

**Project number:** 6088  
**Funding source:** Northern Periphery Programme (NPP)

**Date:** November, 2011  
**Project dates:** June 2010 to March 2011

## Économusée Northern Europe



### Key external stakeholders:

Rural artisan businesses; LEADER companies, Bord Bia, Fáilte Ireland

### Practical implications for stakeholders

This development project demonstrates an innovative model of rural artisan enterprise support.

- An Économusée is a rural artisan business that is supported to develop a tourism aspect to their operations, therefore, diversifying into the cultural tourism market and increasing their viability.
- The proven customised business support model promoted in this project could be mainstreamed to help a larger number of rural artisan companies.
- The project's targeted specialist business advice, mentoring and support can help rural artisan businesses harness the capabilities to diversify into the cultural tourism market.
- Transnational networking helps build rural enterprise competencies and opens up additional tourism related opportunities.

### Main results:

- Two Économusées one in County Galway, one in County Westmeath established
- The Économusée in County Westmeath launched by the Canadian Ambassador to Ireland in March 2011. County Galway Économusée to be launched early 2012.
- Partnerships were established with LEADER companies to support Économusées established in each county.
- At the invitation of the BMW Regional Assembly, Dr. Kevin Heanue of the Teagasc team was the sole Irish NPP project member to present on the theme of Stimulating Rural Business Innovation at the NPP Annual Conference 2010.

### Opportunity / Benefit:

A follow-on two and a half year project called Craft International started in July 2011 and ensures that the learning, materials, networking and expertise from this project remains available to the participating enterprises and stakeholders. More opportunities for dissemination will arise in the follow-on project and it also opens up the possibility of going one step closer to mainstreaming the Économusée idea.

### Collaborating Institutions:

See page 2 of the full Technology Update

**Teagasc project team:** Maria Heneghan (PI)  
Dr. Kevin Heanue

**External collaborators:** Terje Inderhaug, Hordaland County Council, Bergen Norway; Réjean Tardif Économusée Society Network, Eastern Canada, Canada; Tinna Arnadottir Innovation Centre, Iceland; Olga Biskopstø, Centre for Local and Regional Development, The Faeroe Islands; Sarah Irwin, Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust, Northern Ireland; Mads Skifte Tourism and Economic Council of Greenland, Greenland; Ingela Fredell Jämtland County Council Institute of Rural Development, Sweden; Claude Dubé Laval University, Quebec, Canada.

LEADER companies: FORUM Connemara Ltd, Westmeath Community Development Ltd

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### 1. Project background:

Between October 2008 and March 2009, Teagasc RERC was Lead Partner in an EC Northern Periphery Programme (NPP) Preparatory Project. As a result of that involvement, Teagasc was invited to be a partner in a Main Project together with eight other partners. This main project was called Economuseum Northern Europe (ENE).

The Northern Periphery Programme (NPP), which is part of the European Commission's Territorial Cooperation Objective, is one of thirteen INTERREG programmes aimed at encouraging and supporting transnational co-operation between the regions of Europe (for more details on the NPP see <http://www.northernperiphery.net/>). The NPP 2007-2013 aims to help peripheral and remote communities on the northern margins of Europe to develop their economic, social and environmental potential. To do this, the NPP provides funding towards development projects that create innovative products and services.

Against that background, the ENE project sought to introduce the successful Canadian Économusée concept, quality assurance and business model to the NPP project area, including the Atlantic counties of Ireland. An Économusée is a rural artisan business that is supported to develop a tourism aspect to their operations, therefore, it diversifies into the cultural tourism market. The expectation was that at the end of the project (March 2011), 16 Économusées would be operational as a result of the project, 2 of which would be in Ireland.

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### 2. Questions addressed by the project:

- Could the successful Canadian concept of Économusée be brought to Europe and put into use?
- Did the concept need to be altered for European rural enterprises and if so, how?
- Will European artisan businesses see value in the Économusée concept?

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### 3. The experimental studies:

- A feasibility study, investigating the suitability of the artisan product and the commitment of the business owner to be badged as an Économusée, was commissioned from external consultants for each enterprise. This study also reviewed the physical suitability of the premises and alterations necessary to fulfill the six necessary components of an Économusée
- Intensive business support was provided to each candidate Économusée pre and post the feasibility study
- Customised promotional and interpretive material was developed for each Économusée
- Linkages were facilitated between the candidate Économusée and the local LEADER companies

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### 4. Main results:

- The Économusée concept needed remarkably little alteration for the European context
- Two Irish artisan producers with international reputations validated the concept by being badged as Économusée
- The follow-on project will seek to add value to the Économusée created in the first project.

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### 5. Opportunity/Benefit:

- The Économusée concept, as an innovative rural enterprise support model, has been validated for

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Europe

- A follow on two and a half year project called Craft International started in July 2011 and ensures that the learning, materials, networking and expertise from this project remains available to the participating enterprises and stakeholders.

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**6. Dissemination:**

The knowledge developed in this project will be utilized in the follow-on Craft International Project, which seeks to create two additional Économusée (artisan food) in Ireland, and then focus on working with the two Économusée developed in the ENE project and the two new Économusée to optimize their internet sales, maximize (drawing on the Canadian experience) their point of sales techniques, and embed the Économusée network in Ireland in the strategic plans of key stakeholder organizations such as Fáilte Ireland and Bord Bia.

There are several project related websites with information on both the European and Canadian individual Économusée and the associated networks.

Économusée Northern Europe [www.economusee.no](http://www.economusee.no)

Canadian Économusée [www.economusees.com/iens\\_en.cfm](http://www.economusees.com/iens_en.cfm)

**Main publications:**

Heanue, K. (2010) Stimulating Rural Business Innovation, *Northern Periphery Programme Annual Conference*, September 9<sup>th</sup>, Bunratty Castle, Co. Clare. (Invited presentation)

**Popular publications:**

Heanue, K., McIntyre, B. and Heneghan, M. (2012) Supporting Rural Enterprise Innovation, *TResearch*, Vol. 7, No. 3. Autumn, pp 34-35

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**7. Compiled by:** Kevin Heanue

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