

LEADER Food Initiative Summary

Relevant Dates & Budget

- LEADER Food Initiative is open for applications.
- As at the end of February 2021 there was about €5million left in the national budget for allocation, which is managed by the Department of Rural and Community Development.
- Funding is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis for eligible food projects recommended for approval for Local Action Groups.
- Expected that the budget will be fully allocated by August/September 2021.

LEADER Food Initiative Criteria

This initiative aims to support new and existing food and beverage producers to address emerging challenges through investment in areas such as **market development, competitiveness, and innovation**. Support for food producers, may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Artisan, Micro and Small food producers, including those with a focus on collaborative proposals, aimed at production quality and market issues.
- Regional product development, including a focus on marketing distinctive local food stuffs.
- Marketing and processing for strategically identified sectors, including honey and apple processors.
- Improved marketing, product quality and business skills through support for innovative collaborative processes and so address challenges to co-operation identified in studies on facilitating short supply chains e.g. entry barriers, the need for shared understanding, skills/training, and marketing and business skills deficits.

Eligibility Conditions

Projects must be:

- In the areas of (1) market development, (2) competitiveness or (3) innovation and must be in line with the objectives of the LDS (Local Development Strategy) framework for the sub-regional area.
- Project applicants must be an Artisan, Micro or Small food producers and registered as a food producer with the relevant Competent Authority as per Regulation (EC) No 852/2004.

OR

- If the applicant is not a food business (e.g. a Local Development Company) the project must deliver benefit to Artisan, Micro and Small food producers.

Eligible Costs

The costs that are eligible for funding are the same as for all other projects in accordance with the LEADER Operating Rules. For example, this would include support for:

- The construction, acquisition, or improvement of immovable property.
- The purchase of new machinery and equipment.
- Intangible investments such as the development of computer software and the acquisition of patents, licences, copyrights, or trademarks.
- Second-hand equipment as per section 14.4 of the LEADER Operating Rules.

Funding Amounts

- €5,000 minimum grant
- €200,000 maximum grant

Grant Rates of Aid

- **Capital Investment:** 75% for business (effective from 1 April 2021) and community applicants.
- **Training:** 100% for business and community applicants.
- **Analysis and Development:** 75% for business applicants and 90% for community applicants.

Who can apply?

- **'Artisan' businesses** are micro-enterprises with turnover up to €2m, employing fewer than 10 people and producing food in limited quantities using skilled craftspeople. (FSAI Guidance Note The Use of Food Marketing Terms (Guideline No. 29)).
- **'Micro' businesses** are enterprises which employs fewer than ten persons (or whole-time equivalents) and whose annual turnover and/or annual balance sheet total does not exceed €2 million. (Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC).
- **'Small' businesses** are enterprises with turnover up to €10m, employing fewer than 50. (as per Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC).
- Other non-food business applicants (e.g. a Local Development Company, community or voluntary groups) with a project idea that delivers benefits to Artisan, Micro and Small food producers.

How do I apply?

1. Submit an Expression of Interest to your Local Development Company.
2. If your project is eligible in principle, you can make a full application for funding.
3. Your project will be assessed by an Evaluation Committee for funding, and it will make a recommendation to Mayo Local Action Group (LAG).
4. Mayo Local Action Group may approve, refuse or defer your application for more information.
5. If your project is approved by Mayo LAG, it is submitted to the Department of Community and Rural Development (DRCD) for final approval.