEADER 2020 Programme.

### **Men's Sheds Northern Ireland - Cross-border Co-Operation**

#### *Rationale and relevance to LDS*

There is an opportunity to explore a cross-border project with Northern Ireland in relation to the benefits of Men's Sheds Projects. Poverty and social exclusion affect the quality of life of families and communities across the island of Ireland. Creating a more inclusive society by alleviating social exclusion, poverty, and deprivation is a continuing challenge for Ireland both north and south of the border. Wicklow now has a number of projects which provide and promote positive spaces in which to carry out environmental, upcycling, boat building and other skills as a channel of engagement and networking. As a mechanism to promote positive mental health, a co-operative project would benefit both partners in terms of innovation and new approaches and would help such a project to become more sustainable. Such a co-operative initiative would align with this LDS Social Inclusion Theme and would serve to complement some of the strategic actions within this plan in terms of capacity building within the hard-to-reach communities.

### **Potential Trans-National Co-operation Projects**

#### **Wicklow's Coastal Path Development with Mattinata Trail, Italy**

##### *Rationale and relevance to LDS*

Wicklow's coast stretches for some 66km. As outlined in this strategy, however, Wicklow's coastal tourism is underdeveloped. There is potential to develop this sector both for water and land-based activities. Wicklow's proximity to Dublin makes it an attractive destination for outdoor activities. Communities along the coast have expressed interest and enthusiasm in the development of a coastal path.

The area of Mattinata in the province of Foggia, Apulia, Southern Italy has developed a 34km coastal trail and presents potential as a partner for a co-operation project under the LEADER 2014-2020 Programme. The development of such a coastal path would present a flagship product for Wicklow and would present a strong reason to visit and extend the visitors' stay in the county. Cross-learning would assist both parties as Mattinata have little experience of interpretation signage while Wicklow has a strong experience in this area and has been involved in many community projects where the story of the area is told through local interpretation.

### **Potential for co-operation outside of the EU**

#### **Fitzwilliam Estate – Coolattin House and Canada Connection**

There is potential to establish a co-operation project between the communities of South Wicklow with Quebec in Canada. Between 1847 and 1856, the Fitzwilliam Estate in south Wicklow removed 6,000 men, women and children through arranged

passage from New Ross in Wexford to Quebec in Canada on emigrant ships such as the Dunbrody. The records of this estate are among the most comprehensive within the country and are currently in storage in the National Library. There is a huge connection between these two areas which was tested during The Gathering in 2013 through an initiative called 'Canada Come Home'. South Wicklow is a non-traditional tourism area; however, it is home to this wonderful piece of history and its villages have been shaped by the Fitzwilliam Estate.

This LDS has a planned strategic action which will involve an animation programme among the villages of south Wicklow and the Coolattin Estate with a view to creating a heritage destination tour. The stories of the people who left the area could be enriched by the stories from the other side as these 'Surplus People' were cleared off the land to face into the unknown.

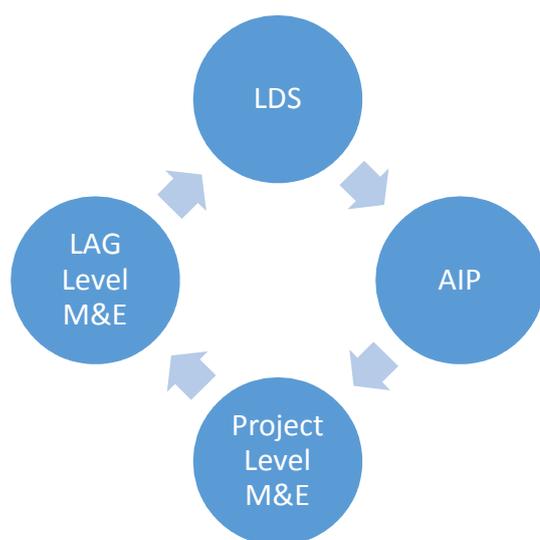
Other projects identified where co-operation on an inter-territorial or trans-national basis would align with this LDS include:

- Rural Youth Engagement Co-operation, Wicklow/Kildare
- Community Heritage Tourism Co-operation, Wicklow/Kildare
- Wicklow/Carlow Community Facilities/Amenity area development

## Section 7 Monitoring Review and Evaluation

### 7.1 Overview

This Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (M&EP) has been devised to assess the success of the Programme in meeting the overall goals and objectives of the LEADER Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 and the Local Development Strategy (LDS) for Co. Wicklow. In keeping with the LEADER monitoring framework, all M&E activity will be centred on the LEADER programme themes and sub-themes under which local priorities have been set to address specific needs and to take full advantage of the unique assets available in the county.



The M&EP will incorporate the two levels of programme monitoring required which will take place at LAG and project levels respectively. This will consider the findings of both the ongoing project monitoring process and a broader LAG evaluation which is more strategic in nature. Overall, the M&E process will be used to ensure that LDS aims and objectives are being met and that adequate systems and procedures are in place. It will also demonstrate if adequate resources are in place and if they are being used efficiently and effectively.

### 1 Monitoring & Evaluation Process Chart

While this M&E plan follows the guidelines set out by the monitoring framework, it also allows for innovative approaches to programme evaluation at a local level. Therefore, this plan will employ a variety of appropriate methodologies to gather local information from a range of sources. A 'pluralistic' approach will be taken in this regard in that both quantitative and qualitative evaluation processes will be used as this is widely accepted as the most effective approach to addressing complex issues. This will ensure that the impact of the Programme on the ground is being thoroughly assessed and that both anticipated and unanticipated outputs and outcomes are recorded.

The M&E process aims to be transparent and ethical in its approach. The LAG will follow all requirements and guidelines as set out by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government and will adhere to the LEADER Operating Rules relating to the monitoring and auditing framework. The LAG is also cognisant of the importance of protecting information of a confidential nature and will fully adhere to national legislation in relation to data protection.

Section 1 of the LDS outlines the M&E roles and responsibilities of each partner and the relevant policies and procedures available. As this is an LCDC-led LAG, it is intended to maximise on what this model offers in terms of the capacity of the

LAG/LCDC itself, its designated implementing body (CWP) and financial partner (Wicklow County Council).

## **7.2 Monitoring & Review – Project Level Activity**

At project level, ongoing monitoring will involve the capture of project information against the specific performance indicators set for each theme and sub-theme of the Programme. The M&E plan is fully in line with the LEADER monitoring framework outlined in Appendix 1 of the Invitation to Submit a LDS document (pp29-34). Each project will be monitored using the relevant Programme Indicators available under each LEADER theme and sub-theme and will ultimately be measured against the LDS targets set for each Local Priority Action. Both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected throughout the project life cycle but primarily at the following critical stages and will be collated and disseminated as appropriate.

As outlined in Section 1, CWP as the implementing body is responsible for the collection and reporting of project data. The primary tool used to capture this information is the LEADER ICT system. At a minimum, the required fields of the LEADER ICT system are completed at application, project evaluation and payment/claim stage. However, as is evident below, further quantitative data is collected for internal and external reporting purposes and qualitative data is also gleaned through regular contact with project promoters.

### Pre-Application

CWP will initiate rolling and time-specific calls and will invite **expression of interest forms** from potential promoters. CWP staff are in direct contact with promoters at this point, advising them on project eligibility and the application/assessment/drawdown process ahead. Referrals to other agencies are also made where appropriate. This information is reported to the Board of CWP and LCDC as not all promoters go on to complete the full application process so it illustrates internal amination and capacity building work and flags potential barriers for applicants which may require a more strategic response.

### Application Stage

Basic information will be collected from the completed relevant **application forms** and inputted on the ICT system. CWP has a number of application forms appropriate to each project type i.e. animation, training, A&D, capital private and capital community. The application forms are designed to capture information appropriate to the specific type of project and at a minimum will request the following basic information: promoter details, project outline, type of funding, new/existing project, employment potential, sector, anticipated outcomes, outputs and impacts, and other relevant programme indicators.

### LAG Assessment of Application

In assessing the project, CWP as the implementing body will prepare a **project assessment report** which is sent forward through the evaluation process and on to the LCDC for approval. This contains both qualitative and quantitative information and is comprehensive, containing information needed for vigorous project assessment. It is also underpinned by the operating rule requirements e.g. Promoter details and skills, project background/rationale and proposal, finance, ownership/permissions, innovation, displacement, de minimis, viability, sustainability etc. This report also expands on how the project fits in with the relevant LDS priority and overarching programme themes and sub-themes and outlines proposed project outputs, outcomes and impacts. Linkages to additional priorities and themes where relevant will also be referenced here. The quality of this information is checked and

verified using relevant supporting documentary evidence e.g. financial statements, correspondence from other agencies, business plans etc.

At this stage, CWP will complete fields on the ICT system linking the project to a specific theme and sub-theme and this will generate the appropriate set of indicators to complete for the project. Qualitative information is kept on the file and may be used for more detailed reports where required e.g. project case studies and Department reports.

#### Reporting on Outputs/Outcomes – Project Payment Stage

At project payment stage, beneficiaries are required to submit a **promoter project report** to CWP illustrating the success of the intervention against initial aims, objectives and targets. A template designed by CWP will ensure that generic information on project outputs and outcomes is collected and measured to meet basic reporting requirements on the ICT system. However, this report also allows the promoter to offer additional qualitative information on the true impact of the project on the ground and in a local context. This methodology captures any new learning from intended and unintended outcomes and is particularly effective in demonstrating the impact of process-led projects e.g. animation projects. This data will be quality checked as appropriate; however, this is a challenging task given the subjective nature of the qualitative information supplied. In cases where complete information is not available at the time of project payment, it will be supplied within a 12-month period.

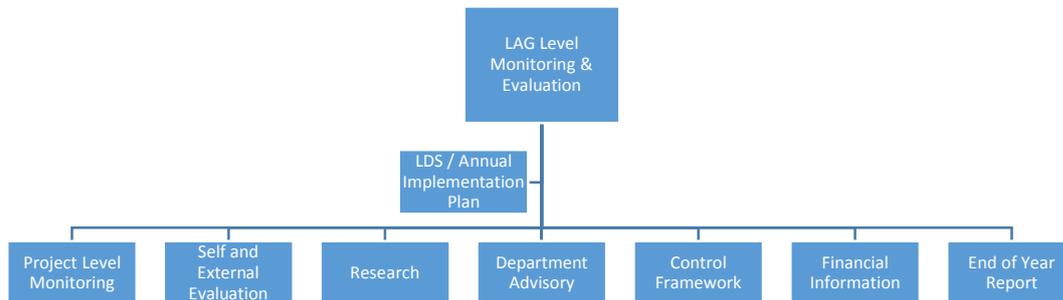
#### Ongoing Project Monitoring

As required by the Programme, **annual “In operation” letters** will be sent to all beneficiaries offering them the opportunity to update their project information/project indicators and to demonstrate the success of the project over time. All new information will be inputted on to the ICT system and placed on file for future analysis.

In addition to the information captured about/from individual projects, there is an annual requirement for each LAG to submit a number of **case studies** to the Department. CWP will collate these reports using the generic template provided for in the monitoring framework. However, it is anticipated that this process will showcase a broad range of innovative local project types and will focus on the more qualitative data collected at the aforementioned stages. CWP staff will engage with beneficiaries at this point to verify the information collated.

### **7.3 LAG-Level Monitoring and Evaluation**

LAG monitoring and evaluation takes place at a more strategic level and thus can involve a more innovative approach using a range of methodologies. Several processes are to be used in this regard incorporating information from a wide range of data sources as illustrated in the chart below.



## LAG Monitoring and Evaluation 1

Following approval of the LDS, CWP on behalf of the LAG will develop and submit an Annual Implementation Plan (commencing in 2017) that will provide ‘a high level overview of how the LAG will deliver against each of the agreed local objectives and strategic actions for that particular year. The LDS is a strategic document that covers the entire programme period whereas the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) will outline ‘the practical actions and activities required to deliver on the LDS and will relate back to the overarching themes and sub-themes..

The success of the LDS and, in turn, the Annual AIP is primarily measured using the information collected from **project level** monitoring. As previously described, all LDS priority actions outlined in Section 4 of the LDS reference back to a programme theme and sub-theme and set out overall targets to be achieved using the prescribed programme indicators. Project indicators will be measured against these overall targets which will clearly show if aims and objectives have been met. The LEADER ICT system will be used to input this data and generate reports on quantitative and qualitative programme elements.

The LCDC through CWP also intends to use a myriad of **self-evaluation** tools to measure overall performance. Samples of these potentially include integrated models such as the Balanced Score Card and core monitoring and evaluation methods such as sampling, use of questionnaires and surveys, stakeholder analysis, focus groups, documentation review, biophysical measures (measurement over time), direct observation, cost benefit analysis, semi-structured interviews and case studies. **External evaluation** of interventions and processes will also be undertaken where required to provide an objective perspective on performance. Public procurement processes will be adhered to in this regard.

As provided for in Section 4, CWP on behalf of the LAG has planned a number of company-led animation, capacity building and analysis and development initiatives which will yield sectoral and thematic **research** and direction in areas such as rural towns, social enterprises, heritage/cultural tourism, youth initiatives, renewable energy and biodiversity. National research and policy documents will also be reviewed as necessary. The LCDC in its coordinating role at county level can also draw on research and information from a broad range of sources e.g. WCC, LEO etc.

The **Department of Environment, Community and Local Government** will be collecting information from all individual LAGs and collating this into a report summarising key trends, patterns and issues emerging on an annual basis. This will assist in evaluating performance against a national perspective. The **control framework** is also a useful performance tool. Department of Agriculture, Deloitte (Department Auditor) and EU officials conduct regular on the spot audits/inspections on project files and administration returns and issue individual and national findings. Internally, CWP staff review files for compliance and have additional controls in place (e.g. CWP drew up their own file check list for public procurement documentation). These are outlined in CWP's procedures manual.

In its role as financial partner to the LAG, Wicklow County Council will also now be involved in control checks and monitoring. Based on review and control information, the Department may offer further guidance in the form of policies and circulars amending the operating rules.

A primary indicator of overall performance **financial information**/reports compiled by CWP on the LEADER programme budgets will help the LCDC to monitor activity. These will provide a detailed breakdown of commitment and spend /claim information relative to budget headlines. The LA as financial partner may also provide information and updates to the LCDC on advance funding to CWP, payments to CWP, promoter payments (TBC), and claims submitted to the Department.

Drawing on all the above sources, an **annual/end-of-year report** will be provided to the Department by CWP on behalf of the LAG outlining progress made during the year against local objectives set out in the LDS and AIP. This will contain project level analysis and other indicators such as financial performance and qualitative information. Local successes, operational issues/challenges and progress on cross-cutting objectives will be highlighted. Information on LAG governance, organisational structure, operations and decision making within the LAG will also be contained in this report.

#### **7.4 LDS Review and Evaluation**

LDS will be regularly reviewed and a new AIP developed in consideration of previous performance at LAG and project level. The aims of this review are to ensure that-

- The LDS remains relevant and flexible to local changing needs
- Continued alignment/proofing with national and local strategies (e.g. CEDRA report, LECP)
- Resources are targeting need and add value
- Actions address local needs and do not duplicate the work of other bodies
- A quality programme is in place for local communities and project promoters.

A "participatory evaluation" process will be used by the LCDC to ensure the plan is meeting stakeholder needs. This is defined as "getting all project stakeholders particularly the target group, involved in project evaluation" (A short guide to M&E, p6). This process allows the LDS to remain dynamic and meet changing local needs. The operating methodology of the LCDC itself lends itself to this approach given that all members are representative of local communities, state agencies, Local Government and social partners. This facilitates the use of learning loops that feed back into the overall strategy. The governance arrangements outlined in Section 1 will ensure the involvement of local actors in participatory decision making and this

will be maintained through continued process and procedural improvements. WCC will support the LCDC in this regard.

While the plan is continually monitored at project and LAG level, CWP will report quarterly to the LCDC on LDS progress so that the plan is monitored by the LAG at regular intervals.

The M&E framework requires reporting to the Department on the LDS in the form of an annual review (end of year report) and an AIP. In addition to this, Wicklow LCDC/CWP will forward information to assist in the mid-term review of LEADER (2017/18) at national level and will participate in any other requests for qualitative and quantitative information as required e.g. end of FEOGA year, post and ex-ante programme evaluation of LEADER programmes.

In addition to disseminating information to the managing authority, reports and findings prepared by CWP on programme performance and thematic/sectoral issues and successes will be made available to the public as appropriate via the website or seminar events. CWP's website will also be regularly updated to reflect new activity. The M&E plan will be resourced through the administration budget of the RDP 2014-2020 with additional supports provided to the LCDC by WCC.

### **7.5 Data Protection**

As the main body tasked with data collection and control, CWP is fully aware that national legislation applies in relation to data protection and will comply with all regulations in relation to this. Information provided by project promoters and LAG partners may be personal and sensitive in nature so CWP has procedures in place to safeguard this. These procedures are outlined in the CWP RDP procedures manual and demonstrate compliance with current regulations.

Systems are also in place to protect information. All project files will be housed in CWP offices and stored in a secure location. It is also proposed that sign off on Article 28 checks will be conducted in CWP offices to keep information secure and reduce the risk of loss of data.

The IT systems in place in CWP also assist in the protection of data. CWP incorporates the latest Information Technology into its everyday business practices. All server information is encrypted using 256 Bit AES protocols before it is stored away to remote servers every 15 minutes. Physical access to the server is restricted and appropriate firewalls are in place to protect the data stored from unauthorised access. The LAN also incorporates a managed corporate anti-virus system. An appropriate backup system is in place to facilitate disaster recovery with both on-site and off-site backups of data. Backup media are tested on a regular basis.

CWP's PCs and laptops are built using the latest Operating Systems and Microsoft Office suite of software. The existing LAN is capable of being configured to allow employees log on securely to the system from remote offices and to access Cloud email and data if needed while out of the office. Each user on the network logs on using a unique username/password and is allocated appropriate permissions on the system. These systems will be crucial on in the operating of the Department LEADER ICT system.

### **7.6 Quality**

As previously referenced, data will be verified where possible to ensure quality. Supplementary documentary evidence will be used to back up promoter information e.g. financial statements and information, memo and articles, business plans,

development plans, CRO checks, information from other agencies on funding and project proposals.

Project development officers will also perform site visits at regular intervals and take photographs to verify progress. Engineers' sign-off is also required on capital projects to verify the value of works and to ensure compliance with planning and building regulations. Sign in sheets and reports are used to demonstrate animation and training activity. Detailed processes are outlined for staff on data verification in the procedures manual. The verification of some qualitative information may be more difficult given that it is often subjective in nature.

# Section 8 Financial Plan

## Implementation of Operations/Projects under the LDS

	2015 (£)	2016 (£)	2017 (£)	2018 (£)	2019 (£)	2020 (£)	Total £
<b>Preparatory Support for the Development of the LDS</b>	<b>£15,780</b>	<b>£8,400</b>					<b>£24,180</b>
Preparatory Costs for the LDS							
<b>Theme 1: Economic / Enterprise Development &amp; Job Creation</b>							
Rural Tourism Local Objective 1		£240,000	£560,000	£500,000			£1,300,000
Enterprise Dev & Job Creation Objective 2		£30,000	£585,000	£375,000			£990,000
Rural Towns Objective 3		£110,000	£323,000	£134,000	£133,000		£700,000
State Sub-Theme and Local Objective Number							£0
State Sub-Theme and Local Objective Number							£0
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£380,000</b>	<b>£1,468,000</b>	<b>£1,009,000</b>	<b>£133,000</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£2,990,000</b>
<b>Theme 2: Social Inclusion</b>							
Basic Services Local Objective 4			£145,500	£345,500	£145,500	£63,500	£500,000
Rural Youth Local Objective 5		£92,000	£92,000	£43,411			£227,411
State Sub-Theme and Local Objective Number							£0
State Sub-Theme and Local Objective Number							£0
State Sub-Theme and Local Objective Number							£0
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£92,000</b>	<b>£337,500</b>	<b>£188,911</b>	<b>£145,500</b>	<b>£63,500</b>	<b>£727,411</b>
<b>Theme 3: Rural Environment</b>							
Protection of Local Water Resources Objective 6		£25,000	£25,000				£50,000
Protection of Local Biodiversity Objective 7		£140,000	£140,000	£170,000	£170,000	£140,820	£760,820
Development of Renewable Energy Objective 8		£66,000	£66,000	£68,000			£200,000
State Sub-Theme and Local Objective Number							£0
State Sub-Theme and Local Objective Number							£0
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£231,000</b>	<b>£231,000</b>	<b>£238,000</b>	<b>£170,000</b>	<b>£140,820</b>	<b>£1,010,820</b>
<b>Total Budget Cost</b>	<b>£15,780</b>	<b>£711,000</b>	<b>£1,936,500</b>	<b>£1,435,911</b>	<b>£448,500</b>	<b>£204,320</b>	<b>£4,752,411</b>

### 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.**

## Administration & Animation Costs

	2015 (€)	2016 (€)	2017 (€)	2018 (€)	2019 (€)	2020 (€)	Total (€)
Rent and Rates	€0	€13,202	€13,202	€13,202	€13,202	€13,202	€66,010
Office Costs	€0	€22,541	€22,541	€22,541	€22,541	€22,541	€112,705
Insurance	€0	€2,500	€2,500	€2,500	€2,500	€2,500	€12,500
Recruitment	€0						€0
Staffing - Salaries	€0	€233,000	€268,000	€268,000	€233,000	€233,000	€1,235,000
Staff Training	€0	€4,000	€4,000	€2,500	€2,500	€2,500	€15,500
Communications/Publicity/Advertising	€0	€6,950	€3,950	€3,950	€3,950	€3,950	€22,750
Evaluation	€0	€4,250	€4,250	€4,250	€4,250	€4,250	€21,250
Financial/Professional Fees	€0	€5,500	€5,500	€5,500	€5,500	€5,500	€27,500
Travel & Subsistence	€0	€8,500	€8,500	€8,500	€8,500	€8,500	€42,500
Animation Costs	€0						€0
Other	€0	€250	€250	€250	€250	€250	€1,250
<b>Total Budget Cost</b>	<b>€0</b>	<b>€300,693</b>	<b>€332,693</b>	<b>€331,193</b>	<b>€296,193</b>	<b>€296,193</b>	<b>€1,556,965</b>

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### 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 Local Authority 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.



## Summary Sheet

	2015 (€)	2016 (€)	2017 (€)	2018 (€)	2019 (€)	2020 (€)	Total (€)
Preparatory Support for the Development of the LDS	€15,780	€8,400	€0	€0	€0	€0	€24,180
<b>Implementation of operations/projects under the LDS</b>							
Theme 1: Economic Development, Enterprise Development & Job Creation	€0	€380,000	€1,468,000	€1,009,000	€133,000	€0-	€2,990,000
Theme 2: Social Inclusion	€0	€92,000	€237,500	€188,911	€145,500	€63,500	€727,411
Theme 3: Rural Environment	€0	€231,000	€231,000	€238,000	€170,000	€140,820	€1,010,820
<b>LAG Administration &amp; Animation Costs</b>	€0	€300,693	€332,693	€331,193	€296,193	€296,193	€1,556,965
<b>Total</b>	<b>€15,780</b>	<b>€1,012,093</b>	<b>€2,269,193</b>	<b>€1,767,104</b>	<b>€744,693</b>	<b>€500,513</b>	<b>€6,309,376</b>
<b>Total Administration &amp; Animation Costs:</b>	<b>€1,556,965</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>Okay</b>				

### Explanatory Notes

- 1 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.
- 2 This sheet should be automatically filled in with figures from the other templates. Please contact Pobal directly if this is not the case.

## **Section 9: Additional Information**

N/A See Appendices

## Section 10 Declaration and Disclaimer

The following Declaration and Disclaimer was signed by all in attendance at the November 30<sup>th</sup> 2015 meeting. The Chair Pat Casey was not in attendance on the day however he had participated in the LDS team sign off on the priority actions in advance of this meeting. Grainne McLoughlin (Vice Chair) acted as Chair at this meeting and signed this declaration as below.

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### Appendix 3: Declaration and Disclaimer

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Please read carefully:

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.

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**Disclaimer**

Please read carefully:

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;
  - 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 Declaration and Disclaimer should be signed by the Chairperson of the LAG.

Name (Print):
Signature:
Position:
Date:

*A. Be...*  
*and help*  
*to cover*  
*100. Gregory*  
*Christopher Hill*  
*Bryna Doyle*

*for J.O. Doyle*  
*James M. Doyle*  
*Maurice James HSE*  
*David A. ...*  
*Richard ...*  
*Kevin Lewis*

X Vice Chair

## **Section 11: Appendices**

Appendix 1: Wicklow LCDC Standing Orders

### **STANDING ORDERS**

### **WICKLOW LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**SEPTEMBER 2014**

## **DEFINITIONS**

Chief Officer means the person designated as such by the County Manager

'Committee' means a Local Community Development Committee;

'LCDC' – Local Community Development Committee

'functional area of a Committee', means the administrative area of Wicklow County Council

'local and community development programme' means any action, intervention, programme, scheme or any other support, financial or otherwise, which is concerned with promoting the interests of local communities

'publicly funded body' means a body whose funds, directly or indirectly and in whole or in part, come out of moneys provided by the Oireachtas for the purpose of performing its functions;

'representatives of local community interests', in relation to the functional area of a Committee, means persons who are representative of community interests that are concerned with promoting the development of aspects of those interests within that area and such representatives may include representatives of non-governmental organisations, development agencies, community based groups, recognised associations, cultural bodies, sporting bodies and social movements and networks

'plan' means the Local Community and Economic Plan

## **INTRODUCTION**

- (1) The purpose of these standing orders is to set out in detail the functions, composition, procedures and operation of the Wicklow Local Community Development Committee in accordance with the **Local Government Reform Act 2014** and in line with subsequent regulations and the Guidelines issued by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.
- (2) Part 6 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 provides for the establishment of a Local Community Development Committee for the purposes of developing, co-coordinating and implementing a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development.
- (3) These Standing Orders set out the Committees policy and practice on those issues which it has power to determine. Should there be any doubt in interpretation of the Standing Orders, the Instruments and Articles of government will take precedence as the legal document.
- (4) The Local Community Development Committee is independent in the performance of its functions. The LCDC functions are set out in S.I. No. 234 of 2014

## **A. MEETINGS**

The Chairperson in conjunction with the Chief Officer will decide the frequency location and timing of meetings as well as the agenda, the objectives and expected outcomes of each meeting.

The LCDC will hold as many meetings as is necessary for the performance of its functions but should meet no less than six times in any calendar year.

Notice of meetings to be given no less than five working days before the meeting and should specify the place date and time.

The agenda is to be circulated no less than three working days in advance of the meeting.

Attendance at meetings will be recorded.

Full participation in meetings is confined to LCDC members. Generally, LCDC meetings are not open to the media or members of the public

## **B. CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

A potential conflict of interest is not automatic grounds for disqualification from being a member of the LCDC but is an important consideration in whether or not to accept a nomination.

It is recommended that no more than one board and/or employee of any single community and voluntary organization, community development body or local development body represented on the LCDC may be a member of the LCDC.

Local authority members and officials who are board members of any community or voluntary organization, community development body or local development body represented on the LCDC cannot be members of the LCDC

Each member should declare at the initial and subsequent relevant meeting of the LCDC any interest they have in:

- an application for funding or other support for decision by the LCDC;
- any initiative taken by the LCDC;
- any contract [service level agreement] or proposed contract that the member, or a person connected with the member may be directly or indirectly involved; or
- any matter from which the member, or anyone connected with the member, might benefit directly or indirectly from as a member of the LCDC

## **C. QUORUM/DECISION MAKING**

The quorum for the Committee meetings shall be 50% Of the membership, rounded up to the nearest whole number plus one (Article 41, S.I. No. 234 of 2014). Vacant positions are not included in the calculation of membership for quorum purposes.

A quorum is required to commence an LCDC meeting.

There is no requirement for a quorum to be maintained for decision-making purposes. Given the likelihood for frequent abstentions from votes to deal with conflicts of interest situations, the maintenance of a quorum at all times in the meeting would be too onerous to facilitate effective decision-making.

Each member present at a meeting of the Committee shall have a vote unless prohibited from voting under the terms of the Regulations or any other enactment.

At decision making level neither public authorities nor any single interest group shall represent more than 49% of the voting rights of the Committee.

Should members have to leave the meeting in order to maintain balance this will be done for the first meeting, initially by agreement and failing that by lottery. Thereafter it will be done by rotation.

All acts of the Committee, and all questions coming or arising before the Committee, shall be shall be determined—

(1) by consensus of those members present and eligible to vote, or

(2) Where consensus cannot be achieved, by a majority of the votes of the members present and eligible to vote

Where a conflict of interest is declared by a member, that member will leave the meeting and will not be entitled to vote on the matter in which they have an interest. This decision is the responsibility of the member. Upon returning to the meeting the member will be notified of the decision by the Chair and no further discussion will take place.

No decision of the LCDC will be invalidated where a member should have vacated the meeting but did not.

#### **D. THE POSITION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR**

The members of the Committee shall select one of their number to be Chairperson at the first meeting of the Committee.

The position of Chairperson of the Committee shall be filled in the following manner:

(1) the proceedings shall begin by a member or members of the Committee

being proposed and seconded by other members of the Committee for the position of Chairperson and every person so proposed and seconded, and no other person, shall be considered for the position

(2) where there is only one person so proposed and seconded, such person shall be deemed to be selected

(3) where two or more persons are proposed and seconded a poll shall be taken;

(4) if such a poll yields a majority for any one person, that person shall be deemed to be the Chairperson of the Committee

(5) if such a poll does not yield a majority for any one person, the person receiving the least amount of support shall be excluded from the process and, subject to the provisions of paragraph (4), one or more further polls, as may be necessary, shall be taken

(6) Paragraphs (4) and (5) shall apply in relation to such further poll or polls

(7) Where only two persons are proposed and seconded or where, as a result of one or more polls, all those proposed and seconded except two have been eliminated, the question as to which person shall be deemed to be Chairperson shall be put to the members of the Committee present and whichever of such persons receives the majority support of the members on such question shall be deemed to be Chairperson

(8) If, because of an equality of support, any question arises as to which of such persons is to be eliminated or as to which of such persons shall be the Chairperson, such question shall be decided by the drawing of lots

The Committee shall, immediately following the selection of the Chairperson, select a Vice-Chairperson to the Committee in the same manner as the selection of Chairperson

The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall be appointed for a maximum period of 3 years, whereupon they shall retire as Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson, as the case may be

Without prejudice to the generality of regulation 24, the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson shall cease to hold office where—

(1) they cease to be, or become disqualified from being, a member of the Committee, or

(2) the Committee, by resolution of not less than two-thirds of its members, rounded to the nearest whole number, determine to terminate their appointment as Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson, as the case may be.

The Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson of the Committee may resign their position at any time, such resignation to be notified to the chief officer and taking effect from the date specified therein or upon receipt of the notification by the chief officer, whichever is the later.

A former Chairperson of the Committee may not hold that position again for a period of 3 years after their tenure as Chairperson has ended.

If present at a meeting of the Committee, the Chairperson shall chair it. If, and for so long as, the Chairperson is not present, or the position of the chair is vacant, the Vice-Chairperson shall chair the meeting, but shall leave the chair upon the arrival at the meeting of the Chairperson, or, in the case of the filling a casual vacancy in the position of Chairperson, following the selection of Chairperson at that meeting. In the event of equal votes, the Chairman shall have a casting vote

### **CONDUCT IN MEETINGS**

Procedures for dealing with disorderly conduct in meetings will be dealt with in accordance with Regulation 57

### **ETHICS IN PUBLIC OFFICE**

The LCDC shall comply with the requirements of the Ethics in Public Office Acts 1995 and 2001.

### **INTERPRETATION OF STANDING ORDERS**

A ruling of the Chair on any question or his interpretation of the Standing Orders shall be final. Should any question, doubt or dispute arise as to the area or functions or functioning of a Committee or as to the application (save at a meeting) of standing orders to a Committee, the matter shall be determined by the Chair of the LCDC whose decision shall be final.

### **MATTERS NOT COVERED BY STANDING ORDERS**

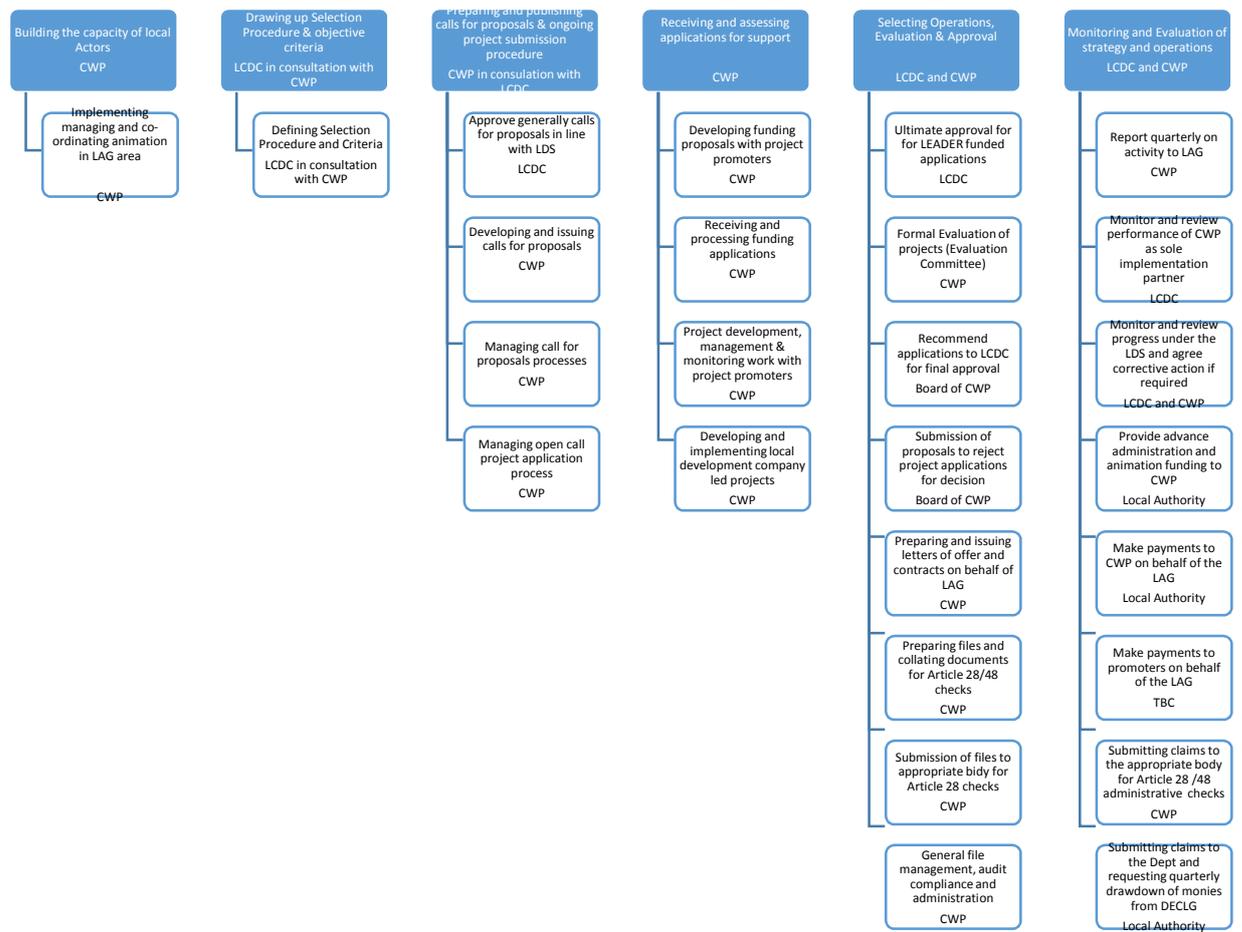
Matters not covered by Standing Orders will be covered by the Local Government Reform Act 2014 and in line with the Guidelines issued by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.

**LAG & IMPLEMENTING PARTNER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The proposed implementation arrangement for County Wicklow of the LEADER / Rural Development Programme 2014-20 is that the Programme will be delivered by an LCDC-led LAG. In acknowledgement of the experience and capacity of the Local Development Company responsible for the management of the Programme to date, it is proposed that the sole lead implementation role will be assigned to CWP. Wicklow County Council as the Local Authority will be the lead financial partner. This arrangement adheres to the draft Operating Rules (version 1.4b) of the RDP 2014-2020 and is further outlined in the Heads of Agreement document contained in Appendix 3.

A full breakdown of the roles and responsibilities of each partner body is illustrated in the chart below. Primarily, the agreement specifies that County Wicklow LCDC as the LAG will provide strategic direction by agreeing the LDS priorities and will also review the performance of CWP as the lead implementation body. CWP as the sole implementing partner will be responsible for animation and capacity building, managing calls for proposals, processing of applications, and monitoring project implementation, with management oversight provided by the LAG. The LAG as the decision-making body will formally approve all decisions on projects. Wicklow County Council as the Local Authority will provide the financial partner role including final responsibility for Article 28 checks, payment of funds, and indemnification of the LAG and CWP

## LCDC LDC Roles & Responsibilities



### Appendix 3: Operational Procedures List

1. LCDC/LDS Heads of Agreement
2. CWP, Financial Procedures Manual 2007 – 2013
3. Wicklow County Council, Purchasing Procedure Manual & Checklist
4. Wicklow County Council Procurement Manual

#### **1. LCDC/LDS Signed Heads of Agreement**

The Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) was established to:

1. have primary responsibility for coordinating, planning and overseeing local and community development funding, whether spent by local authorities or on behalf of the state by other local development bodies,
2. bring a more joined up approach to the implementation of local and community development programmes and interventions, pursuing an integrated approach to local community based services across providers and delivery structures,
3. drive meaningful citizen and community engagement in the scoping, planning, delivery and evaluation of local and community development programmes,
4. pursue a more cost efficient administration of local and community development programmes and delivery structures, the matching of resources to priorities and better value for money in the management and delivery of programmes.
5. focus on learning and feedback, enhancing the links between service delivery and policy development, and
6. Pursue opportunities for additional funding for the area, whether Exchequer, EU, private or other sources.

The LEADER element of the RDP 2014-2020 will provide €6.3m to address poverty reduction, social inclusion and economic development of rural areas in Co. Wicklow. A maximum of 25% of this will be required to cover administration, project development and monitoring costs. The programme is a community led approach to the delivery of rural development interventions that will be supported by a Local Development Strategy and implemented by interested groups at a local level.

Following respective approvals from the Board of County Wicklow Partnership (CWP) and the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), it was agreed that the Wicklow Local Action Group would be a partnership between the LCDC and the CWP.

On that basis, an Expression of Interest application was prepared under the first phase of the LEADER Programme, by the LCDC/CWP as partners. This Expression of Interest was subsequently accepted by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG).

The preparation of the Local Development Strategy (LDS) by the LCDC/CWP is now taking place, and will be finalised and submitted to the DECLG by the end of the year.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015, draft LEADER Operating Rules were received from the DECLG. The operating rules are the framework to support and ensure the compliance of

LEADER interventions with EU and National requirements. In particular the rules set out the general basis on which each Local Action Group (LAG) will deliver the LEADER element of the Rural Development Programme (RD) 2014-2020. The rules apply to the implementation of each LAG's LDS and supplement the terms and conditions of the contract between each LAG and the Department.

It is clear from the operating rules and from a Governance perspective, that the LCDC has to be the LAG and that the joint approach is not feasible. The Department, while not specifically stating that it is their policy that the LCDC should be the LAG in each County, is desirous that it should be so. The recommendation is that the LCDC operates as the LAG and that County Wicklow Partnership as the lead implementation partner administer and deliver the projects under the LEADER Programme, by way of a Service Level Agreement (SLA).

### **Heads of Agreement**

On the proposed implementation arrangement for LEADER element of the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020 in Wicklow where the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) is the Local Action Group (LAG).

#### **The role of the LCDC will be to:**

- Set out the overall strategic direction and agree the main Local Development Strategy (LDS) priorities
- Monitor and review performance of County Wicklow Partnership (CWP) as lead implementation partner as per the Service Level Agreement between the LCDC and CWP

- Delegate to CWP the sole implementation role
- Delegate to the Local Authority the financial partner role including final responsibility for Article 28 checks, payment of funds and indemnification of the LAG and the designated implementing partners.

### **Principles of the Partnership Approach**

The proposed arrangements will operate on the following basis:-

- The LCDC will ensure coherence with the community led LDS when selecting operations, by prioritising these operations according to their contribution to meeting that strategy's objectives and targets; CWP will discharge their role under a Service Level Agreement with the LCDC.
- CWPs role will be as the implementing partner of the LCDC for the duration of the LEADER programming period, subject to continued compliance with the requirements of the Managing Authority (Department) and as per the Service Level Agreement with the LCDC
- The implementing role will be assigned to CWP for all project implementation elements of the programme i.e. there will be no fragmentation of the programme delivery role and funding among other Local Action Group Partners
- Provision will be made in the local development strategy for CWP to cover the geographic area within the Local Action Group's boundary; the implementation role would be carried out by CWP in the entire LDS area. CWP will have responsibility and accountability for the delivery of the local development strategy and the implementation of the programme actions in this area
- The operating methodology will be based on the Community Led Local Development (CLLD)/ LEADER specificities<sup>28</sup> and will be proactive, flexible and responsive to local needs and opportunities.

---

<sup>28</sup> Seven Specificities of LEADER are:

Over the course of the life of the EU LEADER suite of Programmes (1991-present day) seven specificities (operational principles) have been identified as underpinning the unique approach to rural development.

1. Area based approach
2. Bottom up approach
3. Local group (partnership approach)
4. Integrated and Sustainable Development Strategies
5. Multi sectoral integration
6. Trans National and Inter Territorial Cooperation and
7. Networking

All additional CLLD/LEADER programmes, where managed by the LCDC and as appropriate funds to be delivered by the LCDC and the implementing partner as provided for in the EU Regulations; 'some elements of smaller, locally focused agriculture schemes such as water quality/biodiversity/EIP groups (Section 4.2) and outcome based conservation projects (Section 1 c) and artisan food cooperation measures (Section 5c) could be delivered through local structures such as LEADER'.

- The total required administration and animation Programme Budget allocation will be made available to CWP save any amount required/agreed for performance of Article 28 checks where these are the responsibility of the lead financial partner.

<b>Role/Task</b>	<b>Implemented by</b>
<b>Application Phase</b>	
Preparation of Expression of Interest application under the first phase of the LEADER application and selection process	CWP in consultation with LCDC
Approval of Expression of Interest prior to submission	LCDC and CWP Board (Joint EOI)
<b>Local Development Strategy Development</b>	
Preparation of the Local Development Strategy including strategic priorities	Lead role CWP in collaboration with LCDC partners
Agreeing the Local Development Strategy and strategic priorities and objectives and overseeing the development of this strategy	LCDC
Approval of the LDS before submission	LCDC
Approval of the Local Action Group partners role in the implementation of the Local Development Strategy	LCDC to approve CWP as sole implementing partners and the Local Authority as the lead financial partner
<b>Regulatory Framework 2014-2020 Tasks</b>	
<b>Building the capacity of local actors to</b>	

<b>develop and implement operations including fostering their project management capabilities</b>	<b>CWP</b>
Specific Tasks:	
Implementing, managing and coordinating animation activity in the Local Action Group's area	CWP
<b>Drawing up a non-discriminatory and transparent selection procedure and objective criteria for the selection of operations, which avoid conflicts of interest, ensure that at least 50% of the votes in selection decisions are cast by partners which are not public authorities, and allow selection by written procedure</b>	LCDC in consultation with CWP
<b>Preparing and publishing calls for proposals or an ongoing project submission procedure, including defining selection criteria</b>	CWP in consultation with the LCDC
Specific Tasks:	
Approve generally calls for proposals in accordance with the priorities and objectives set out in the local development strategy	LCDC
Developing and issuing calls for proposals	CWP
Managing call for proposals processes	CWP
Managing open call project application processes	CWP
Defining selection criteria	<b>LCDC in consultation with CWP</b>
<b>Receiving and assessing applications for support</b>	CWP
Specific Tasks:	
Developing funding proposals with project promoters	CWP
Receiving and processing funding applications	CWP
Project development, management and monitoring work with project promoters	CWP
Developing and implementing local development company led projects	CWP

<b>Selecting operations and fixing the amount of support and, where relevant, presenting the proposals to the body responsible for final verification of eligibility before approval</b>	LCDC and CWP
Specific Tasks:	
Membership of the LEADER Evaluation Committee (Independent Advisory Committee) will be independent and will not include any members from the CWP Board or LCDC Committee.	Membership approved by both LCDC Committee and CWP Board
Ultimate approval for LEADER funded applications	LCDC
Formal evaluation of projects (Evaluation Committee)	CWP
All LEADER project applications seeking grant aid up to a maximum of €50,000 will be presented in full to the Evaluation Committee and then to the Board of CWP for decision. Projects will then be forwarded to the LCDC.	Board of CWP
All project applications seeking grant aid in excess of €50,000 will be presented in full to the Independent Advisory Committee, CWP Board and the LCDC.	LCDC
Submission of proposals to reject project applications for decision	Board of CWP
Preparing and issuing Letters of Offer and contracts with project promoters on behalf of the Local Action Group. Appropriate Logos	CWP
Preparing and collating documentation for Article 28 checks	CWP
Submission of files to appropriate body for Article 28 checks	CWP
General file management, audit compliance and administration related to above actions	CWP
<b>Monitoring the implementing of the community led local development strategy and the operations supported and carrying out specific evaluation activities linked to</b>	LCDC and CWP

<b>that strategy</b>	
Specific Tasks:	
Report quarterly on Activity to Local Action Group	CWP
Monitor and review performance of CWP as lead implementation partner as per Service Level Agreement with the LCDC	LCDC
Monitor and review on an ongoing basis progress under the LDS and agree corrective action, where required	LCDC and CWP
Providing advance administration and animation funding to the implementation partners (local development companies)	Local Authority as Lead Financial Partner
Making payments to CWP on behalf of the LAG	Local Authority as Lead Financial Partner
Making payments to promoters on behalf of the LAG	CWP? Needs clarification LCDC or CWP (CCMA issue)
Submitting claims to the appropriate body for Article 28 administrative checks	CWP
Requesting quarterly drawdown of monies from DECLG	Local Authority as Lead Financial Partner

  
Mr Michael Nicholson  
Chief Officer to the LCDC

Present when the seal of Wicklow County Council was affixed hereto:

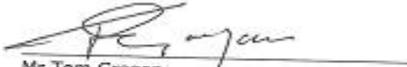
  
Director of Services

  
Nominated Member

SR 337/15  
18/12/15  
2

  
Nominated Employee

  
Cllr Pat Casey  
Chairperson to the LCDC

  
Mr Tom Gregan  
Chairperson County Wicklow Partnership

  
Mr Frank d'Arcy  
C.E.O. County Wicklow Partnership

## 2. CWP – Financial Procedures Manual, Rural Development Programme 2007- 2013.

(79 pages, copy available on request)

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### 3.3 Wicklow County Councils – Purchasing Procedure Manual & Checklist

(39 pages, copy available on request)

## 3. Wicklow County Council Purchasing Procedure Manual & Checklist

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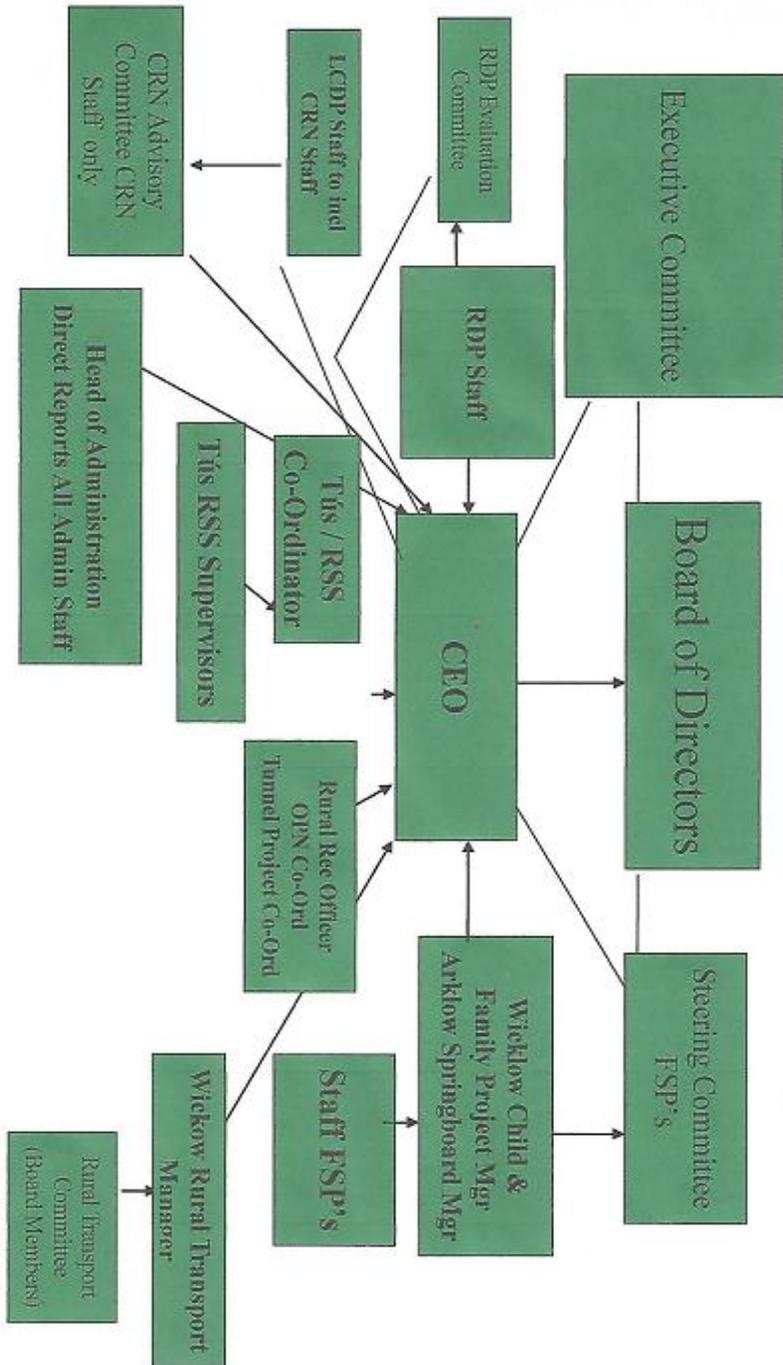
(52 Page document available on request, Manual will be updated in early 2016)

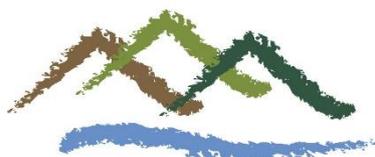
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Appendix 4: CWP Organisational Chart

# Co Wicklow Partnership





## County Wicklow Partnership

### Job Description for Chief Executive Officer

#### **Reporting to**

The Board of County Wicklow Partnership.

#### **Background**

County Wicklow Partnership is engaged in the planning and delivery of a range of rural development, community development and social inclusion programmes and initiatives in Co. Wicklow (excluding the Bray area) as follows:

1. *Rural Development Programme/LEADER*
2. *Family Support Services*
  - Wicklow Child & Family Project
  - Arklow Springboard Project
3. *Local & Community Development Programme(incl.)*
  - Croí Rath Naoi CDP
  - Arklow CDP
4. *Wicklow Rural Transport*
5. *Rural Social Scheme*
6. *Walks Scheme/Rural Recreation*
7. *Arklow Mental Health Project(The Tunnel)*
8. *Older People's Network(Get Vocal Project)*
9. *Tús Programme*
10. *Wicklow Information Network*
11. *Employment & Social Inclusion Unit*

#### **Areas of responsibility**

##### **Main Areas of responsibility**

The CEO of County Wicklow Partnership will be responsible for:

- The overall management of the affairs and operations of the company in order to fulfil its aims and objectives, and deliver on its vision:  
*“To effect change in the county by supporting the social, cultural, economic and environmental well being of individuals, families, groups and communities”*
- Managing the delivery of the above Programmes.
- Determining and formulating strategies, policies and objectives and providing overall direction for County Wicklow Partnership, with the Board of directors.
- Implementing recommendations from the recently completed Organisational Review of the Company, in conjunction with the Board and staff of the company.

##### **The CEO will also be responsible for:**

- Securing funding for existing programmes and new programmes and initiatives from traditional and non traditional funding sources.

- Representing and promoting the company at local and national levels to various bodies with a view to promoting services, exchanging ideas and accomplishing objectives.
- Working with local stakeholders to identify and develop new opportunities for the Partnership to support wellbeing of communities in the area.
- Developing strategic alliances with relevant bodies and networks to jointly explore and generate new economic and social opportunities for the area.
- Setting and monitoring targets for the programmes delivered by the company.
- Ensuring that the company's programmes achieve value for money in their delivery.
- Managing change effectively in the company.
- Conferring with board members and staff members to discuss issues, coordinate activities, and resolve problems.
- Reviewing operations on an ongoing basis to evaluate the performance of the staff in meeting the objectives of the programmes delivered by the company.
- Ensuring the necessary structure and resources are in place to meet the company's strategic and governance agendas.
- Managing the ongoing integration process to ensure a smooth transition from the original three companies into one company.
- Ensuring the provision of appropriate management and financial accounts of the company to the Board in a timely fashion.
- Ensuring compliance with all statutory responsibilities.
- Carrying out any other duties or responsibilities as set out by the Board.

### **Person Specification**

The CEO will be a highly motivated and efficient person with extensive experience in the development and implementation of strategy, policy and operations in the areas of rural development, community development and social inclusion. Specific requirements of the position will include:

#### **1. Education**

The ideal candidate will have:

- A Bachelor's Degree, or Diploma, in a relevant field.

#### **2. Knowledge and Experience**

- Five or more years experience working in rural development, community development, social inclusion, enterprise development or a related field.
- Previous experience at CEO or general manager level.
- Experienced in policy development and/or project work.
- An appropriate understanding of rural development, community development and social inclusion work.
- Experienced in financial planning/forecasting, financial management, budgeting and expenditure control.
- Demonstrated knowledge of good governance in the local development sector.
- Competence in using a PC, software packages, databases and spreadsheets.
- Demonstrated experience in human resource management.

#### **3. Strategic Decision Making Abilities**

- A strong strategic perspective with the ability to build, prioritise and implement focused and viable strategies for the company.
- The ability to manage change, both in terms of identifying when fundamental changes are needed and also implementing change through consultation and planning.

- The ability to identify and develop key commercial opportunities for the company.
- The ability to exercise independent judgment.
- The ability to manage contract negotiations and implementation of same.

#### 4. Leadership / Teamwork

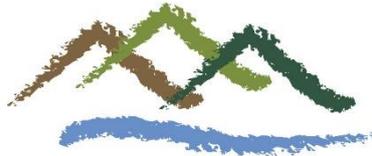
- Proven ability to develop, motivate, and lead all levels of the organisation in both hierarchical and non-hierarchical situations.
- The ability to both work independently and participate as part of a multi-disciplinary team.
- The ability to effectively manage multiple projects and deadlines; hands-on approach to getting things done.

#### 5. Interpersonal / Communication Skills

- Excellent interpersonal, influencing and networking skills with a demonstrated capacity to build effective relationships across a wide spectrum of situations both within and outside the company including the Board of Directors.
- Ability to liaise with relevant and appropriate agencies in the promotion of the company.
- Ability to identify and manage conflict and sensitive issues to achieve positive outcomes with a high degree of probity, integrity and confidentiality.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills with the ability to write clearly, succinctly and correctly in a well-structured and logical way.

#### **Salary and Benefits:**

Salary and benefits package is negotiable depending upon experience (based on the Pabal salary scale for CEOs).



## County Wicklow Partnership

**Post:** Rural Development Officer

**Reporting to:** Chief Executive Officer

**Overall purpose of the job:** The Rural Development Officer will work on the implementation of the company's business plan for the delivery of the Rural Development Programme 2007 – 2013 (RDP) in County Wicklow.

**Principal Responsibilities:**

- Inform, advise and assist communities and issue groups to avail of opportunities for development through RDP funding and in accordance with CWP's business plan for the programme.
- Inform, advise and assist private individuals to establish or expand businesses in rural areas through RDP funding and in accordance with CWP's business plan for the programme.
- Provide advice and support to the members of community organisations and small business relating to skills acquisition for planning and project development.
- Assess, prepare and evaluate project proposals to the Rural Development Programme 2007 - 2013 and make recommendations on same to the Evaluation Committee.
- Present projects to the Evaluation Committee meetings and ensure that all information required on the projects is prepared for those meetings.
- Present projects to the Board of CWP and ensure that all information required on the projects is prepared for those meetings.
- Take responsibility for administration attached to all stages of project funding – from application to approval to payment and any post payment follow-up.
- Monitor and review compliance with terms and conditions of projects that have been approved for funding from the Rural Development Programme 2007 - 2013.
- Liaise with Department Officials in relation to specific project queries and work with the RDP Project Team in formulating responses to Department requests for information.

- Contribute to the ongoing development of the RDP Programme Strategy and to the development of Programme policies and procedures relevant to the work
- Assist in the development of inter-territorial and / or transnational projects with European partners.
- Share responsibility with other company staff for promotion of the RDP by a variety of means and in various local and national media.
- Represent the company on local or county committees and attend meetings, trade fairs or other events on behalf of the company as requested by the CEO.
- Identify opportunities for cross collaboration with other company programmes.
- Contribute to the development of any company policies and procedures relevant to the work
- Participate in training pertinent to the post and company
- Complement activities of other staff and work as part of the overall company staff team.
- Participate in RDP team meetings and lead out on team initiatives where appropriate
- Report to the CEO on all matters relating to the work of the company and to provide weekly and monthly reports to the CEO or Administrators as required.

### **General**

Undertake any other duties as may be required from time to time by the Rural Development Manager or CEO in pursuance of the specific aims and objectives of the organisation.

## **PERSONAL SPECIFICATION FOR THE POST OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICER**

### **SKILLS AND ABILITIES**

- Facilitation, training and consultation skills
- Communication skills – written and oral
- Presentation Skills
- Organisational skills
- Networking / liaison skills
- Teamwork
- Problem solving skills
- Ability to work on own initiative
- Administration skills

- IT competence
- Strategic planning / business planning
- Managing time / deadlines

### **EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE**

- At least three years rural development experience – ideally with experience of both community development and enterprise development
- A proven track record in working with community groups and / or business
- A good understanding of rural development and the issues facing rural dwellers
- A proven track record of adopting a strategic approach to local development
- Knowledge of the policy context of the RDP
- Experience of working with state bodies
- Familiarity with the local development infrastructure in Co. Wicklow desirable

### **EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

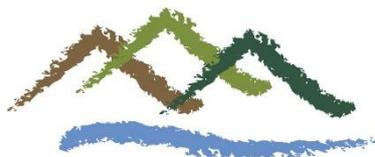
- A diploma or degree in a relevant discipline
- Training relevant to the post.
- Willing to engage in further training / professional development

### **PERSONAL QUALITIES**

- Professional, dynamic, enthusiastic, flexible, approachable, team oriented and consultative
- Positive attitude
- A self starter able to work on their own initiative

### **OTHER**

- Commitment to rural development and social inclusion.
- Use of a car for work and to have a full clean driver's licence.
- Willing to work outside normal office hours.



## County Wicklow Partnership

**Job title: Administrator of Rural Development/LEADER Programme.**

**Key responsibilities:**

- Financial Accounting and Reporting to CEO, Executive & Board, Funders – including RDP, – monthly, quarterly, annually as applicable
- Bank Accounts –
- Ensure timely invoice payments to suppliers and promoters and maintain records of same
- Ensure sufficient funds are available for payments including tracking core funding, invoicing, etc
- Participate in audits (year-end financial audit for CWP Plus Deloitte, Dept of Agriculture, Dept of Environment and EU – reference admin and project audits) internal and external, assist with budget controls.
- Meet with CWP and Government Department deadlines often at short notice as well as monthly standard return requirements.
- Ensuring compliance with procedural requirements of all funders is met. Particular compliance with RDP operating rules (and subsequent circulars)
- Promoter files / paperwork is compliant and available for inspection and to a very high standard.
- Maintain Department electronic IT system and database accurate reporting and attention to detail require maintaining this IT system.
- Maintain electronic and hard copy filing system.

**Key duties:**

**General:**

- Ensure accurate, complete and timely financial management reporting, including monthly management accounts and bank reconciliations for all RDP accounts.
- Production of financial information on an ad hoc basis (eg for planning purposes, budgeting)
- Annual Accounts and Audit liaison and preparation to pre trial-balance stage for all accounts
- Ensure that all information required for audit is available and accurate and respond to auditor queries in a timely manner to conclusion
- Board and Evaluation reporting – providing financial and other as required for both meetings
- Ensuring Bond is in place on an annual basis for RDP if required.
- Ensuring admin and project payments are received and transferred as appropriate
- Banking and banking on-line for payments
- Ensure animation records are maintained on a monthly basis
- Answering general queries from promoters.

- Assisting Rural Development Officer/s as necessary.
- Assist in the preparation of the agenda for meetings.
- Track all project promoters and maintain files, databases, and project records.

**Project Administrative Duties:**

- Set up a file for the project
- Enter on RDP IT System to generate a File No & Measure/Grant information
- Liaise with the RDO assigned to the file

*Application Stage*

- Ensure that a copy of the most recent application under the EU Single Payment Scheme ( SPS) for farmers (if relevant) is on file
- Original Expression of Interest is on the file
- Original Completed application form, signed & dated by the promoter is on file and is date stamped & signed by the LAG
- Ensure a copy of the Letter acknowledging receipt of the application form is on the file

*Project Assessment Stage*

- Ensure that the Promoters Business Plan / Development Plan is on file
- Liaise with relevant RDO to ensure Preliminary site visit has taken place and that the report (including photographs) is on file
- Completed and signed project analysis/assessment report as completed by the RDO in preparation for the Evaluation and Board meetings needs to be on file ensuring compliance with RDP Operating Rule requirements
- If appropriate confirm the promoter's registration with the Companies Registration Office and Certificate of incorporation Registration Number via the CRO website, print out any findings and place on the file.
- Ensure that any projects of a commercial nature are in line with the 'de minimise' rule and that this is minuted at Evaluation and Board?
- Ensure that if displacement occurs it is discussed and minuted at the Evaluation and Board
- Any issues around deadweight need to be discussed and minuted at the Evaluation and Board
- If the promoter requires any specific skills/qualifications that these are evidenced with copies of the relevant certifications on file
- If the project has an innovative aspect, this must be discussed at the evaluation and board meetings and minuted
- Ensure that all evidence of private matched funding and any relevant bank statements, loan approval, etc been supplied and is on file
- If Local Authority Co Funding is applicable then a letter from the local authority confirming that the funding is from monies raised locally by the Local Authority and/or monies received from the Local Government Fund should be evidenced on the file
- Departments/State agencies check list must be completed for the file and must include any correspondence to support lack of funding from another source
- In instances where the CEB been notified of a project, the file must contain written proof of same and the file should also contain a copy of the sectoral agreement between CWP and CEB
- Where planning is a requirement for the project then a letter of final approval/Planning Permission & Drawings needs to be on file with the Planning No. and Planning Date

- Where a Project has been referred to ERG (for queries around eligibility), a copy of the file must be made and the original posted to the Department and we must track outcome if required and be available for any queries that arise should the RDO not be available
- A copy of the most recent Audited Accounts (existing business) for the promoter must be on file
- Memo & Article of Association (if applicable) must be on file
- Where evidence of title/leasehold is required then a letter of entitlements to carry out the work on the site land title & map / Lease existing buildings need to be retained on the file. If an agreement is being used rather than a lease it must be endorsed by a solicitor and evidenced on the file
- If the project involves capital works the promoter has to provide evidence of ownership/lease/agreement Owner of Land Certified copy of the folio/stamped deed of conveyance/indenture & map and evidence of same needs to be on file
- Relevant signed original quotations are required for the file. Likewise, if appropriate, a completed schedule of tenders should be on file with all required supporting documentation

#### *Project Evaluation Stage*

- A completed and signed project scoring report must be on the file
- Relevant extracts of Evaluation Committee Minutes signed and dated must be on file and must include whether any Board/Evaluation Committee/Staff Member declared a conflict of interest or absented themselves during the assessment process
- Relevant extracts of Board Minutes signed and dated must be on file and must include whether any Board/Evaluation Committee/Staff Member declared a conflict of interest or absented themselves during the assessment process
- Any variances between the recommendation of the Evaluation committee and the decision of the Board must be detailed in the minutes and put on the file
- Any voluntary labour/ use of donated land/property must be approved in advance by the Board of CWP (Submitted at Application)
- Ensure that any promoter requests for Extension of contract expiry date is evidenced on file
- Ensure that any Re allocation up to a limit of 5,000 or 5% whichever is less is approved in writing by the CEO or in instances where the reallocation is in excess of 5,000, that the board minutes are on file with the necessary approvals

#### *Grant Offer Stage*

- Where Department approval requests relating to projects in excess of €150,000 are necessary, the RDO completes the relevant paperwork and submits same to Dept, any decisions in relation to these requests must be documented on the file
- Detailed letter of offer/contract and terms and conditions is issued to the promoter and copied for the file
- Confirmation that work did not commence before the promoter had formally accepted the offer of grant aid must be sought from the RDO and a work not started report placed on the file
- The Promoter must accept the letter of offer /contract within 15 working days from the date of the letter offer and a signed and dated acceptance should be on file
- Any 3 months extension requests must be responded to in writing and a copy of the correspondence placed on file

#### *Payment Stage*

- Liaise with promoters in the completion of a payment claim form (via telephone, email, face-to-face). Once all the documentation detailed below is on file:

- Project Promoter TCC (tax clearance certificates) and supplier TCC (if applicable) are verified on the revenue.ie website and copied for the file
- Any Promoter VAT registered information should be on file
- Where VAT is included, confirmation from Revenue Promoter not registered for VAT must be sought and on file
- If the promoter is claiming charity status there need to be written confirmation of same from The Revenue Commissioners on the file
- Where applicable voluntary labour / donation of land/building formal leases (community based) needs to be appropriately certified and referenced to the original investment proposal to ensure they correspond
- If a donation of land/building has been included in the calculation the value of the donated land must be agreed beforehand and the donation is subject to certification by an independent qualified expert or duly authorised official body
- In the case of capital projects, is there an Architects/Engineers certificate of compliance with relevant planning, building and fire regulations, and EU and national, other statutory regulations on the file?
- A copy of the relevant inspection report, signed and dated, verifying that the grant Aided works have been satisfactorily completed, by or (as appropriate) on behalf of the LAG By an independent qualified person (engineer/architect) & total cost of works should be on file if required
- Ensure that any equipment purchased, if relevant, is detailed in an asset register and maintained in a specified place of storage and must be available for inspection
- Second-hand equipment micro enterprise (only) must be evidenced in a written declaration stating its origin and shall confirm in writing that at no point during the previous 7 years has it been purchased with the aid of national or European Community grants
- Certified Title/Leasehold in respect of capital projects involving land, e.g. sites of building construction/renovation, fixtures, and traffic ways. Leases in respect of such projects must run for a minimum period of 5 years from the date of the final grant payment to the promoter. Evidence on file
- If a lease or evidence of title is not available a legal document declaring that the project promoter has permission to carry out the project activities concerned for at least a 5 year period signed by a person/entity recognised as being the person/entity in charge of the property in question and the promoter will suffice. A solicitor must witness the signing of this document and a copy is required for the file
- Where a Purchase of Land is relevant then the purchase of said land/buildings costs should not be more than 10% of the total eligible expenditure on the project
- Tourism Projects compliance Failte Ireland or other standard /Tourism accommodation registration must be evidenced on the file where appropriate
- Copies of the relevant insurance policies with mandatory wording need to be on file
- A LAG Indicator should be on the file at application and claim stages
- Promoter narrative report upon completion of the project detailing the outcomes, outputs and impacts needs to be on file at final claim stage
- Payment Claim form - This involves ensuring that the promoter supplies, original detailed invoices, original signed receipts, appropriately verified voluntary labour/donation, copies of cheques, TCC and bank statements showing the payments
  - If this is the first payment then 15 % of the total project must be paid and this must be evidenced.
  - The RDO and Administrator both review the file/claim and sign the relevant areas of the file.

- Ensure that written report by the RDO is on file following a site inspection
- The payment claim is entered on the Dept IT system and a printout of the claim is put in the file
- The CEO authorises all claims on the Dept IT system, prints out the claim detail (pending dept stage of the process on the IT system) and signs for the file
- Any project payments from the Dept need to be transferred to the promoter within 5 working days and relevant authorisations are required for the transaction
- Copy of the grant banking on line transfer from (a) DCE&GA include Banks statement (b) CWP to promoter include bank statement
- NB showing payment of the grant to the promoter within 5 working days of receipt by LAG, if this timeline is exceeded then the file must contain an explanation as to why
- And receipts must date stamped and stamped CWP & EAFRD as grant aided under the Rural Development Programme and copies of same retained on file
- Write to the promoter advising of payment date and amount and supply them with an payment acknowledgement form for their completion. This is returned with a bank statement from the promoter showing their receipt of the grant and this is on the file

#### *Publicity*

- Ensure there is evidence on file that the promoter has erected an explanatory plaque which must acknowledge the assistance of the EU and EAFRD (Irish & English)
- Before & After Photos are required on the file
- Ensure Promoter notified that details of grant and the amounts received will be published on the website of the Dept agriculture and fisheries and food
- Annual In-Operation Letter for promoters each year - Annex 18. The letter shall request the promoter to confirm that they are still operating as funded. In addition, the letter shall also request that the promoter update their previously submitted Performance Indicators.

#### **Skills Required:**

- Good computer skills which include Microsoft Office Word, Excel, Access and Power Point.
- In your role as administrative assistant you will be expected to be part of administration team and as such your job will involve you in supporting other members of the team from time to time.
- Understand the work flow of the Rural Development Programme (LEADER) and operations to anticipate and meet work capacity needs.
- Understanding of basic accountancy principles necessary for monthly bank reconciling.
- Other skills required attention to detail, good communication skills, teamwork, confidentiality planning and organising.

Any significant changes to the role will be subject to consultation.

Appendix 6: Current LEADER Project Scoring Sheet

**CWP – Evaluation Committee Scoring Record**

Date:

Time:

Project Title:

Project Reference no:

Assessment Criteria	Objective	Issues raised by Evaluation Committee	Weighting	Score
Compatibility with Local Development strategy	Do the project proposals meet the criteria set out in the LAG business plan for the relevant measure?		20	
Innovation	Is the product innovative in its nature and does it displace existing enterprises?		15	
Promoter experience	Does the promoter have the TrainingSkills, track record or experience to deliver? Are the project costs justifiable and is adequate funding available to co-fund the project?		20	
Financial Viability	Is the project viable and will the services continue to be delivered?		20	
Sustainability	Does the proposal target a specific need or address a specific gap in the market?		10	
Requirement Total			15	0%

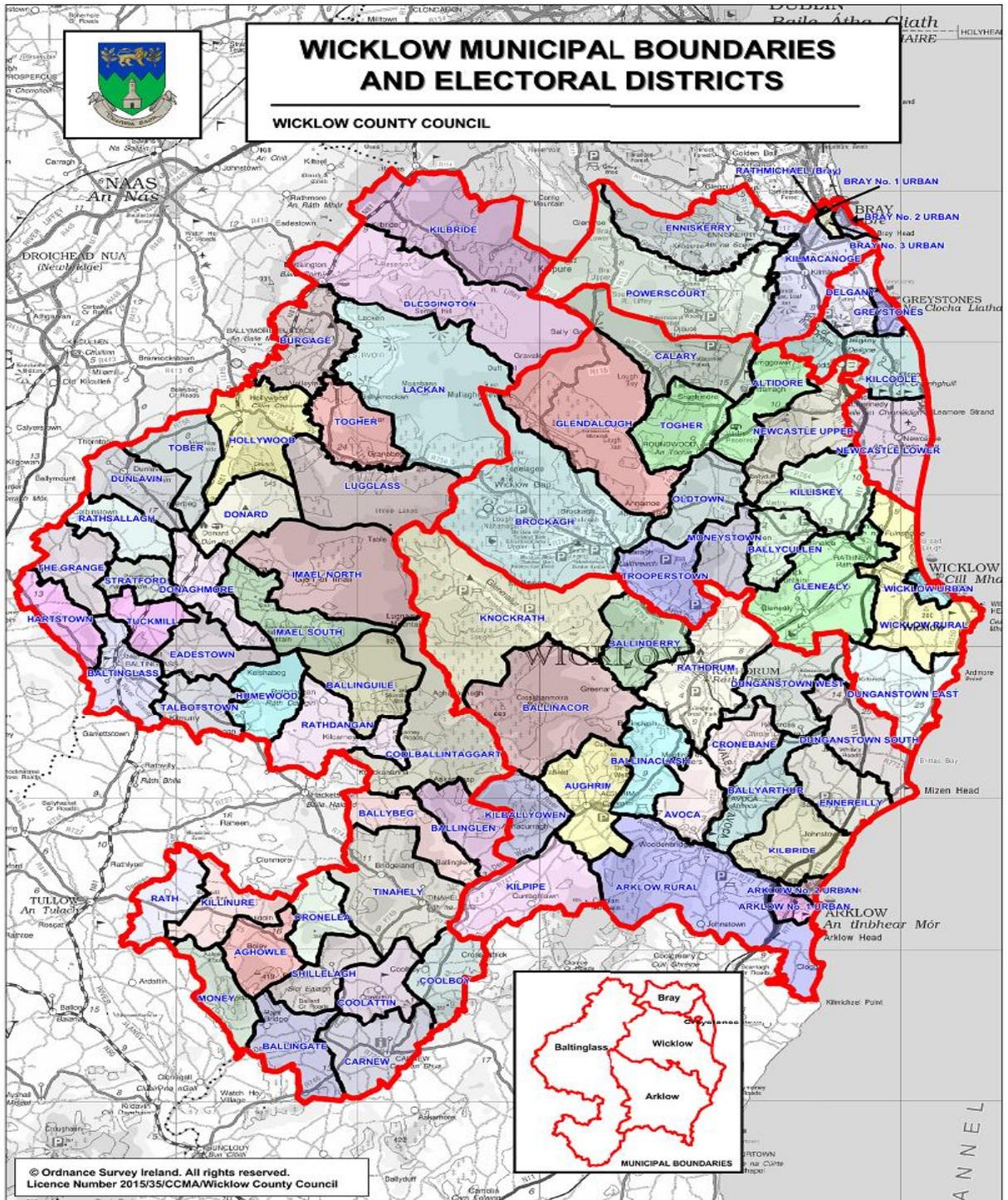
N.B. Projects must receive a minimum score of 60% prior to being recommended for approval.

Recommendations of the Evaluation Committee:

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix 7: Map of Wicklow LDS boundary area with a list of Electoral Areas



## Appendix 8: Socio-Economic Profile County Wicklow – Local Development Strategy Data

### **Introduction**

This socio-economic profile is primarily based on the results of the 2011 Census of Population. The Census data will be supplemented where appropriate with other CSO reports and available Departmental statistical reports. As the area covered by the LDS is the entire county of Wicklow, most of the data will be presented at county level and, where relevant, at town, electoral division, and municipal district level.

### **Overview of County Wicklow**

Co. Wicklow occupies an area of 2,017 square kilometres with a population of 136,640 in 2011. The county is part of the Greater Dublin Area and is, therefore, subject to many of the pressures emanating from the expansion of the capital city.

The typical topography in Wicklow is one of mountains, rolling foothills, forests, coastline, and lakes with attractive views and prospects. The county is dominated by the Wicklow Mountains. Among the most distinctive physical features in the county are the Sally Gap, Powerscourt Waterfall, and Glendalough with its renowned early monastic site. Wicklow also has a 66km coastline, renowned for its shingle and sandy beaches.

Wicklow has a number of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs). Recent patterns of development in the county have been very much influenced by the location of key items of infrastructure and the settlement pattern that has evolved over centuries.

In recent times, the dominant influence has been the extent of commuting that has resulted from the overspill of Dublin. The principal towns are located along the east coast with a second linear arrangement of smaller centres in the west. The principal transport routes are the N11 in the east and the N81 in the west. East-west movement is severely restricted by the mountains so that most traffic has to take either the R756 or the R759.

### **Population**

The population of County Wicklow has varied significantly over the last 50 years as outlined in the table below covering the period 1961 to 2011.

**Table 1: Population of Co Wicklow at each Census since 1841**

<b>Census Year</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Actual Change</b>	<b>Percentage Change</b>
1961	58,473	-1,433	-2.4
1966	60,428	1,955	3.3
1971	66,295	5,867	9.7
1979	83,950	17,655	26.6
1981	87,449	3,499	4.2
1986	94,542	7,093	8.1
1991	97,265	2,723	2.9
1996	102,683	5,418	5.6
2002	114,676	11,993	11.7
2006	126,194	11,518	10.0
2011	136,640	10,446	8.3

Source: CSO Census of Population 2011

At the time of the Census 2011, Co. Wicklow's population stood at 136,640, up 8.3 per cent on the 2006 figure. The average increase in population per annum was 1.65%. The Wicklow increase is slightly below the rate of increase for the province of Leinster (9.1%) and nearly the same as the increase in population of the State of 8.2% which occurred in the population of the State over the period 2006 to 2011.

### **County Settlement Populations**

While the population of the county increased during the period 2006 to 2011, the entire county did not grow at the same rate as can be seen in Table 2. It is therefore worthwhile to look at the population change in more detail by examining the change which has occurred at town/village level. The populations of the principal settlements and the extent of change since 1991 are summarised in the following table.

**Table 2: Population Change in Main Settlements**

	<b>Total 1991</b>	<b>Total 1996</b>	<b>Total 2002</b>	<b>Total 2006</b>	<b>Total 2011</b>	<b>Percentage Change 2006 - 2011</b>
Bray + Legal environs	25,138	25,760	28,002	31,901	31,872	-0.1
Greystones + environs	10,778	11,296	11,913	14,569	17,468	19.9
Arklow + environs	7,987	8,557	9,993	11,806	13,009	10.2
Wicklow + environs	6,215	7,290	9,355	10,070	10,356	2.8
Kilcoole	2,485	2,694	2,826	3,252	4,049	24.5
Newtownmountkennedy	2,321	2,528	2,521	2,548	2,410	-5.4
Blessington	1,408	1,860	2,509	4,018	4,639	15.5
Enniskerry	1,238	1,275	1,904	1,881	1,811	-3.7
Rathnew	1,496	1,437	1,441	1,849	2,964	60.3
Rathdrum	1,175	1,234	1,387	1,405	1,586	12.9
Ashford	878	1,215	1,356	1,349	1,449	7.4
Baltinglass	1,068	1,127	1,260	1,735	2,061	18.8
Aughrim	713	745	871	1,145	1,364	19.1
Newcastle	633	763	851	837	951	13.6
Kilmacanogue	763	818	834	839	1,028	22.5
Dunlavin	720	693	814	849	830	-2.2
Carnew	737	795	809	949	1,091	15.0
Tinahely	628	630	692	965	970	0.5
Avoca	494	490	564	734	753	2.6
Roundwood	437	446	518	589	833	41.4
Kilpedder	406	480	517	480	1,287	168.1
Glenealy	361	383	377	528	670	26.9
Laragh	248	267	357	378	340	-10.1
Shillelagh	326	324	278	311	341	9.6
Donard	165	162	201	182	187	2.7
Stratford	-	-	151	163	217	33.1
Redcross	-	-	-	196	241	23.0
Ballinaclesh	-	-	-	-	301	-
Manor Kilbride	-	-	-	-	281	-
Barndarrig	-	-	-	-	233	-
Coolboy	-	-	-	-	144	-
Knockananna	-	-	-	-	141	-
County Wicklow	97,265	102,683	114,676	126,194	136,640	8.3

Source: CSO Census of Population

The main settlements in the county (based on the settlement hierarchy set out in the Wicklow County Development Plan 2010-2016) are:

1. Bray (29,339 people)
2. Wicklow-Rathnew (13,468 people)
3. Arklow (13,066 people)
4. Greystones-Delgany (17,208 people)
5. Blessington (4,780 people)

Of these five main settlement towns, four are located in the east of the County. Fifty-seven per cent of the county's population reside in these five main towns.

**Table 3: Population Change at Electoral Division (ED) Level 2006 - 2011**

District	Persons 2006	Persons 2011	Actual Change	Percentage Change
<b>Wicklow County</b>	126,194	136,640	10,446	8.28
Arklow No. 1 Urban	9128	9,817	689	7.55
Arklow No. 2 Urban	2584	2,953	369	14.28
Bray No. 1	1700	1,746	46	2.71
Bray No. 2	6305	6,192	-113	-1.79
Bray No. 3	6557	6,424	-133	-2.03
Rathmichael (Bray)	2431	2,380	-51	-2.10
Wicklow Urban	6930	6,761	-169	-2.44
Ballinguile	144	138	-6	-4.17
Baltinglass	2392	2,614	222	9.28
Blessington	4001	4,399	398	9.95
Burgage	1542	1,786	244	15.82
Donaghmore	373	396	23	6.17
Donard	483	508	25	5.18
Dunlavin	1300	1,327	27	2.08
Eadestown	186	201	15	8.06
Hartstown	283	276	-7	-2.47
Hollywood	671	727	56	8.35
Humewood	301	304	3	1.00
Imael North	212	235	23	10.85
Imael South	349	254	-95	-27.22
Kilbride	982	975	-7	-0.71
Lackan	763	743	-20	-2.62
Lugglass	143	155	12	8.39
Rathdangan	399	445	46	11.53
Rathsallagh	283	269	-14	-4.95
Stratford	379	430	51	13.46
Talbotstown	404	395	-9	-2.23
The Grange	422	419	-3	-0.71
Tober	453	524	71	15.67
Togher	302	332	30	9.93
Tuckmill	225	246	21	9.33
Delgany	5158	5,652	494	9.58
Enniskerry	2696	2,765	69	2.56
Greystones	7044	7,151	107	1.52
Kilmacanogue	13772	14,043	271	1.97
Powerscourt	773	785	12	1.55

Altadore	303	363	60	19.80
Arklow Rural	1067	1,310	243	22.77
Aughrim	1440	1,760	320	22.22
Avoca	838	682	-156	-18.62
Ballinaclash	592	636	44	7.43
Ballinacor	258	309	51	19.77
Ballinderry	418	459	41	9.81
Ballyarthur	887	1,024	137	15.45
Ballycullen	217	269	52	23.96
Brockagh	733	776	43	5.87
Calary	283	302	19	6.71
Cronebane	494	478	-16	-3.24
Dunganstown East	686	764	78	11.37
Dunganstown South	748	840	92	12.30
Dunganstown West	416	453	37	8.89
Ennereilly	393	382	-11	-2.80
Glendalough	257	268	11	4.28
Glenealy	2410	2,750	340	14.11
Kilbride	825	909	84	10.18
Kilcoole	6832	9,834	3,002	43.94
Killiskey	1010	1,038	28	2.77
Knockrath	209	239	30	14.35
Moneystown	247	303	56	22.67
Newcastle Lower	2098	2,209	111	5.29
Newcastle Upper	3161	3,584	423	13.38
Oldtown	544	583	39	7.17
Rathdrum	2237	2,448	211	9.43
Togher	909	1,204	295	32.45
Trooperstown	303	348	45	14.85
Wicklow Rural	5872	7,429	1,557	26.52
Aghowle	236	213	-23	-9.75
Ballingate	388	398	10	2.58
Ballinglen	231	230	-1	-0.43
Ballybeg	187	201	14	7.49
Carnew	1573	1,759	186	11.82
Coolattin	264	290	26	9.85
Coolballintaggart	420	461	41	9.76
Coolboy	462	546	84	18.18
Cronelea	173	190	17	9.83
Kilballyowen	292	345	53	18.15
Killinure	352	340	-12	-3.41
Kilpipe	380	406	26	6.84
Money	138	149	11	7.97
Rath	271	261	-10	-3.69
Shillelagh	562	595	33	5.87
Tinahely	1508	1,536	28	1.86

As can be seen, across the county there was significant variation in the population change in the county over the period 2006 to 2011. At ED level, Imael South (-27.22) had the largest percentage decline in population and Kilcoole (43.94) the largest increase.

The main reasons for population increase are natural increase and net in-migration. The following table illustrates the natural increase and net migration levels 1986 – 2011.

**Table 4: Co. Wicklow Natural Increase and Net Migration 1986 to 2011 Rates**

Period	Natural Increase*	Net Migration*
1986-1991	9.40	-3.72
1991-1996	7.58	+3.4
1996 – 2002	8.09	+10.3
2002 - 2006	9.6	+14.3
2006 - 2011	12.6	+3.0

Source: CSO

\*Annual Rates per 1,000 Average Population

### **Rural – Urban Population**

It is interesting to note that, according to the 2011 Census of Population, 65.1% (88,945 people) of the population in Co. Wicklow live in the aggregate town areas. This compares to 62% (approx.) in the State and 63.3% in the Mid-East region.

When examining the principal demographic changes that have occurred in Co. Wicklow, it is essential to examine the age structure of the population and the changes which have occurred within it.

### **Age Profile of Population**

Co. Wicklow has grown substantially over the last 20 years.

**Table 5: County Wicklow Population Change by Age Cohort 1991 – 2011**

Age	1991	1996	2002	2006	2011	% Change 1991 - 2011
0 - 14	27,384	25,585	25,826	27,137	31,172	13.83
15 - 24	15,753	16,968	17,641	17,767	16,514	4.83
25 - 44	27,596	29,349	34,694	40,331	41,609	50.78
45 - 64	16,716	20,361	25,082	28,442	32,344	93.49
65 years and over	9,816	10,420	11,433	12,517	15,001	52.82
<b>Total</b>	97,265	102,683	114,676	126,194	136,640	40.48

While the overall population of the county grew over the period, the level of growth differed across the age cohorts. The number of people in the age category 45–64 grew by approximately 93.49% while the population in the age category 65 years and older increased by 52.82%.

**Table 6: Persons by Age Category**

Age Category	Wicklow	Leinster	State
0 – 4 Years	11,474	198,742	356,329
5 – 9 Years	10,179	175,466	320,770
10 – 14 Years	9,519	161,678	302,491
15 – 19 Years	8,582	151,886	283,019
20 – 24 Years	7,932	169,781	297,231
25 – 29 Years	8,983	213,574	361,122
30 – 34 Years	10,937	229,387	393,945
35 – 39 Years	11,193	206,043	364,261
40 – 44 Years	10,496	181,738	330,812
45 – 49 Years	9,970	164,354	305,185
50 – 54 Years	8,412	145,078	274,386
55 – 59 Years	7,323	126,629	244,522
60 – 64 Years	6,639	111,770	218,786
65 – 69 Years	5,372	88,075	173,638
70 – 74 Years	3,757	66,721	131,190
75 – 79 Years	2,633	51,035	102,036
80 – 84 Years	1,731	34,680	70,113
85 Years and Older	1,508	28,177	58,416

**Age Dependency:**

As can be seen from the above table, 39,754 of Wicklow's population at the time of the 2011 Census were aged 19 years or younger - approximately 29% of the county's population. The Young Dependency rate is the number of young people aged 0–14 as a percentage of the total population of working age; at a national level, the rate was 31.9%, the rate in Wicklow is 34.5%.

The Census also shows that 83.1% of pre-school children aged 0-4 lived in family units with both parents, with 15.4% in lone-parent families. While there was an increase of pre-school children living with a lone parent of 7.5% since 2006, this family unit type has decreased as a proportion of household types from 16.9 to 15.4% in 2011<sup>29</sup>. In Wicklow, the overall age dependency rate was 51%; this highlights the fact that in Co. Wicklow there is approximately one young or older person to one person of working age.

**Main Settlements Age Profile:****Table 7: Age Categories in Main Urban Settlements 2011**

Town	Total	0 – 14 Years	15 – 24 Years	25 – 44 Years	45 – 64 Years	65 Years and Older
Bray	31,872	6,374	4,258	9,926	7,698	3,616
Greystones	17,468	4,134	2,046	5,607	3,910	1,771
Arklow	13,009	3,037	1,557	4,312	2,764	1,339
Wicklow	10,356	2,438	1,312	3,078	2,441	1,087
Blessington	5,010	1,397	528	1,945	889	251
Rathnew	2,964	836	306	1,206	476	140
Baltinglass	2,061	521	242	662	421	215
Rathdrum	1,586	368	172	491	327	228

<sup>29</sup> CSO, Profile 2, Older and Younger, May 2012, pg. 20

**Table 8: Average ages of the aggregate town and aggregate rural areas in 2006 and 2011 for selected areas**

Area	2006			2011		
	Total	Aggregate Town Area	Aggregate Rural Area	Total	Aggregate Town Area	Aggregate Rural Area
Wicklow	35.2	34.5	36.2	35.7	35.1	36.9
Meath	33.4	31.0	36.0	33.8	31.4	37.0
Kildare	32.8	32.1	34.1	33.5	32.6	35.3
Leinster	34.9	34.7	35.8	35.5	35.1	36.6
State	35.6	34.9	36.7	36.1	35.4	37.3

Source: Census of Population 2011, Profile 2 Older and Younger

The 2011 Census highlights that the average age of the population continues to increase and stood at 36.1 in 2011 compared to 35.6 in 2006. Table 8 shows that the rural population was on average almost two years older than the population in urban areas. In Co. Wicklow, the average age in 2011 was 35.7 while for aggregate rural areas it was 36.9 and for aggregate urban areas 35.1, a difference of 1.8 years.

### **Nationality and Ethnicity**

The increase in the county's population has led to a more ethnically and culturally diverse mix of people.

The CSO outlines that, between 2002 and 2006, there was a rapid growth in the number of non-Irish nationals from 224,261 to 419,733. Growth slowed during the period 2006 to 2011 with the number now standing at 544,357, an increase of 29.7%.

The CSO also notes that a small number of nationalities account for most of the increase: Polish, UK, Latvians, Lithuanians, Romanians, Brazilians, and Indians.

According to the 2011 Census, 9.9% of the population in Co. Wicklow were non-Irish nationals (see Table 9). This is slightly below the national rate of 12%; the rate in Wexford is 9.4%, Kildare 11.8%, and Meath 10.8%.

**Table 9: Population by Nationality 2011 in County Wicklow**

Nationality	Number	% of Total Population
Irish	120,409	89.27
Non-Irish	13,377	9.92
UK	3,749	2.78
Poland	2,754	2.04
EU15 (excl. Ireland and UK)	1,443	1.07
EU15 to EU27 (excl. Poland)	2,121	1.57
Other European Nationalities	395	0.29
Africa	472	0.35
Asia	1,497	1.11
America	672	0.50
Other Nationalities	250	0.19
Multi Nationalities	24	0.02
No Nationality	25	0.02
Not Stated	1,067	0.79
Total	134,878	100

As well as examining the population in relation to nationality it is also worth looking at the population of County Wicklow in terms of ethnicity.

**Table 10: Demography by Ethnicity and cultural background in Co. Wicklow**

	Number	Percentage
White Irish	117,991	87.48
Irish Traveller	721	0.53
Any other White background	11,128	8.25
African	381	0.28
Any other Black background	108	0.08
Chinese	617	0.46
Any other Asian background	1,432	1.06
Other including mixed background	1,044	0.77
Not Stated	1,456	1.08
Total	134,878	100

### **Irish Traveller Community**

According to the 2011 Census, there were 29,573 Irish Travellers enumerated on census night representing 0.6% of the total population, up 32% on the 2006 Census. The 2011 Census recorded 721 Irish Travellers in Co. Wicklow, approximately 2.4% of the Irish Traveller population. Table 11 outlines the Irish Traveller Population living in the main urban centres in the county.

**Table 11: Irish Travellers by Urban Area**

Area	White Irish Traveller	Total
Bray Legal Town and its Environs	180	31415
Baltinglass	24	2058
Greystones Legal Town and its Environs	31	17206
Enniskerry	14	1796
Arklow Legal Town and its Environs	49	12881
Wicklow Legal Town and its Environs	139	10244
Ashford	29	1443
Aughrim	3	1353
Kilcoole	37	4015
Kilpedder	1	1281
Newtownmountkennedy	6	2397
Rathdrum	8	1586
Rathnew	56	2949
Roundwood	10	826
Newcastle	1	948
Carnew	10	1090

### **Education**

Co. Wicklow is well positioned in close proximity to Dublin and Carlow providing it with access to many educational institutions. The Institute of Technology, Carlow has established a Wicklow Campus in Rathnew which provides access to a varied range of undergraduate and post-graduate part-time programmes in the areas of Business, Accounting and Law, Engineering, and Social Sciences. The county also possesses a number of adult further education and training centres, largely located in the main settlements of Bray, Wicklow Town, Arklow, and Baltinglass.

Census 2011 shows that the of the population in the county aged 15 years and older whose full-time education had ceased, 14.1% had no formal education or primary education only, while a further 54.1% had second level education; 31.8% had a third level qualification.

### **County Income and Regional GDP**

The CSO report, County Income and Regional GDP, demonstrated that the estimated disposable income in Co. Wicklow in 2012 was €19,009, an estimated increase of €133 on 2011.

**Table 12: Disposable Income per person 2006 - 2012**

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Wicklow	20,052	21,071	21,603	20,104	18,349	18,876	19,009
Mid East	22,001	22,926	23,666	21,796	19,624	19,023	19,226
Kildare	22,416	23,154	24,150	22,373	19,941	19,344	19,658
Meath	23,162	24,234	24,838	22,536	20,326	18,767	18,898
Dublin	22,445	23,495	24,816	23,167	21,251	21,611	22,011
State	20,316	21,368	22,707	21,188	19,573	19,307	19,468

Source: CSO (2015) County Incomes and Regional GDP 2012

The CSO highlights the important contribution of primary income in overall disposable income. Adding social transfers to primary income and subtracting off income taxes and social insurance contributions, results in disposable income. In the counties of Dublin, Kildare, Meath, Wicklow, and Cork, primary income exceeded disposable income in 2012. These are the counties with the highest employment rates as indicated in the 2011 Census.

### **Employment and Unemployment:**

The labour force consists of persons who are at work, unemployed and those who are seeking regular work for the first time. Those outside of the labour force consist mainly of students, people who are looking after the home/family and retired persons. It is worth noting that the populations inside and outside the labour force refer to the population aged 15 years and over.

According to the 2011 Census of Population, 80.7% of all those aged 15 years and over in the labour force in Co Wicklow were at work. Those outside the labour force included students, those looking after the home/family, and retired people. Of those recorded as workers (52,907 people), 21,050 worked outside the area. Commerce and trade were recorded as the largest industry.

**Table 13: Persons aged 15 and over, classified by principal economic status**

<b><i>Economic Status</i></b>	<b>Total Persons 1996</b>	<b>Total Persons 2002</b>	<b>Total Persons 2006</b>	<b>Total Persons 2011</b>
<b><i>In Labour Force</i></b>				
<i>At work</i>	36,423	47,790	57,326	52,907
<i>Looking for first<sup>t</sup> regular job</i>	713	529	633	789
<i>Unemployed</i>	5,464	3,697	4,410	11,885
<b><i>Total in Labour Force</i></b>	<b>42,600</b>	<b>52,016</b>	<b>62,369</b>	<b>65,581</b>
<b><i>Not In Labour Force</i></b>				

<i>Student</i>	9,131	9,455	9,876	11,687
<i>Home Duties</i>	16,308	13,825	12,452	11,064
<i>Retired</i>	6,382	9,265	10,519	12,845
<i>Unable to work (sickness/disability) and other</i>	2,164	3,236	3,480	4,291
<i>Other</i>	63	1,053	361	
<b><i>Total Not in Labour Force</i></b>	<b>34,498</b>	<b>36,834</b>	<b>36,688</b>	<b>39,887</b>

Source: CSO Census 2006 and 2011 Principal Socio-economic Results

Calculating unemployment rate by **principal economic status** shows an unemployment rate in Co. Wicklow of 19.3, significantly higher than the 2006 rate of 8.1. This compares to a national rate of 19% at the time of the 2011 Census of Population.

It is also worth noting that between the 2006 and 2011 censuses, the labour force in the county increased by 5.2%. The decrease in the number of people at work can be seen as a result of the economic downturn experienced during the period, there was an actual decrease of 4,419 people at work or 7.7%.

**Table 14: Labour force participation rates according to Principal Economic Status, 2011**

	<b>Dublin</b>	<b>Kildare</b>	<b>Meath</b>	<b>Wexford</b>	<b>Wicklow</b>	<b>State</b>
<b><i>Male participation rate</i></b>	70.1	73.8	74.4	69.2	<b>70.6</b>	69.4
<b><i>Female participation rate</i></b>	57.3	57.7	57.5	51.4	<b>54.1</b>	54.6
<b><i>Total participation rate</i></b>	63.5	65.7	65.8	60.1	<b>62.2</b>	61.9

### **Unemployment:**

Profiling unemployment in Co. Wicklow is problematic as the only data available from the Live Register is on an office basis and a number of people have signed on in offices outside of the county i.e. Tallaght and Carlow. The figures available from the Live Register are therefore incomplete. In addition, the Live register is not a measure of unemployment as it includes part time workers, seasonal and casual workers entitled to Jobseekers' Benefit or Allowance as well as persons who are unemployed. However, it provides the most up-to-date figures and gives a clear indication of the way unemployment level are going.

**Table 15: Live Register October 2015 by County and Local Office**

Age	Area	Both sexes	Male	Female
<b>Under 25 years</b>	Wicklow County	1,224	735	489
	Arklow	385	241	144
	Baltinglass	159	93	66
	Bray	435	252	183
	Wicklow	245	149	96
	<b>25 years and over</b>	Wicklow County	8,396	4,945
Arklow		2,118	1,302	816
Baltinglass		1,087	646	441
Bray		3,622	2,031	1,591
Wicklow		1,569	966	603
<b>All Ages</b>		Wicklow County	9,620	5,680
	Arklow	2,503	1,543	960
	Baltinglass	1,246	739	507
	Bray	4,057	2,283	1,774
	Wicklow	1,814	1,115	699

As can be seen in Table 15, approximately 13% of the people on the Live Register in the county are aged under 25 years, 59% are male and 41% are female.

Youth unemployment declined to 20.6% in September 2015, down from 22.4% in January. The youth unemployment rate averaged 18.4% during 1983 to 2015 and was at its highest in June 2012 at 31.1%.

#### **Employment Profile by Industrial Group**

The table below presents the number of Wicklow people employed in the County by industrial group.

**Table 16: Number of Persons Travelling to Work in County Wicklow by industrial Group 2011**

<b>Industrial Grouping of Total Persons Working in Wicklow County</b>	<b>Total</b>
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	1,714
Construction	911
Manufacturing, mining and quarrying, Electricity, Gas	4,334
Wholesale, Retail Trade, Transportation and Storage	8,928
Information and Communication, Financial, Real Estate	1,489
Public Administration and Defence; Compulsory Social Security	1,505
Education, Human Health and Social Work Activities	7,375
Other Service Activities	4,875
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>31,131</b>

As shown in Table 16, the largest number of people (29% of all workers) were employed in the 'Wholesale, Retail Trade, Transportation and Storage' sector, followed by 24% of people working in 'Education, Human Health and Social Work Activities'. The 'Manufacturing, mining and quarrying, Electricity, Gas' sector employs 14%. Unsurprisingly, following the economic recession, only 3% (911 persons) were employed in the 'Construction' sector. It should be noted that persons from the construction sector rank highest on Wicklow's Live Register.

Table 17 shows that, in total, there are 21,050 residents from County Wicklow commuting out of the county for employment. 32% (6,781 persons) of all those commuting out of the county are working in the Information and Communication, Financial, Real Estate sectors. One in five respectively (21%) are working in Education, Human Health and Social Work Activities and Wholesale, Retail Trade, Transportation and Storage sectors.

**Table 17: Wicklow Residents Employed Outside of County Wicklow by Industrial Group**

<b>Industrial Grouping of Total Persons Working Outside of County Wicklow</b>	<b>Numbers Working in all counties (excl. Wicklow)</b>
Not stated	125
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	107
Manufacturing, mining and quarrying, Electricity, Gas	2,279
Construction	537
Wholesale, Retail Trade, Transportation and Storage	4,374
Information and Communication, Financial, Real Estate	6,781

Public Administration and Defence; Compulsory Social Security	1,562
Education, Human Health and Social Work Activities	4,435
Other Service Activities	850
Grand Total	21,050

Source: Wicklow County Council Socio Economic Profile, prepared as part of the LECF

### **Carers and Disability**

The results of the Census of Population 2011 shows that, nationally, a total of 595,335 people had a disability (13% of the population). Since 2006, there has been an increase in the number of people classified as having a disability across all age groups with an overall increase of 51.2%, in part due to the changing to the wording of the Census questions. It is worth noting that when the increase is analysed by age category the greatest changes were for the youngest age group under five years of age and for the oldest age group persons aged 85 years and older. The other age groups increased in line with the average.

**Table 18: Persons with a disability and those without in 2006 and 2011**

Area	2006		2011		Actual Change in persons with a disability	% Change
	Persons with a disability	Persons without a disability	Persons with a disability	Persons without a disability		
<b>Wicklow</b>	11,576	114,618	17,616	119,024	6,040	52.2

It is worth noting that of the 17,616 people in Co. Wicklow with a disability, 5,173 (32.4%) were aged 65 years or older. While Co. Wicklow has a disability rate of 12.9%, Rathdrum town has a disability rate of 20.2% placing it in the top five in the country. This may be at least partially explained due to St. Colman's being located in Rathdrum.

**Table 19: Age Categories of Persons with a disability 2011**

Area	1 – 14	15 – 24	25 – 44	45 – 64	65 plus	Total
Wicklow	1,847	1,453	3,554	5,049	5,713	17,616

32.4% of the persons with a disability in Wicklow are aged 65 years or older, while 28.7% are aged 45 to 64 years and 10.5 percent are aged 14 years or younger.

The labour force participation rate for people with a disability was 30% compared to 61.9% for the overall population. The unemployment rate for disabled people was 30.8% compared to 19% for the overall population.

## **Deprivation**

The main measurement of affluence and disadvantage in Ireland is based on the Pobal HP Deprivation index. This index is based on three dimensions of affluence/disadvantage: demographic profile, social class composition, and labour market. The index provides two different statistical outputs - the Absolute Index score and the Relative Index score. The Absolute Index score is used when making a comparison over time, while the relative index score is used when talking about an area at a particular point in time.

Using data derived from the 2011 Pobal HP deprivation Index, Wicklow is the second most affluent local authority area within the Mid-East region and the Mid-East region is the second most affluent region nationally.

Interestingly, the 2011 Pobal HP Deprivation Index Absolute Deprivation score shows the extent to which the county was impacted as a result of the economic recession. The absolute deprivation score fell from 1.3 in 2006 to -5.9 in 2011, representing a decline of 7.2 points. This is greater than the national fall of 6.6 and identifies that the county was significantly adversely affected by the economic recession.

Looking at Co. Wicklow at ED level, it is not characterised by extremes with no EDs classified as extremely affluent or extremely disadvantaged. Rathmichael in Bray is the most disadvantaged ED in the county with a score of -15 and is classified as disadvantaged. Rathmichael is the only ED to fall into this classification. Forty-three of the EDs (52.4%) are classified as marginally below average, while 37 are classified as marginally above average and Kilcoole ED is classified as affluent.

The most affluent areas in the county are located in the north east of the county, Kilcoole 10.2. Powerscourt 9.9, Enniskerry 9.6, Greystones 9.4 and Delgany 8.5. Analysis of the data shows a significant difference between the north of the county and the south. However, examining the data at ED level hides many of the pockets of deprivation which exist in the county. Interestingly, the Small Area statistics and small area HP Deprivation scores show that Co. Wicklow does not have areas that extremely affluent >30 or extremely disadvantaged >-30. It does show up areas of very disadvantaged which were not visible at ED level.

**Table 20: Small Areas showing highest level of deprivation**

<b>Small Area</b>	<b>Electoral Division</b>	<b>Deprivation Score</b>	
257004022	Arklow No. 1 Urban	-22.80	Very Disadvantaged
257077011	Wicklow Rural	-22.50	Very Disadvantaged
257082002	Rathmichael (Bray)	-22.20	Very Disadvantaged
257021002	Carnew	-21.90	Very Disadvantaged
257004021	Arklow No. 1 Urban	-20.60	Very Disadvantaged
257004036	Arklow No. 1 Urban	-20.50	Very Disadvantaged
257004020	Arklow No. 1 Urban	-20.40	Very Disadvantaged
257004029	Arklow No. 1 Urban	-20.30	Very Disadvantaged
257005004	Aughrim	-20.10	Very Disadvantaged
257077010	Wicklow Rural	-19.90	Disadvantaged
257033003	Dunlavin	-19.40	Disadvantaged
257004030	Arklow No. 1 Urban	-18.80	Disadvantaged
257065004	Rathdrum	-18.70	Disadvantaged
257051041	Kilmacanogue	-18.20	Disadvantaged
257082006	Rathmichael (Bray)	-18.10	Disadvantaged
257078018	Wicklow Urban	-17.80	Disadvantaged
257004009	Arklow No. 1 Urban	-17.70	Disadvantaged
257079002	Arklow No. 2 Urban	-17.30	Disadvantaged

257082004	Rathmichael (Bray)	-17.30	Disadvantaged
257077007	Wicklow Rural	-17.20	Disadvantaged
257080008	Bray No. 1	-16.90	Disadvantaged
257082003	Rathmichael (Bray)	-16.90	Disadvantaged
257004006	Arklow No. 1 Urban	-16.80	Disadvantaged
257082008	Rathmichael (Bray)	-16.80	Disadvantaged
257033002	Dunlavin	-16.50	Disadvantaged
257059001	Newcastle Upper	-16.50	Disadvantaged
257065002	Rathdrum	-16.40	Disadvantaged
257077006	Wicklow Rural	-15.60	Disadvantaged
257078017	Wicklow Urban	-15.30	Disadvantaged
257015001	Baltinglass	-15.00	Disadvantaged
257082005	Rathmichael (Bray)	-15.00	Disadvantaged
257004037	Arklow No. 1 Urban	-14.50	Disadvantaged
257051043	Kilmacanogue	-14.50	Disadvantaged
257017012	Bray No. 3	-14.20	Disadvantaged
257038004	Glenealy	-14.10	Disadvantaged
257051017	Kilmacanogue	-14.10	Disadvantaged
257004010	Arklow No. 1 Urban	-13.70	Disadvantaged
257017018	Bray No. 3	-12.90	Disadvantaged
257017017	Bray No. 3	-12.80	Disadvantaged
257004031	Arklow No. 1 Urban	-12.70	Disadvantaged
257015009	Baltinglass	-12.70	Disadvantaged
257078002	Wicklow Urban	-12.60	Disadvantaged
257082007	Rathmichael (Bray)	-12.60	Disadvantaged
257027015	Delgany	-12.50	Disadvantaged
257004014	Arklow No. 1 Urban	-12.20	Disadvantaged
257021006	Carnew	-12.20	Disadvantaged
257004007	Arklow No. 1 Urban	-11.90	Disadvantaged
257024002	Coolboy	-11.60	Disadvantaged
257078012	Wicklow Urban	-11.60	Disadvantaged
257004008	Arklow No. 1 Urban	-11.50	Disadvantaged
257027016	Delgany	-11.50	Disadvantaged
257004035	Arklow No. 1 Urban	-11.40	Disadvantaged
257065009	Rathdrum	-11.40	Disadvantaged
257016005	Blessington	-11.20	Disadvantaged
257071005	Tinahely	-11.20	Disadvantaged
257071006	Tinahely	-11.20	Disadvantaged
257078005	Wicklow Urban	-11.10	Disadvantaged
257051016	Kilmacanogue	-11.00	Disadvantaged
257051035	Kilmacanogue	-10.90	Disadvantaged
257021005	Carnew	-10.80	Disadvantaged
257015006	Baltinglass	-10.70	Disadvantaged
257021008	Carnew	-10.70	Disadvantaged
257015010	Baltinglass	-10.30	Disadvantaged
257017010	Bray No. 3	-10.30	Disadvantaged
257051049	Kilmacanogue	-10.30	Disadvantaged
257059002	Newcastle Upper	-10.20	Disadvantaged
257068001	Stratford	-10.00	Disadvantaged

Table 20 and the maps clearly illustrate that there are areas of disadvantage across the county which will require targeted specific actions to meet those areas' specific needs. Rathmichael ED in Bray shows the highest level of deprivation and this follows through at small area level. It has the highest level of local authority housing with 45% of the population living in local authority housing. In the 2011 Census, the area was also characterised by high unemployment with a principal economic status unemployment rate of approximately 36%, the highest in the county.

It is also worth noting that the areas classified as very affluent fall into four EDs - Delgany, Kilcoole, Kilmacanogue and Enniskerry. All of the areas of affluent or very affluent grading are in the east of the county.

### **Agriculture**

Agriculture, forestry, and fishing continue to play an important in the Wicklow economy with approximately six per cent of the people at work employed in the sector in 2011. This is particularly true in the more rural areas of Wicklow.

There were 2,394 farms in the county with an average size of 42.3ha. The majority of the farms (30%) were engaged in beef production, with 23.9% in sheep production, 21.7% in mixed crops and livestock, 8.4% in dairying, 6.4% in mixed field crops, and 5.5% in tillage. The average standard output, according to the Agricultural Census 2010, is €36,891, compared to €30,726 for the state. In 2010, the area in Co. Wicklow used for agriculture was 127,337 hectares, including 25,971ha of commonage. Wicklow has one of the highest amounts of land in commonage after Donegal, Kerry and Mayo.

Due to the pressures on farm incomes, especially over the last number of years, there has been a growth in artisan food producers in the county as people try to add value to the local food production.

### **Forestry**

Wicklow is the most densely afforested county in Ireland with a total of 18% forest cover. Coillte and the National Parks accounts for the majority of state-owned forestry in the county. However there is substantial forestry in private ownership, 11,685 hectares, which represents 33% of the total forest area in the entire county, see map in Appendix 11.

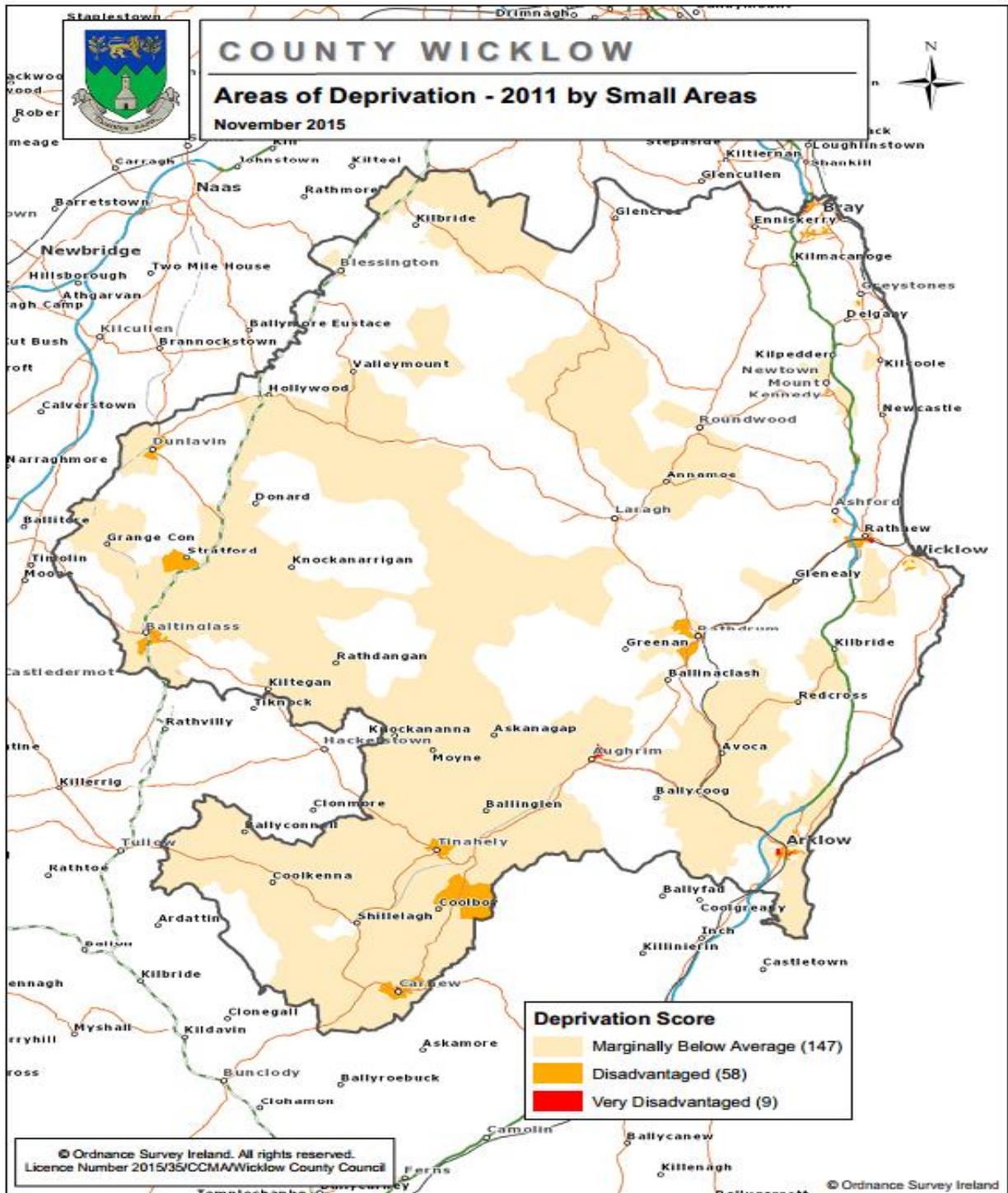
In 2009, County Wicklow Partnership in association with Wicklow Private Woodland Owners Group, an established producers group, commissioned a study into the potential of the private timber sector in Wicklow up to 2028.<sup>30</sup> This study found that there are 500 private woodland owners in Wicklow, the majority of whom are farmers. The IFA estimates the value of forestry output from the County at circa €3.6 million. Broadleaf forests make up 33% of the total composition of species in the private woodland estate in Wicklow which is considerably greater than the national average of 24%. Many of these forests are associated with old estates and apart from their value as timber producers, they contribute significantly to Wicklow's landscape, woodland biodiversity, and the presence of a forestry culture in the county. Future tourism and outdoor recreation potential exists in such forests.

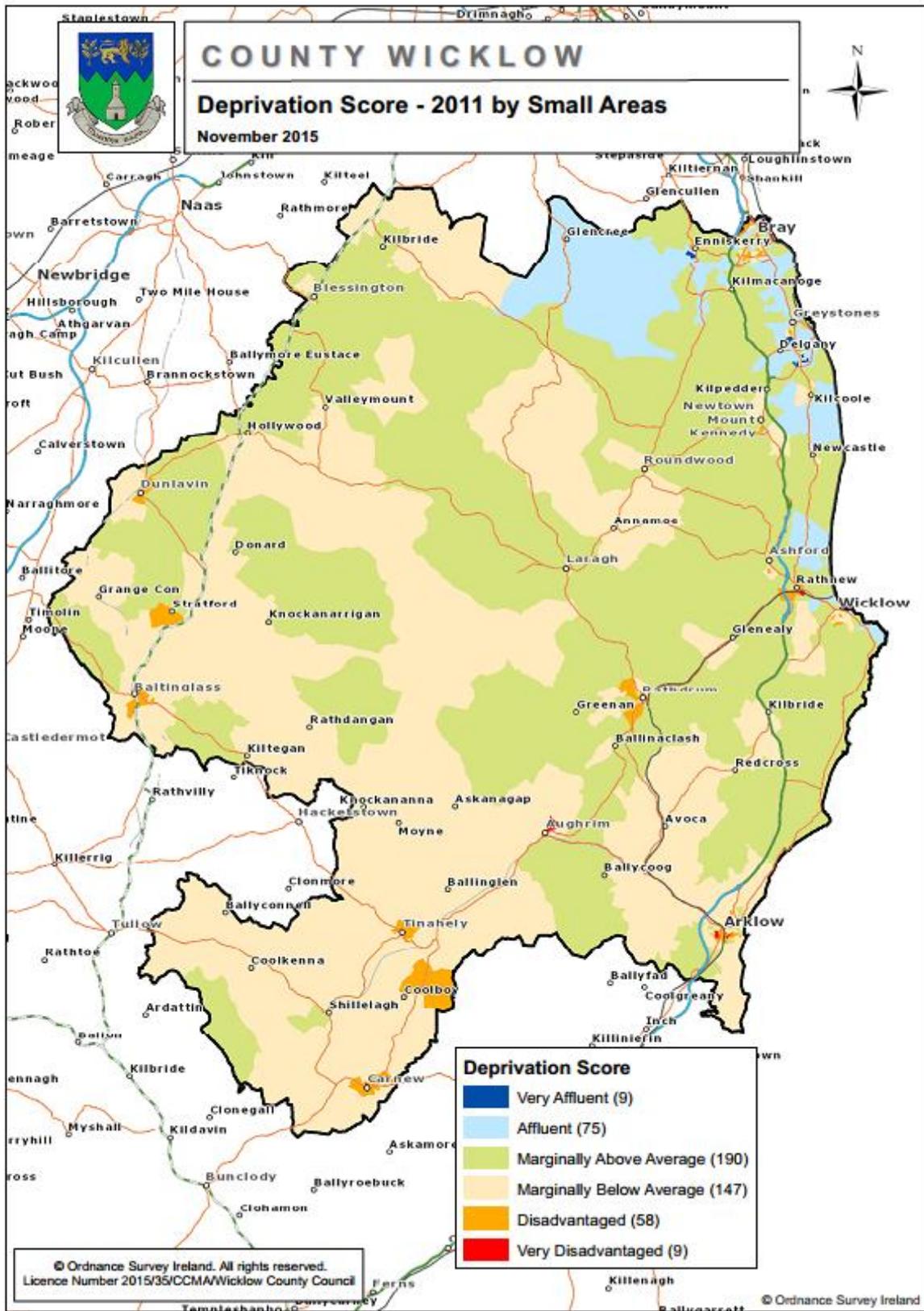
Equally, the county possesses strong potential in the area of value-added timber output and products as a significant contribution to the profitability of the overall farm enterprise. The support for the development of forestry for timber biomass would support both the local rural economy and promote greater renewable energy resources within the county.

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<sup>30</sup> County Wicklow Private Timber Production Forecast and Market Assessment (2010 – 2028)

Appendix 9: Maps by Small Area – Areas of Deprivation 2011





## Tourism Industry Audit

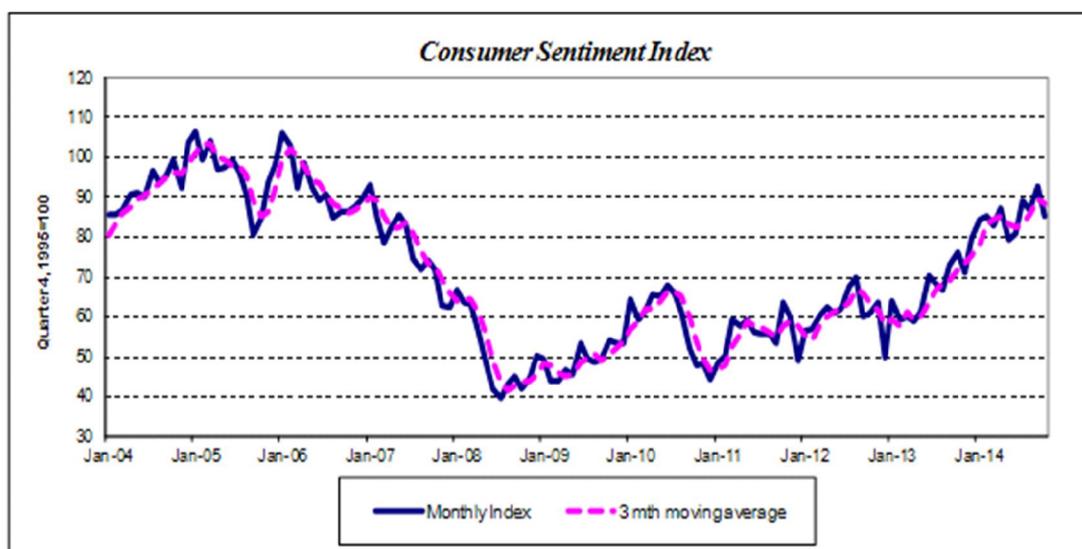
### Policy:

- Government maintained the 9% VAT rate.
- Objective to reach 7.7 million visitors 2015 with revenue of € 3.9 billion (best year ever!)
- Tourism Objective for 2025 = 10 million visitors to Ireland and 5 billion euro
- Fáilte Ireland is to develop a “Greater Tourism Region” along the South and East of Ireland that would include various destinations: Cork, Waterford & Wexford, Kilkenny, Kildare & Wicklow, and The Boyne Valley. This greater tourism region follows the success of the Wild Atlantic Way. The theme of this region is on “Heritage and Culture” with a focus on 4000 years of history. This development, when completed, will offer a fantastic opportunity to Wicklow to gain overseas exposure.

### Economic:

- Increased consumer sentiment

Figure 1

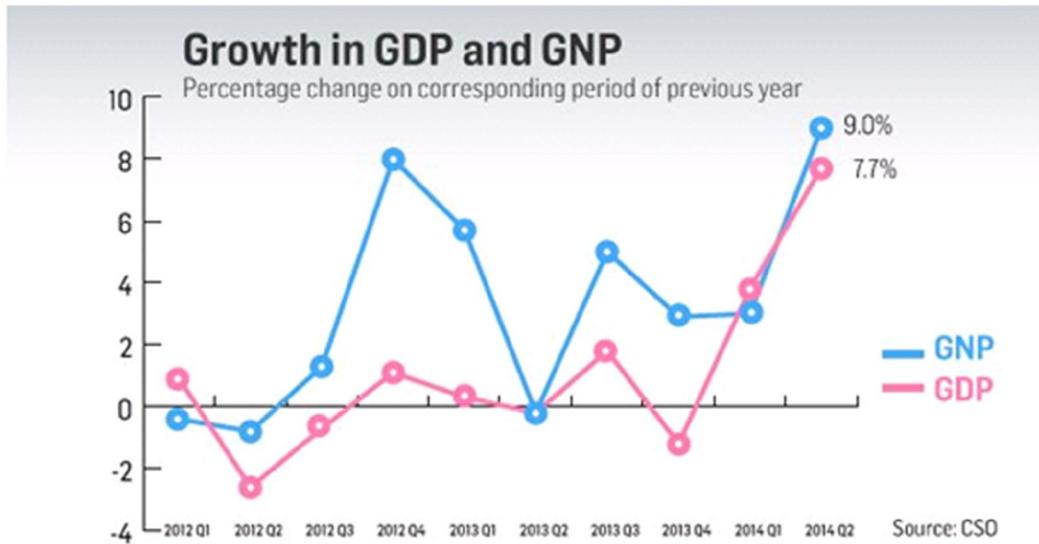


Source: ERSI (2014)

Consumer sentiment in Ireland is at its highest for 5 years.

- The Irish economy is expected to grow by its fastest rate in seven years, growing by over 7% in the year to June.

Figure 2



While many economies in Mainland Europe are still weak, with Italy falling back into recession, the UK economy is expected to grow by 2.7% in 2015, German economy by 2% and US economy by 3.2% (tourism Ireland 2015)

## Social:

- Increased demand for walking holidays
- Increased focus on food quality
- Women in a relationship are the key decision makers on where to go on holiday; they assume the role of “gatekeeper” when planning a holiday and make the majority of decisions in the planning process (Mottiar and Quinn 2004).
- Potential Impact of Ebola on international tourism, most notably US market is unknown.

## Technological

- 72% of consumers prefer to research their holidays online (edigitalresearch.com)
- 68% of smartphone owners use their device when travelling or planning their trip, while 70% of those preferred to use a mobile optimized site rather than an app (edigitalresearch.com). However, the use of smart phones by tourists is still limited and this is primarily due to high roaming charges. Therefore, while Wi-Fi is widely available, tourists are more restricted in where they access the internet while on holidays compared to at home (BDRC 2012).
- Info on when they research holiday, on go, when arrive etc. visitor’s awareness of the destination before they travel
- Web ireland.com reported 13.6 Million visitors in 2015 of which 37% from a mobile device

- Failte Ireland to focus on Social Media and online

## Industry Analysis

### Latest Visitors Numbers Figures

- Visitor numbers from January to September 2014

**Figure 3**

Visitor Origins	Ireland Visitors January 2014 – September 2014		Northern Ireland Visitors January – June 2014	
	'000s	% YOY	'000s	% YOY
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,910</b>	<b>+9%</b>	<b>811</b>	<b>+5%</b>
Great Britain	2,396	+9%	573	+3%
Mainland Europe	2,079	+7%	108	+2%
North America	1,065	+14%	82	+29%
ADM	370	+11%	48	+8%

*Source: CSO, NISRA*

- 250000 more visitors in 2014 (8% increase) - 7.3 million visitors 2014
- Breakdown by markets: 13% new world. 26% UK. 26% US. 34% Europe
- As visitors' numbers are expected to increase, the share of the various markets is expected to remain roughly similar.
- Market segments: Culturally Curious - Social Energisers - Great escapers

### Tourism Facts 2013 (source Failte Ireland)

## Tourism Numbers 2009 - 2013

Figure 4

### Where did Ireland's tourists come from?

Numbers (000s)	2009 <sup>1</sup>	2010 <sup>2</sup>	2011 <sup>3</sup>	2012	2013
<b>Britain</b>	<b>3,034</b>	<b>2,759</b>	<b>2,799</b>	<b>2,722</b>	<b>2,870</b>
<b>Mainland Europe</b>	<b>2,323</b>	<b>2,011</b>	<b>2,184</b>	<b>2,247</b>	<b>2,346</b>
France	393	344	381	384	409
Germany	411	381	411	437	466
Italy	274	214	214	240	226
Spain	255	214	233	239	249
Netherlands	na	120	133	137	148
Belgium	na	65	83	81	95
Denmark	na	43	46	42	51
Sweden	na	53	57	70	72
Switzerland	na	53	68	78	73
Austria	na	41	44	46	51
Norway	na	45	51	48	50
Poland	na	166	161	159	152
All Other Europe	na	270	302	284	306
<b>North America</b>	<b>920</b>	<b>864</b>	<b>904</b>	<b>940</b>	<b>1,039</b>
USA	835	781	811	833	924
Canada	85	83	93	107	115
<b>Rest of World</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>431</b>
Australia, New Zealand & Other Oceania	130	135	143	158	191
Other Areas	171	176	210	219	240
<b>Total Overseas</b>	<b>6,578</b>	<b>5,945</b>	<b>6,240</b>	<b>6,286</b>	<b>6,686</b>
Northern Ireland	n/a	n/a	1,416	1,264	1,574
<b>Total out-of-state</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>7,656</b>	<b>7,550</b>	<b>8,260</b>
Domestic trips <sup>4</sup>	8,340	7,300	7,169	7,031	7,111

Source surveys are designed to measure area of residence groupings (bold figures). Figures in italics are indicative of approximate overall market size but do not provide a sufficient level of precision to accurately reflect absolute market size or trends over time.

Figure 5

### How much money did they spend?

Revenue (€m)	2009 <sup>5</sup>	2010	2011 <sup>6</sup>	2012	2013
<b>Britain</b>	<b>1,035.8</b>	<b>879.4</b>	<b>858.3</b>	<b>858.0</b>	<b>890.9</b>
<b>Mainland Europe</b>	<b>1,348.0</b>	<b>1,133.9</b>	<b>1,110.8</b>	<b>1,060.5</b>	<b>1,228.2</b>
<b>North America</b>	<b>724.6</b>	<b>695.1</b>	<b>677.4</b>	<b>745.7</b>	<b>829.0</b>
<b>Other Overseas</b>	<b>311.3</b>	<b>290.4</b>	<b>272.8</b>	<b>291.6</b>	<b>367.7</b>
<b>TOTAL OVERSEAS</b>	<b>3,419.7</b>	<b>2,998.8</b>	<b>2,919.4</b>	<b>2,955.8</b>	<b>3,315.7</b>
Northern Ireland <sup>7</sup>	n/a	n/a	295.8	284.3	304.7
<b>TOTAL OUT-OF-STATE</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>3,215.2</b>	<b>3,240.1</b>	<b>3,620.4</b>
Carrier receipts <sup>8</sup>	524.0	580.0	626.0	856.0	865.0
Overseas same-day visits	27.0	25.0	36.0	34.0	35.0
<b>TOTAL FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNINGS<sup>9</sup></b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>3,877.2</b>	<b>4,041.1</b>	<b>4,520.4</b>
Domestic trips <sup>10</sup>	1,389.8	1,560.5	1,415.9	1,345.4	1,373.3
<b>TOTAL TOURISM REVENUE</b>	<b>5,360.5</b>	<b>5,164.3</b>	<b>5,293.1</b>	<b>5,386.5</b>	<b>5,893.7</b>

Source surveys are designed to measure area of residence groupings (bold figures).

Northern Ireland resident expenditure data provided in StE from 2009 onwards, average annual exchange rates supplied by Central Bank of Ireland.

Source: CSO/Fáilte Ireland/TSB NISRA/Central Bank of Ireland

**Figure 6**

**Where did visitors go in 2013?**

<b>Numbers (000s) Revenue (€m)</b>	<b>Overseas Tourists</b>	<b>Northern Ireland<sup>11</sup></b>	<b>Domestic Trips</b>	<b>Total</b>
Dublin	3,998	460	1,344	5,802
	1,401.4	87.0	255.8	1,744.2
East & Midlands	772	178	932	1,882
	286.9	28.7	148.5	464.1
South-East	785	76	957	1,818
	203.7	14.2	178.6	396.5
South-West	1,860	107	1,411	3,378
	615.9	21.6	313.8	951.3
Shannon	931	42	669	1,642
	250.7	5.5	107.7	363.9
West	1,203	115	1,168	2,486
	381.2	38.8	265.2	685.2
North-West	506	596	630	1,732
	176.0	109.0	103.5	388.5

Source: CSO/Fáilte Ireland NISRA/Central Bank of Ireland

Key Point: Dublin is the main hub to all tourists. Stronger concentration towards the West against the East

**Overseas Tourists in 2013**

**Figure 7**

**How did overseas tourists spend their money in Ireland?**

<b>Breakdown of Spend in Ireland (%)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Britain</b>	<b>Mainland Europe</b>	<b>North America</b>	<b>Rest of World</b>
Bed & board	30	32	34	27	27
Other food & drink	21	24	25	16	30
Sightseeing/entertainment	13	15	13	13	9
Internal transport	13	8	12	16	10
Shopping	12	9	12	11	22
Miscellaneous	11	12	4	17	2

Key Point: Most of the spending is done in Accommodation and Food.

**Figure 8**

***When did they arrive?***

<b>Seasonality (%)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Britain</b>	<b>Mainland Europe</b>	<b>North America</b>	<b>Rest of World</b>
January-March	18	19	18	15	16
April	8	8	9	7	6
May	10	9	10	10	9
June	9	8	9	13	11
July	11	10	11	13	12
August	12	13	12	12	13
September	9	9	9	11	11
October-December	23	25	21	19	23

*Source: Fáilte Ireland estimates based on CSO*

Key Point: July & August are the busiest months. May is very strong as well.

**Figure 9**

***What activities did they engage in?***

	<b>Overseas Participants (000s)</b>
Hiking/cross country walking	742
Cycling	241
Golf	204
Angling	127
Equestrian	99

Key Point: Walking is the most important activity visitors engage in.

**Figure 10**

***What was their main reason for visiting Ireland?***

<b>(000s)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Britain</b>	<b>Mainland Europe</b>	<b>North America</b>	<b>Rest of World</b>
Holiday	3,144	979	1,227	718	220
Visit friends/relatives	2,096	1,296	496	176	128
Business	1,088	549	388	92	58
Other	357	46	235	53	24

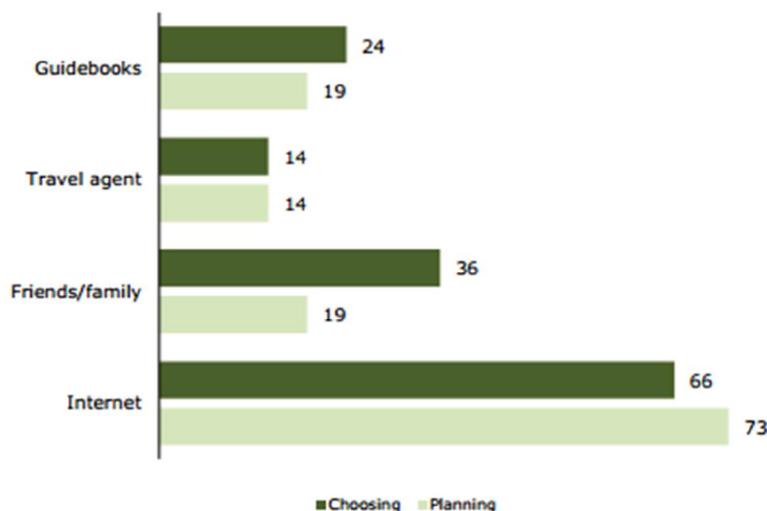
*Source: CSO and NISRA*

Key Point: Europe main marketing for holiday makers to Ireland

## Overseas Holidaymakers 2013

Figure 11

### Sources of information for choosing/planning a holiday in Ireland (%)



Source: Fáilte Ireland's Post Survey of Holidaymakers 2013

Key Point: Internet remains the strongest platform when it comes to planning holidays

Figure 12

### How did they arrange their holiday?

(%)	Total	Britain	Mainland Europe	North America	Rest of World
Package*	17	9	16	27	13
Independent	83	91	84	73	87

\* Prepaid an inclusive price for fares to/from Ireland and at least one other element of the holiday.

Source: Fáilte Ireland's Survey of Overseas Travellers

Key Point: Independent travellers more important than packaged holidays

## Domestic Tourism in 2013

Figure 13

### Domestic trips (000s) by purpose of travel

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Holiday trips	4,037	3,978	3,696	3,374	3,460
- Long (4+ nights)	1,104	1,151	1,040	780	920
- Short (1-3 nights)	2,933	2,828	2,656	2,594	2,541
Visiting friends/relatives trips	2,712	1,997	2,231	2,374	2,452
Business trips	600	370	350	322	341
Other trips	990	955	891	960	858
<b>Total trips</b>	<b>8,340</b>	<b>7,300</b>	<b>7,169</b>	<b>7,031</b>	<b>7,111</b>

Source: CSO Household Travel Surveys 2009-2013

Figure 14

<b><i>Activities engaged in by domestic holidaymakers (%)</i></b>	
Houses/castles	24
Hiking/walking	24
Watersports	22
National parks	20
Visits to spas	20
Heritage/ interpretive centres	15
Gardens	15
Museums/art galleries	13
Golf	8
Cycling	8
Angling	4
Attending horse racing	4
Equestrian pursuits	2

Source: Fáilte Ireland Domestic Omnibus 2013

## Regional Tourism Performance in 2013

Regional distribution of overseas markets in 2013

Figure 15

REGION		Britain	Mainland Europe	North America	Other Areas	Total
<b>Dublin</b>	Visitors (000s)	1,251	1,637	772	338	3,998
	Visitor Revenue (€mn)	243.3	604.9	302.7	250.5	1,401.4
	Holidaymakers (000s)	449	889	564	194	2,096
<b>Midlands East</b>	Visitors (000s)	381	214	122	55	772
	Visitor Revenue (€mn)	116.1	103.2	43.2	24.4	286.9
	Holidaymakers (000s)	93	109	78	28	308
<b>South East</b>	Visitors (000s)	319	224	172	70	785
	Visitor Revenue (€mn)	99.9	62.0	30.6	11.2	203.7
	Holidaymakers (000s)	140	155	138	56	489
<b>South West</b>	Visitors (000s)	606	628	470	156	1,860
	Visitor Revenue (€mn)	173.7	207.6	167.5	47.1	615.9
	Holidaymakers (000s)	266	455	384	105	1,210
<b>Shannon</b>	Visitors (000s)	332	247	280	72	931
	Visitor Revenue (€mn)	91.3	62.0	86.5	10.9	250.7
	Holidaymakers (000s)	111	182	239	56	588
<b>West</b>	Visitors (000s)	270	476	353	104	1,203
	Visitor Revenue (€mn)	78.0	136.9	150.2	16.1	381.2
	Holidaymakers (000s)	128	368	281	82	859
<b>North West</b>	Visitors (000s)	262	127	85	32	506
	Visitor Revenue (€mn)	88.8	51.5	28.2	7.5	176.0
	Holidaymakers (000s)	81	91	62	19	253
<b>National</b>	Visitors (000s)	2,870	2,346	1,041	432	6,689
	Visitor Revenue (€mn)	890.9	1,228.2	829.0	367.7	3,316
	Holidaymakers (000s)	979	1,227	716	215	3,137

Key Point: Poor performance of the Midland East against all other destinations except North West

## Overseas visitors (000) to counties in 2013

Figure 16

County	Total	Britain	Mainland Europe	North America	Other Areas
Dublin	3,998	1,251	1,637	772	338
Carlow	68	39	17	9	2
Kilkenny	207	42	75	72	18
Tipperary (South)	117	55	32	21	9
Waterford	225	79	61	61	24
Wexford	229	119	65	22	22
Cork	1,228	485	451	254	99
Kerry	877	154	307	333	84
Clare	485	129	126	183	47
Limerick	420	176	121	102	21
Tipperary(North)	51	28	9	6	7
Offaly (West)	9	5	2	1	1
Galway	1,028	199	426	310	93
Mayo	218	59	78	67	15
Roscommon	35	18	7	8	2
Cavan	111	78	11	17	5
Donegal	199	78	70	37	14
Leitrim	39	29	5	5	-
Monaghan	58	41	8	4	5
Sligo	133	45	47	29	13
Kildare	168	96	39	22	11
Laois	52	29	11	7	5
Longford	22	12	4	4	3
Louth	108	55	27	16	11
Meath	122	58	27	26	12
Wicklow	204	80	77	34	13
Offaly (East)	28	18	7	2	1
Westmeath	95	45	28	19	4

•\*\*\* indicates less than 1,000.

•Total visits to region are less than the sum of visits to the counties because overseas visitors can visit more than one county.

Key Point: Although Wicklow performs the best against other Midlands-East Counties, it is out-performed by all other counties along the coast, from Wexford to Galway.

## Overseas visitor revenue (€m) by county 2013

Figure 17

County	Total	Britain	Mainland Europe	North America	Other Areas
Dublin	1,401	243	605	303	251
Carlow	30	10	14	4	2
Kilkenny	30	11	9	9	2
Tipperary (South)	34	17	11	5	1
Waterford	49	24	12	9	5
Wexford	60	38	16	4	2
Cork	433	128	152	119	34
Kerry	183	46	56	69	14
Clare	94	31	20	37	6
Limerick	135	48	37	47	4
Tipperary (North)	19	12	4	2	1
Offaly (West)	2	1	1	*	*
Galway	308	51	115	128	14
Mayo	60	21	20	18	1
Roscommon	13	6	2	4	1
Cavan	36	23	5	8	1
Donegal	63	30	18	13	3
Leitrim	14	10	2	1	*
Monaghan	19	13	4	2	1
Sligo	44	14	23	5	3
Kildare	52	22	23	6	2
Laois	19	10	6	3	1
Longford	6	4	2	1	*
Louth	43	16	10	9	8
Meath	39	15	12	8	4
Wicklow	70	19	30	12	10
Offaly (East)	15	8	6	1	*
Westmeath	43	24	15	4	*

\* indicates less than €1m.

Data is based on three-year rolling averages.

Key Point: Here, Wicklow is performing better than Wexford and Waterford. Interesting to note as well that Wicklow is getting a quarter of the number of visitors to Kerry, but yet gets more revenue per visitor than Kerry.

## Domestic Travel by Irish residents

Figure 18

Number of trips (000s) by main county visited, 2010 - 2013

	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Total Domestic - Trips<sup>1</sup></b>	7,300	7,169	7,031	7,111
Dublin	1,116	1,279	1,392	1,344
Cork	855	837	793	740
Galway	737	686	651	739
Kerry	767	656	610	671
Wexford	580	547	481	455
Mayo	399	348	342	373
Clare	426	376	340	294
Donegal	266	272	245	269
Waterford	301	335	254	242
Westmeath, Roscommon and Longford	232	215	302	226
Limerick	192	172	169	208
Kilkenny	191	149	159	204
Kildare and Carlow	174	210	196	198
Wicklow	169	205	213	194
Cavan and Leitrim	194	161	178	192
Sligo	225	193	189	182
Tipperary	137	144	152	155
Meath	88	158	149	150
Laois and Offaly	108	124	118	146
Louth and Monaghan	142	104	100	129

<sup>1</sup> Data is published at county level above a threshold of 150,000 trips for most recent year. Data is amalgamated below this threshold.

Source: Central Statistics Office Household Travel Survey, Quarter 4 2013

Key Point: Poor performance against Wexford and other neighbouring counties.

## Profile of overseas visitors by region in 2013

Figure 19

Main reason for visit (%)	Dublin	East & Midlands	South East	South West	Shannon	West	North West
Holiday	52	40	62	65	63	71	50
Business	19	12	10	14	8	4	12
Visiting friends/ relatives	23	43	25	18	26	20	35
Other	6	4	2	3	3	4	2

Key Point: Visitors to Midlands East are far more likely to be visit friends and relatives as opposed to holidays, double that of those visiting the west.

Figure 20

Route of entry (%)	Dublin	East & Midlands	South East	South West	Shannon	West	North West
Air from Britain	32	40	25	35	43	22	28
Air from Mainland Europe	45	29	26	32	22	33	25
Transatlantic Air	15	14	19	20	23	27	20
Sea from Britain	7	16	26	10	10	14	24
Sea from Mainland Europe	1	2	3	3	2	3	3

Accommodation used (%)	Dublin	East & Midlands	South East	South West	Shannon	West	North West
Hotel	53	27	37	45	41	34	31
Guesthouse/ B&B	8	12	22	23	20	25	20
Rented	4	3	2	6	4	5	5
Caravan & camping	*	1	2	1	2	2	2
Hostel	6	1	2	6	5	9	2
Friends/ relatives	25	50	32	21	30	23	34
Other	1	4	3	4	2	4	7

**Figure 21**

Use of car (%)	Dublin	East & Midlands	South East	South West	Shannon	West	North West
Car brought	5	18	22	12	9	12	26
Car hired	26	48	44	45	52	47	42
Car not used	70	36	36	44	39	41	34

Whether travelling on a package (%)	Dublin	East & Midlands	South East	South West	Shannon	West	North West
Package	19	20	28	31	30	25	25
Independent	81	80	72	69	70	75	75

**Key Points:**

- The vast majority of Midlands-Eats arrive by air.
- 50% of ME visitors stay with friends and relatives.
- Midlands East has the lowest % using paid for accommodation.
- While visitor numbers to Wicklow are higher than many counties, the low occupancy levels of ME would imply that many of these are day trippers.
- Almost half of ME visitors hire a car.
- ME visitors are overwhelmingly independent travellers versus package holidays.

**Coach tourist numbers to Ireland 2009-2013**

There were 294,000 overseas coach tourists to Ireland in 2013 contributing an estimated €210 million to the Irish economy.

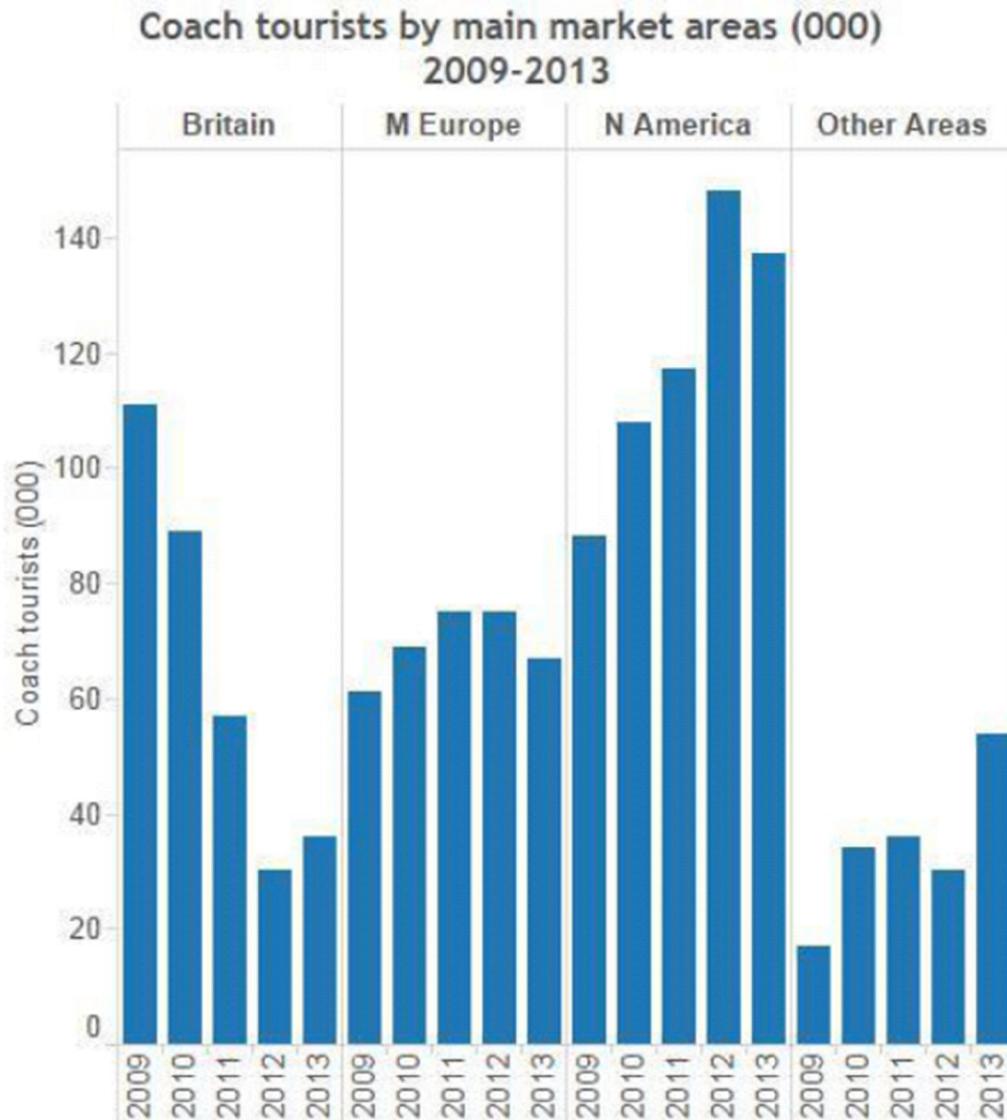
**Figure 22**

**Total overseas coach tourists 2009-2013 (000)**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Overseas Coach Tourists	278	300	284	283	294

Key Point: The top market for coach tourists to Ireland since 2010 has been North America. British coach numbers showed an increase in 2013 arresting steep declines evident since 2009. Coach tourists from long haul destinations are also showing an upward trend.

**Figure 23**

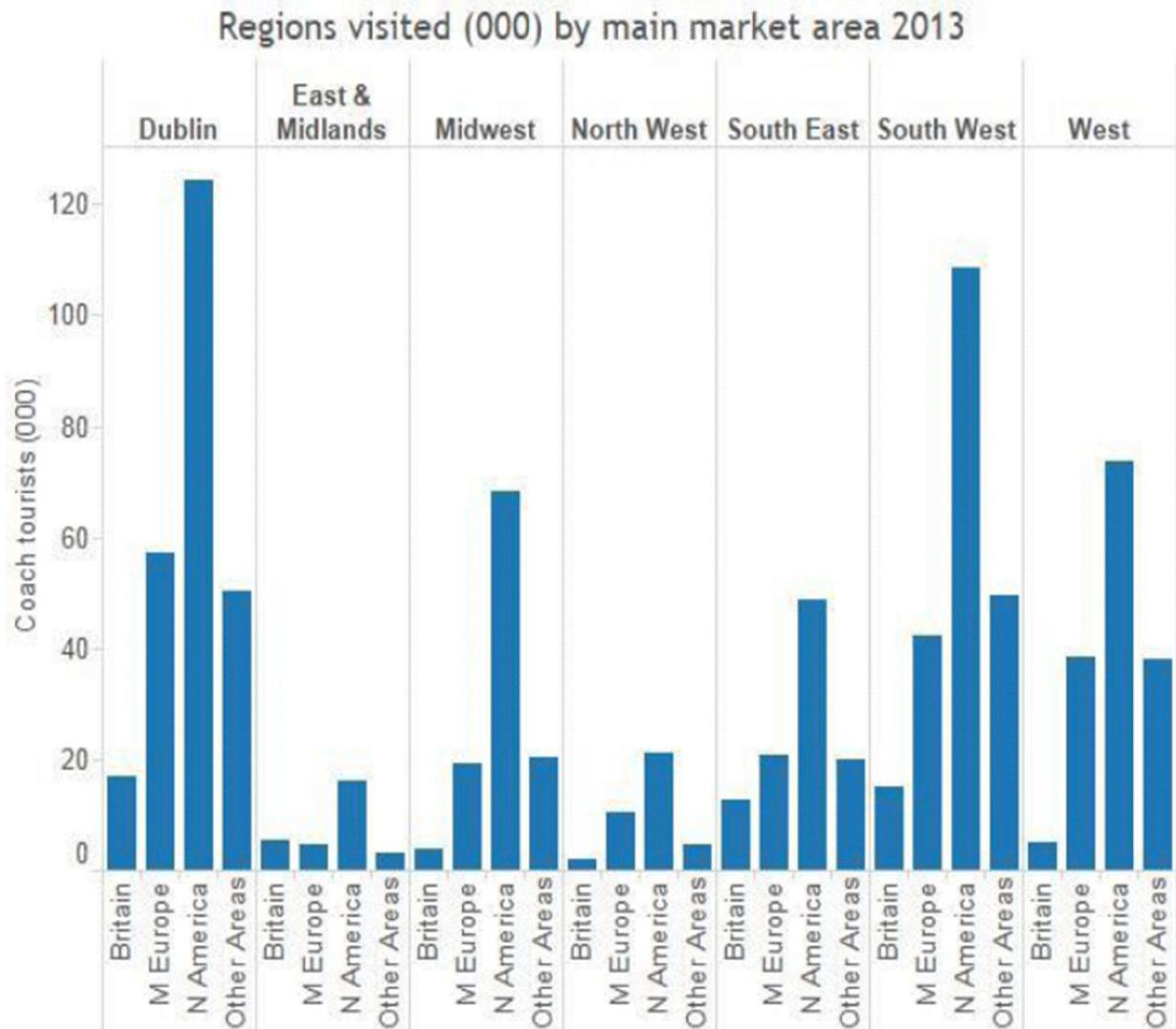


Source: Coach Tourist numbers are estimates based on data from Fáilte Ireland’s survey of overseas travellers and figures provided by the sea carriers.

**Regions visited**

Dublin was the most visited region with over 85% of overseas coach tourists spending at least one night in Dublin. Outside of Dublin, the South West and the West were the next most popular destinations for coach tourists.

Figure 24



Source: Coach Tourist numbers are estimates based on data from Fáilte Ireland's survey of overseas travellers and figures provided by the sea carriers.

## Overseas Visitors by County ('000) 1997 - 2012 (source Fáilte Ireland)

Figure 25

Overseas Visitors by County ('000) 1997-2012: Source Fáilte Ireland.

	2012	2009	2008	2007 (*Change from '98)	2006	1998	1997
Dublin	3,641	3,881	4,210	4,449 (+34%)	4,306	2,933	2,586
Cork	1,228	1,001	1,221	1,326 (+25%)	1,372	988	1,022
Galway	968	879	1,099	1,205 (+27%)	1,179	877	939
Kerry	826	784	959	1,048 (+2%)	1,040	1,072	1,101
Clare	445	432	607	685 (+17%)	727	570	540
Limerick	391	350	460	529 (+23%)	540	409	380
Mayo	245	314	375	340 (+15%)	308	288	298
Wexford	229	166	220	243 (-28%)	215	312	310
Waterford	225	214	300	356 (+6%)	366	336	290
Kilkenny	211	206	241	285 (+25%)	288	228	265
<b>Wicklow</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>254 (-13%)</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>265</b>
Kildare	139	158					
Meath	122	127					

- Overseas visitors to Ireland peaked in 2007. From 1998 to 2007, growth in numbers was excellent (see chart). In that 9 year period, Wicklow visitors dropped by 13% and Dublin grew by 34% to 4,449 million visitors.
- Wicklow in 2012 lowest overseas visitors were at 191,000 p.a., which was the lowest in 15 years.
- Wicklow in 1998 peaked at 292,000 visitors, however, by 2012 there had been a decrease of 100,000 (34%) of overseas visitors to 191,000.
- In 2012 Wicklow ranked 11<sup>th</sup> as a destination for overseas visitors.
- Dublin Tourism can be part of a solution to get Wicklow's overseas visitors back up to the 1998 figure of 292,000.
- Minister Varadkar plans as per Avon Rí speech is to get Dublin numbers to over 6 million.
- Blessington Lakes development (€2 million+) should be a crucial part of the plan for growth of Wicklow tourism.
- Solution for Wicklow – Co-operation in marketing offers with Dublin Tourism packages that include overnight stays in Wicklow as part of the visitors' special experience of Dublin/ Wicklow outdoor offerings.
- Globally, adventure tourism is growing at an annual rate of 65% - a plus for Wicklow's outdoor pursuits.
- **We need political assistance to help influence decision makers such as Fáilte Ireland and Dublin Tourism to help us in the quest for growth in the numbers of overseas visitors to Wicklow.**

Key Points: Although Wicklow has seen an increase of visitor number in 2013 compare to 2012, the table above shows overseas overnight visitor's numbers in 2012 were 35% below the 1998 figures.

**Activity product usage among overseas visitors in 2013 (Failte Ireland figures)**

**Figure 26**

<b>Table 1 – Overseas visitors engaging in activities</b>					
	<b>Angling</b>	<b>Cycling</b>	<b>Equestrian</b>	<b>Golf</b>	<b>Hiking/Walking</b>
Nos. engaging (000s)	127	241	99	204	742
Expenditure (€m)	100	232	97	217	650

Key Points: Hiking/walking more than three times any other activity and revenue.

**Figure 27**

<b>Table 2 – Market distribution of overseas visitors (%)</b>					
	<b>Angling</b>	<b>Cycling</b>	<b>Equestrian</b>	<b>Golf</b>	<b>Hiking/Walking</b>
Britain	39	18	30	42	22
Mainland Europe	51	64	39	27	55
<i>France</i>	12	13	8	6	12
<i>Germany</i>	18	13	10	6	16
North America	8	9	26	24	18
Other long haul	2	9	4	7	5

Key Points: Mainland Europe engage in more outdoor activities than any other markets

**Figure 28**

<b>Table 7 - Length of stay (%)</b>					
	<b>Angling</b>	<b>Cycling</b>	<b>Equestrian</b>	<b>Golf</b>	<b>Hiking/Walking</b>
1-3 nights	6	11	10	19	12
4-5 nights	15	9	15	19	17
6-8 nights	33	25	27	23	30
9-14 nights	26	21	26	28	24
15+ nights	20	33	22	12	17
<i>Average length of stay</i>	<i>14.5</i>	<i>32.3</i>	<i>17.6</i>	<i>13.0</i>	<i>16.1</i>

Key Points: 6 to 8 nights seems to be the optimum length of stay when engaging in outdoor activities

**Figure 29**

**Table 12 – Use of car (%)**

	Angling	Cycling	Equestrian	Golf	Hiking/Walking
Car brought	36	9	8	17	13
Car hired	25	21	37	31	34
Car not used	39	70	56	52	53

Key point: visitors engaging in outdoor activities most likely do not have a car.

**Figure 30**

**Table 14 – Nights by region (%)**

	Angling	Cycling	Equestrian	Golf	Hiking/Walking
Dublin	22	51	28	41	41
East & Midlands	9	7	13	13	7
South-East	5	5	5	4	5
South-West	27	14	16	25	25
Shannon	6	6	5	7	7
West	20	14	21	6	12
North-West	12	4	11	5	4

## Outdoor Activities

**Figure 31**

**Table 13 – Regions visited (%)**

	Angling	Cycling	Equestrian	Golf	Hiking/Walking
Dublin	21	58	42	48	51
East & Midlands	14	11	20	18	12
South-East	10	13	11	10	15
South-West	38	38	41	36	51
Shannon	13	15	16	20	18
West	28	34	32	17	30
North-West	16	10	8	8	8

Key point: Dublin and South West are the most visited regions for outdoor activities. It is fair to assume that a lot of Dublin activities are in fact undertaken in surrounding counties: Wicklow!

**Figure 32**

**Table 16 – Breakdown of spend (%)**

	Angling	Cycling	Equestrian	Golf	Hiking/Walking
Bed and board	20	27	26	37	25
Other food and drink	27	31	33	25	29
Sightseeing/entertainment	8	9	9	13	11
Internal transport	21	11	11	7	17
Shopping	9	17	14	13	14
Miscellaneous	15	5	5	5	4

Key Point: Most money spent on accommodation and food

**Figure 33**

**Table 27 – Type of arrangement (%)**

	Angling	Cycling	Equestrian	Golf	Hiking/Walking
Package *	8	15	19	16	14
Independent	92	85	81	84	86

\* Prepaid an inclusive price for fares to/from Ireland and at least on other element of the holiday.

Key Point: again, independent travellers is the strongest market

### **Other Key Points on Activities**

- **Golf tourism:**

According to Fáilte Ireland Golf Tourism has outperformed other key segments in the past three years averaging 6% growth per annum in the period 2009 to 2012, with 163000 tourists playing golf while in Ireland in 2012.

- **Walking:**

- An EU report on developing destinations for walking holidays identified the following key features:
- According to a survey by the English Tourist Board, 80% of tourists go on walks during their holidays.
- Strong presence of women with over 50% in Germany and France, while walkers and hikers tend to be middle and upper classes, and it is very popular with the over 50's.
- Increasing popularity of family walks.
- Serious hikers or trekkers make up only 15%; the vast majority prefer walks of 2-3 hours which form a loop.
- 90-95% goes out on their own and not as part of organized walking packages.

- Key motivations, unspoilt nature but not wilderness, health and wellbeing, discovery and not doing what everybody else does.

### Cultural product usage among overseas visitors in 2013

Figure 34

**Table 1 – Numbers of overseas visitors engaging in cultural activities (000s)**

Gardens	Cultural/historical visits	Houses/castles	Monuments	Museums/art galleries	Heritage/Interpretive centres
1,594	3,723	2,438	1,508	1,760	1,668

Figure 35

**Table 2 – Market distribution of overseas visitors (%)**

	Gardens	Cultural/historical visits	Houses/castles	Monuments	Museums/art galleries	Heritage/Interpretive centres
Britain	19	25	20	14	16	19
Mainland Europe	45	43	43	45	45	43
<i>France</i>	9	8	8	9	9	7
<i>Germany</i>	11	9	10	9	9	11
North America	26	23	28	31	29	30
Other long haul	10	9	9	11	9	8

Key Point: The European market, again, most engaging in cultural products.

Figure 36

**Table 7 - Length of stay (%)**

	Gardens	Visits to sites of historical/cultural interest
1-3 nights	16	22
4-5 nights	19	21
6-8 nights	27	26
9-14 nights	23	17
15+ nights	16	14
<i>Average length of stay</i>	<i>16.1</i>	<i>14.4</i>

**Figure 37**

**Table 12 – Use of car (%)**

	Gardens	Visits to sites of historical/ cultural interest
Car brought	7	6
Car hired	27	24
Car not used	66	71

Key point: vast majority not using a car.

**Figure 38**

**Table 14 – Nights by region (%)**

Nights by region (%)	Gardens	Visits to sites of historical/ cultural interest
Dublin	57	52
East & Midlands	7	8
South-East	4	5
South-West	14	15
Shannon	4	6
West	12	11
North-West	3	2

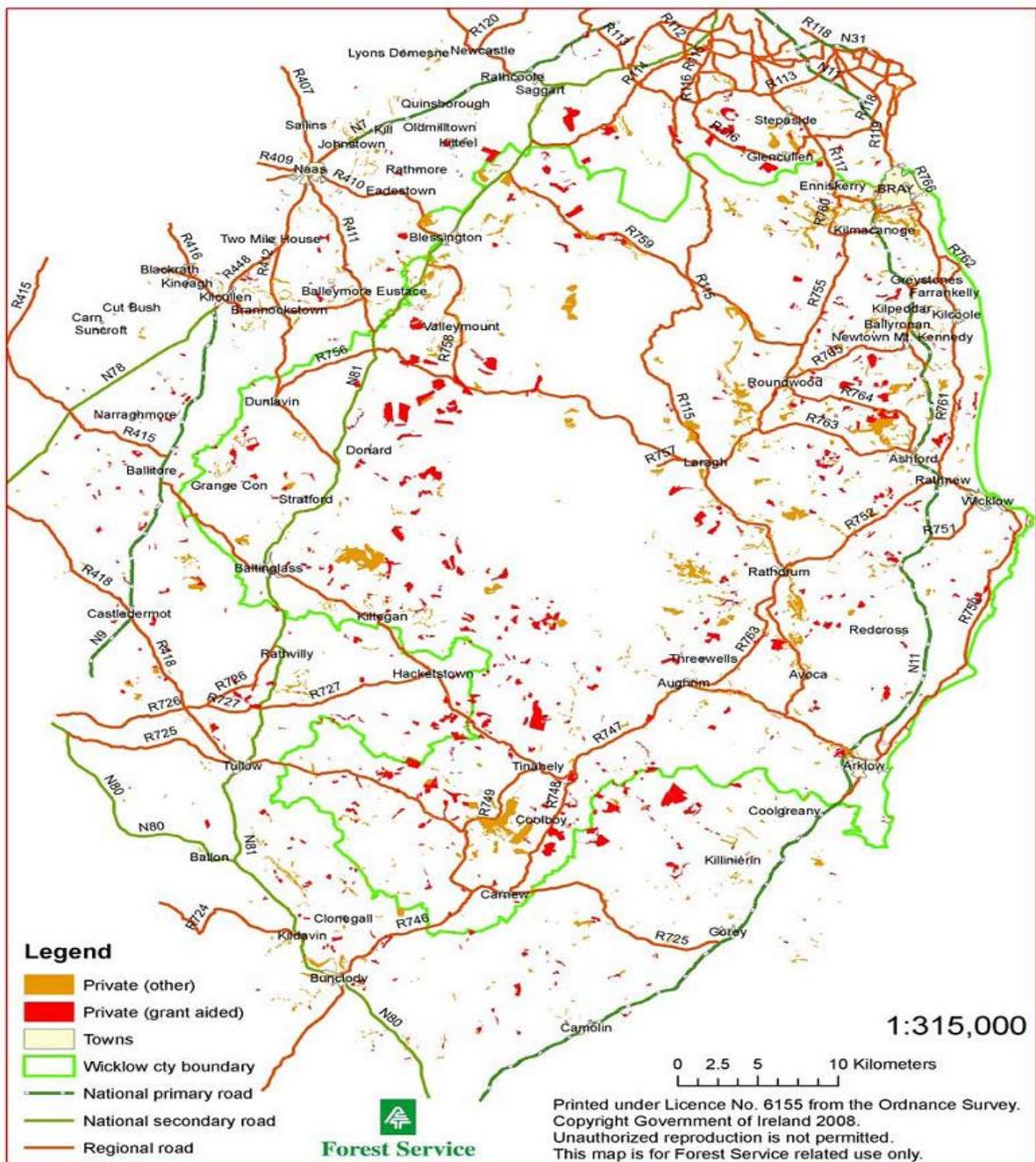
Key point: Here Dublin is the undisputed champion.

**Figure 39**

**Table 16 – Breakdown of spend (%)**

	Gardens	Visits to sites of historical/ cultural interest
Bed and board	30	28
Other food and drink	26	22
Sightseeing/entertainment	9	10
Internal transport	16	15
Shopping	13	12
Miscellaneous	6	13

Appendix 11: Map of Private Forestry Ownership in County Wicklow

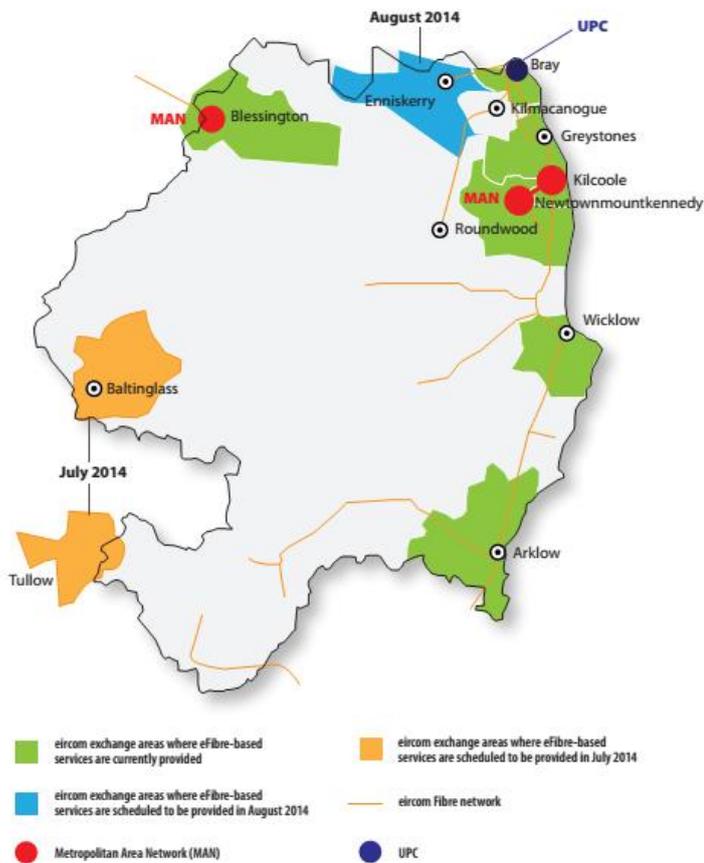


**Figure 5: Map of Private Woodland in County Wicklow and Surrounding Areas (reproduced courtesy of the Forest Service)**

## Appendix 12: Fibre and cable-based broadband facilities in Wicklow

The following map shows the location of high-speed fibre and cable-based broadband services including the MANs and the eircom next generation network in Wicklow.

**Figure 7.1 Fibre and cable-based broadband facilities in Wicklow**



**Wicklow County Council**  
*Comhairle Contae ChiN Mhantáin*

**County Wicklow Partnership**

**WICKLOW'S LOCAL  
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

**RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (RDP)  
2014-2020 IRELAND**

**LEADER PLAN**

# The Local Development Strategy (LDS)

LEADER provides rural communities, across the EU, with a method and the resources for local people to actively engage with and direct the local development within their own area. This is underpinned by a framework which requires the Local Action Group to design a Local Development Strategy for the delivery of LEADER activities.

The LDS is a community-led plan, developed and driven by rural communities, through the Local Action Group to achieve a particular vision and support the sustainable development of the area. The LDS is based on the seven key features that underpin the LEADER approach which are:

- 1. Area-based local development strategies;**
- 2. Bottom up approach;**
- 3. Public-private partnerships - the LAG;**
- 4. Innovation;**
- 5. Integrated and multi-sectoral actions;**
- 6. Networking;**
- 7. Co-operation**

The LDS seeks to address the identified needs of the area, whilst also exploiting its development potential and is based on a series of local objectives. Each objective must directly link to a LEADER theme and sub-theme. As LEADER is included under priority 6 of the RDP, the objectives should reflect a commitment to promoting economic development and social inclusion.

## Community-Led Approach

The LDS is developed and implemented through a Community Led Local Development (CLLD) approach, which is all about local consultation and active participation of the rural community. This engagement includes the general population, area-based, sectoral and interest groups and representatives from the statutory, community and voluntary and private sectors. In the context of addressing rural social exclusion, it is critical that people living in disadvantaged areas and those from marginalised groups are actively engaged in the process.

Adopting a CLLD approach enables the local community to identify the needs of the area whilst also having an input into the type of actions that might be delivered through the LDS. The community-led approach also underpins the implementation of the LDS

### **Strategic Integration**

The LDS and the actions contained within the strategy should reflect the 3 cross cutting objectives of the RDP.

1. Innovation;
2. Climate change
3. Environment

## LEADER Themes /Sub-Themes

To facilitate a more effective targeting of resources, the RDP outlines a series of themes that were identified as overarching needs in rural Ireland, through consultation and research. These themes respond to key challenges facing rural Ireland, with regard to economic recovery, employment creation, tackling social exclusion and reducing the impact of global warming and resource depletion. Each theme is given further definition through a number of sub-themes which reflect the key areas that stakeholders believe require the most support and have the greatest potential to promote the sustainable development of rural communities. The sub-themes are considered to be sufficiently broad and flexible to encompass the diversity of local needs in rural areas and the range of projects supported through the LDS.



## 1. Economic Development, Enterprise Development & Job Creation

### Sub-Themes



## 2. Social Inclusion

### Sub – Themes



### 3. Rural Environment

#### Sub – Themes



**Protection and Sustainable use of Water Resources**



**Protection and Improvement of Local Biodiversity**



**Development of Renewable Energy**



### **Theme 1 - Rural Tourism**

Rural tourism is an important sector that provides a stimulus for enterprise and job creation. As tourism is based on a particular asset that is generally place-specific, for example, landscape, history, it offers significant potential, even in peripheral areas. While tourism actions are primarily aimed at attracting foreign visitors to an area this can be a challenge for the more peripheral rural areas who often struggle to engage with tourists unless, for example, the area is in the catchment area of a well-known attraction. Interventions under this sub-theme should focus on actions that have the potential to make the area more attractive for local, national and foreign visitors. Examples of actions that may be supported include feasibility studies to explore the tourism potential of an area, marketing initiatives and the creation of tourism hubs to facilitate a multi-sectoral approach. Activities that centre on the development and renovation of infrastructure are also an important contributor to historic and heritage-based tourism. Other actions that promote an innovative tourism sector include the development of cultural/heritage infrastructure of local significance and arts-based activities and events. The provision of amenity and leisure facilities can support adventure/eco-based tourism, which is a growing sector.

### **Enterprise Development**

The significance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to the rural economy is demonstrated by the fact that SMEs account for 92% of all enterprises. It is evident however, that SMEs in

rural areas face key challenges, as they are disproportionately at risk of closure with the economic downturn. To support the diversification of the rural economy, the CEDRA report (2014) identifies potential sectors for future enterprise development, which may be relevant to the development of local strategies, these include:

- Artisan Foods;
- Renewable Energy;
- Marine;
- Social Enterprises;
- Creative Industries.

## Rural Towns

This sub-theme supports the regeneration of rural towns by promoting them as attractive places to visit, live and do business in. The CEDRA (2014) report outlines how many rural towns felt the impact of the economic downturn more acutely than urban areas, with high levels of unemployment and poverty. LEADER is particularly suited to revitalising rural towns through co-ordinating an integrated approach that builds on the economic strengths and infrastructure of the area whilst addressing the key challenges for business, community and recreation. Actions that support the regeneration of rural towns include town renewal schemes that renovate derelict buildings with incentives to attract business to vacant properties. The building or refurbishment of community buildings also provides a multifunctional infrastructure for social, cultural and sporting activities and training for the local community. The development and promotion of unique social events and activities, such as farmers' markets, can provide an important stimulus to rural towns.

## Broadband

Given the extent of work that is conducted online, increased access to reliable and high-speed broadband is vital for the economic and social development of rural areas and communities. High quality broadband enables businesses to set-up or continue to be based in rural areas, by overcoming barriers relating to access to markets and services. There is also a potential to create additional employment, as access to broadband can support businesses to grow. The *National Broadband Plan* (NBP) 'Intervention Strategy' was unveiled by the *Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources* (DECNR) in July 2015. Up to €500 million has been promised to deliver on its goals which are a minimum of 30 Mbps download and 6 upload by 2021. LEADER will not play a role in Broadband delivery as this would be duplication of resources. This sub-theme supports local actions that complement the national initiatives tasked with developing a comprehensive rural broadband infrastructure. Examples of actions include, basic ICT training to priority groups, for example, to enable older people and young people to stay connected.

## **Theme 2 - Social Inclusion**

The focus of theme two, relates to promoting the cohesion of the sub-regional area not only from an economic development perspective but also in relation to fostering social inclusion. In rural areas, the low density of population, high levels of out-migration and distance from urban centres, results in fewer employment options and lower levels of service provision than in urban areas. In addition, the importance of rural transport in addressing social exclusion has been acknowledged for some time.

### **Provision of Basic Services Targeted at Hard to Reach Communities.**

This sub-theme addresses a lack of access to basic services, for people living in rural and remote areas and groups who are at risk of social exclusion. In some cases, the particular service may have never existed in the locality or has been withdrawn. In rural areas, people's experience of exclusion is often compounded by physical isolation. The type of actions supported may involve establishing a new service for hard to reach communities, or improving existing services. Examples of basic services include community facilities; education/training; social/cultural, recreational; retail and finance; personal support. Examples of particular groups who may be at risk of social exclusion include: 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; NEETs (Young People who are Not in Employment, Education or Training); migrants/new communities (including refugees/asylum seekers); local authority tenants; Travellers; Roma.

### **Rural Youth**

The significant increase in unemployment levels across many EU countries has had a severe impact on young people. In 2014, the percentage of young people in Ireland who were not in employment, education or training (NEET) was 15.2%. Evidence suggests that the life-chances of young people in rural areas have been affected by lower levels of educational attainment, the decline of traditional sectors of employment and the out-migration of well-educated young people. The promotion of youth entrepreneurship and associated training can provide improved pathways for young people to access economic opportunities in rural areas. In addition, actions that develop the social infrastructure of rural areas provide important opportunities for young people to realise their potential. These include the provision of youth clubs/cafés; improved access to ICT; sports/recreation activities; arts-based projects; and youth development programmes. Young people, particularly those who may be vulnerable, also have distinct needs regarding the type of services they may need to access. In the context of LEADER, young people are defined as people aged 15 to 35 years.

## **Theme 3: Rural Environment**

Theme three is focused on maximising the potential of the environment to contribute to the sustainable development of rural Ireland. This is premised on utilising the landscape within a local area and its features and natural resources, while simultaneously creating a greater environmental awareness and improving environmental protection.

## **Protection and Sustainable use of Water Resources.**

Greater protection of local water resources is essential for sustaining rural communities. Environmental schemes have the potential to play a pivotal role in addressing pressures on water reserves and in supporting the local community to conserve this valuable resource.

Actions funded under this sub-theme may include, general awareness raising on water conservation issues, the development of local water conservation plans and feasibility studies. Capacity building on the technical aspects of water recycling schemes is also a key activity.

Local projects that could be funded under this priority include practical initiatives that conserve water, for example, community programmes for rain water harvesting and the use of greywater for fertiliser and general washing.

## **Protection and Improvement of Local Biodiversity**

Biodiversity, which encompasses natural wildlife, flora and fauna, is an important foundation to the healthy functioning of ecosystems. The protection of biodiversity is a growing concern, with the loss of various species of wildlife, flora and fauna as well as their natural habitat. Factors that impact on local biodiversity include population growth, cutting hedgerows and changes in land usage. Examples of actions that promote local biodiversity include, awareness raising and practical guidance on how to protect biodiversity domestically. In addition, feasibility studies and action plans may focus on larger scale projects that enhance and protect particular aspects of biodiversity. Local projects that could potentially be funded under this priority include practical initiatives that support biodiversity and environmental improvements, for example, the upgrading of parks and river walks, establishment of nature corridors, habitat creation and planting of native species.

## **Development of Renewable Energy**

Clean sources of energy have a lower environmental impact on nature than conventional energy technologies. This sub-theme is premised on the need to mitigate against the impact of recent environmental trends, which include climate change. It is considered that community-based initiatives will play a key role in realising national and EU environmental targets, particularly in the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions through energy infrastructure. In addition, renewable energy technologies have the potential to generate new employment opportunities in rural areas. Examples of actions that may be supported include general awareness raising on environmental issues and feasibility studies relating to green technologies. Capacity building actions may focus

on the installation and use of renewable energy technologies. Local projects that could potentially be funded include technologies that deliver sustainable energy alternatives, for example, biomass heating, solar power, community wind farms and community-based heating systems.

Appendix 14: Consultation Poster and Workshop Photographs



County Wicklow Partnership

Wicklow **LEADER** 2016 - 2020 Local Action Group  
Invite you to have your say on  
**Wicklow's Local Development Strategy**

**Public Consultation Meetings**

**Avon Ri, Blessington**  
Sept 29<sup>th</sup> at 8.00pm

**Parkview Hotel, Newtownmountkenny**  
Sept 24<sup>th</sup> at 8.00pm

**Grand Hotel, Wicklow Town**  
October 6<sup>th</sup> at 8.00pm

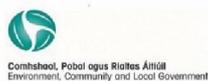
**Germaines, Baltinglass**  
October 8<sup>th</sup> at 8.00pm

**Lawless Hotel, Aughrim**  
October 1<sup>st</sup> at 8.00pm

**Emerging Themes**  
Community Facilities  
Rural Youth  
Rural Environment  
Tourism & Enterprise Development  
Rural Towns  
Broadband

**LEADER supporting rural enterprises and communities for 25 years.**

Please RSVP to: [info@wicklowpartnership.ie](mailto:info@wicklowpartnership.ie) or Phone 0402 20955



# Wicklow's LDS Public Consultation Process Launch September 2015







Tom Gregan Chairman, County Wicklow Partnership LDC

Pat Casey Chairman Wicklow LCDC



Michael Nicholson (Director WCC) Pat Casey (Chairman LCDC) Tom Gregan (Chairman LDC)

Andrew Doyle TD. Bryan Doyle (County Manager)

## Public Consultation Meetings

Date - 8 p.m.	Venue
Thurs 24 <sup>th</sup> September	Parkview Hotel, Newtown
Tues 29 <sup>th</sup> September	Avon Ri, Blessington
Thurs 1 <sup>st</sup> October	Lawless's Hotel, Aughrim
Tues 6 <sup>th</sup> October	Grand Hotel, Wicklow
Thurs 8 <sup>th</sup> October	Germaines, Baltinglass

Have Your Say in the  
next LEADER PLAN

