LEADER Networks Supporting Agri Tourism

Martina Earley
Chair of Irish Leader Development Network - Western Region
The Irish Local Development Network CLG (ILDN) is the representative body for the country’s 49 Local Development Companies who deliver RDP LEADER, Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme, Rural Social Scheme, Tús, Local Employment Service, Jobs Clubs, Rural Recreation Programme, The Walks Scheme, Back to Work Enterprise Allowance and social enterprise programmes across rural and urban Ireland.
## LDC’S IN THE WESTERN REGION

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<th>Contact:</th>
<th>Website:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Roscommon LEADER partnership</td>
<td><a href="http://www.rosleaderpartnership.ie">www.rosleaderpartnership.ie</a></td>
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<td>Galway Rural Development,</td>
<td><a href="http://www.grd.ie">www.grd.ie</a></td>
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<td>Galway City Partnership,</td>
<td><a href="http://www.gcp.ie">www.gcp.ie</a></td>
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<td>Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann</td>
<td><a href="http://www.oileain.ie">www.oileain.ie</a></td>
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<td>South West Mayo Development,</td>
<td><a href="http://www.southmayo.com">www.southmayo.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mayo North East LEADER</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mayonortheast.com">www.mayonortheast.com</a></td>
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WHAT IS AN LDC?

- Bottom-up approach – working with communities to develop local solutions to local issues
- Focus on promoting local & rural economic development
- Focus on addressing inequality and social exclusion
- Currently, ILDN members oversee €330 million worth of economic activity each year supporting labour market access measures, rural development, social inclusion, community development and enterprise activity. The network is the largest non-governmental provider of local development supports and services in the state.
“Funding is available for rural tourism projects under the new Leader Programme. Farm families wishing to explore such opportunities should get in touch with their local LEADER company”

• LEADER uses a ‘bottom-up’ or community led local development approach to rural development.

• The overall LEADER Programme budget for this period is €250 million, supporting many areas of Rural Development including Agri-Tourism

• LEADER has supported many farm families to successfully diversify their agricultural portfolios and generate a secondary income
Many farmers are considering rural tourism as an opportunity to generate income and overcome the challenges facing farming by providing accommodation and/or activities for tourists.

EXAMPLES OF AGRI-TOURISM INITIATIVES WE SUPPORT

- Bed & Breakfast
- Bunkhouse Barns
- Open farms / Farm shops / tea shops
- Canoeing
- Self-catering cottages / houses
- Glamping / Yurts
- Karting
Glen Keen is one of the largest farms in Ireland’s agri-tourism offering, over 1,400 acres in size, this single family-owned sheep farm with a commonage footprint that extends to over 5,500 acres is larger than some national parks.

It is ideally located on the Wild Atlantic Way, 6.2 miles from Louisburgh in Mayo.

The mix of education, heritage & environmental tourism this project offers is very innovative.
This agri-tourism project introduces visitors to rural Ireland and the farm. Farm Experience Activities include:

- Traditional Turf Cutting
- Sheep Shearing Demonstrations (seasonal)
- Traditional Tea Rooms
- Nature Walks
- Petland Habitats
- Archaeological Sites
- Famine Walk
- Guided Hill Walk for groups
- School Tours
- Wool Spinning Demo
How Did LEADER Help?

• The construction of the visitor centre at Glen Keen Farm received a LEADER Grant of €150,000 at a rate of 75%.
• The visitor centre has a capacity of 250 guests and is equipped with traditional tearoom, craft shop stocked with Irish handmade art and crafts and an historic photographic exhibition.
How Did LEADER Help?

Glen Keen also received LEADER mentoring support to:

1) **Work with an ecologist to draw up a Biodiversity Action Plan for the visitor farm.**

The Biodiversity Action Plan included:

- Site surveys
- Flora and fauna signage for Glen Keen,
- Nature walks and wild lifetrails
- Ecology materials for schools and colleges

2) **Marketing Mentoring Support for website and brochure development.**
Another successful example of farm diversification and Agri-Tourism which received grant aid from LEADER is Carrick Quads based near Carrick on Shannon

- John Molloy, the owner of Carrick Quads transformed some of his farm land into a quad biking terrain that consists of hills, dykes, ditches, trails, open countryside and streams
- Carrick Quads is a thriving enterprise which has greatly increased tourism in the region attracting Irish and International Tourists, School tours, corporate team building etc
- Carrick Quads employs 5 staff and has on average 2,000 visitors/yr
• Glendeer Pet Farm is an award winning 12 acre open farm situated in the heart of Ireland.
• Glendeer provides a safe and carefree environment for children of any age.
• The farm itself comprises of 6 acres and an additional 6 acres of a nature walk which was once an old mass path. The farm has over 50 species of animals and is continuing to expand.
Coffee Shop

Guided Tours arranged for groups

Indoor and outdoor picnic area (visitors are welcome to bring their own picnic if they wish)

Nature walk (approx half a mile long)

Wheelchair Accessible (nature walk can be difficult due to rough terrain and tree roots)

Over 50 species of animals & birds

Parking - Ample coach and car parking

Pets Corner

Playgrounds

Restored 1850’s cottage

Toilet facilities and baby changing facilities

Supported By

This project received grant aid from Roscommon LEADER Partnership Rural Development Programme which is financed by the Irish Government under the Rural Development Programme Ireland 2007-2013 and by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in Rural Areas.
SUCCESSFUL LEADER PROJECTS

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- **The Glendeer Pet Farm employs 3 full-time staff and 10 part-time staff and had 28,000 Visitors in 2017!**
ARE YOU ELIGIBLE FOR LEADER FUNDING?

• Today we have shown you some successful examples of LEADER funded projects in the area of Agri-Tourism
• Many farms have untapped resources which could form the basis of a second income generating enterprise, such as rural tourism
• If you have an idea and think you might be eligible please contact the LEADER Team in your area today!
ANY QUESTIONS?

• Thank you for listening, any questions?