



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Overview of the DRCD Rural Development Investment Programme

Fintan OBrien, 24 February 2023



Outline



- The Policy Context
- The components of the Rural Development Investment Programme and other DRCD schemes
- Common issues and challenges

The Policy Context



- There is a strong emphasis on rural development right throughout the Programme for Government, which contains commitments which will benefit rural Ireland in areas such as the revitalisation of town centres, better rural transport services etc.
- Our Rural Future – the Government’s RD Policy for 2021-2025
 - Sets out a vision for a rural Ireland which is integral to our national economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing and development.
- Town Centre First
 - Tackling vacancy, combating dereliction and breathing new life into town centres. Backed up by various funding strands across Government.

Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF)



- Towns and villages with a population of less than 10,000, and outlying areas. Medium to large scale capital projects.
- Funding of €395 million approved to date for 215 projects costing €542million.
- €60m allocation in 2023. Commitments across year on multiannual projects.
- Calls for applications sought under 2 Categories. Category 1 call results announced in December 2022 - €115m.
- Focus on:
 - revitalising rural towns and villages through planned and sustainable regeneration; and
 - providing the necessary facilities and infrastructure in rural communities in terms of remote working, connectivity, town centre residency, economic and enterprise development etc., which will assist in attracting people back to live in rural areas.
 - Addressing vacancy and dereliction in town centres.

Examples of projects from latest RRDF round



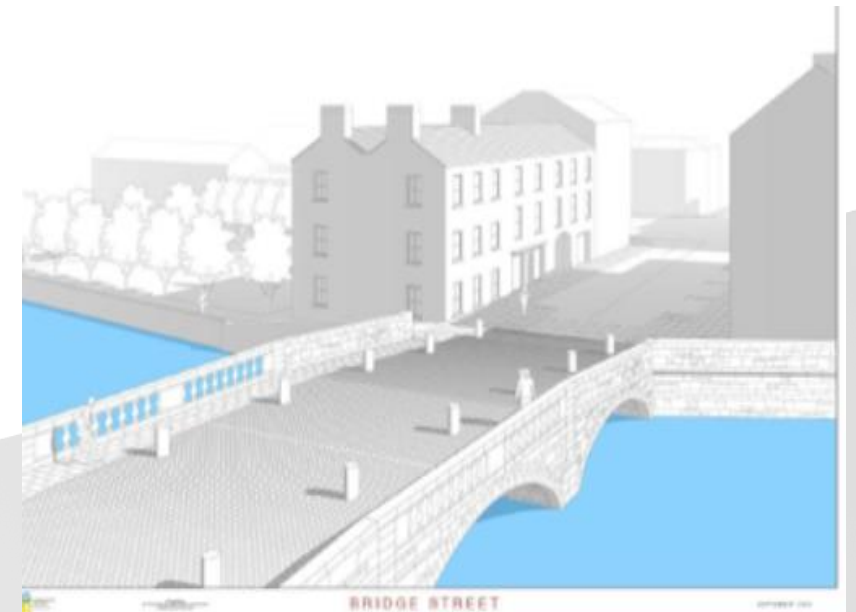
- €5.2m for Charleville Town centre renewal
- €4.27m for conversion of historic building in Athy into a state of the art innovation hub
- €3.5m for conversion of vacant building on the Marina into a new Maritime Training Centre
- €1.45m for the development of an Enterprise Centre in Durrrow
- €6.3m for Ramelton Reimagined project

RRDF Boyle

- **Boyle Regeneration**
- **RRDF Funding €2,147,000**
- This significant town regeneration project will undertake a series of linked projects, including the refurbishment and conversion of the old Royal Hotel into an Enterprise Centre, exhibition space, information point and coffee dock and the creation of a new riverside promenade, which will link the town centre to key tourism attractions using the river.



- **Energising Boyle Town Centre and Kings Cross**
- **RRDF Funding €2,174,400**
- This project represents the next step in revitalising Boyle Town and bringing town centre living, tourism and economic development back into the centre of the town. The project focuses on the King House Cultural Quarter, and will deliver public realm improvements which will transform the area into a vibrant, town centre that will be attractive to both the local community and visitors. Investment will also be made in the facilities and attractions within King House itself.



Town & Village Renewal Scheme (TVRS)



- Funding to support the revitalisation of our towns and villages. Small to medium scale capital projects (min grant €20k, max grant €500k)
- Applications from local authorities. €121 million approved for almost 1,500 projects since 2016
- Budget of €19m in 2023
- An agile scheme, taking into account emerging priorities
 - *Emphasis on vacancy & dereliction, and town centre living*
 - *Building Acquisition Measure*
 - *Connected Hubs Call*
 - *Bringing vacant properties back into use as remote working hubs*
 - *Green spaces and recreational amenities*
 - *Project development measure*

Examples from the latest TVRS round



- €500k for recreational facilities in Robertstown
- €500k for the restoration of Duncannon Fort
- €500k for the repurposing of the old co-op building in Herberstown as a community space
- €112k to bring the old Fire Station in Moate back into community use
- The purchase of the former Bank of Ireland in Rathkeale for development as an e-hub and community space
- The conversion of the former Garda Station in Moyvane into a multi purpose hub

TVRS - Edenderry



LEADER



- Implemented over 30 years in Ireland – part of Ireland’s CAP Strategic Plan
- Selection Process currently underway for 2023-27 programme
- Indicative themes arising from the SWOT underlying the new CSP
 - Economic Development and Job Creation
 - Rural Infrastructure and Social Inclusion
 - Sustainable Development of Rural Environment and Climate Change Mitigation
- Locally delivered by LAGs on a bottom up basis. Challenge in balancing the bottom up nature of LEADER and the coherence required across local development needs.

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme



- €16m allocation in Budget 2023 – investment to underpin sport and recreational activities in the countryside
- Key driver of the new National Outdoor Recreation Strategy
- Funding available under 4 separate Measures
 - Measure 1 - Small Scale Repair/Development/Promotion and Marketing (up to €30,000 grant available).
 - Measure 2 - Medium Scale Repair/Upgrade and New Trail/Amenity Development (up to €200,000 grant available).
 - Measure 3 – Strategic Large Scale Repair/Upgrade and New Strategic Trail/Amenity Development (up to €500,000 grant available).
 - Project Development Measure – Development costs for Strategic Large Scale Projects (up to €50,000 grant available).

Local Improvement Scheme



- Supports improvement works on rural private/non-public roads which have not been taken in charge by the relevant local authority and which provide access to parcels of land owned/occupied by different persons engaged in separate agricultural activities
- Previously Dept of Transport and suspended in 2012 – reintroduced by DRCD in 2017
- €100m allocated to participating local authorities since 2017 – funding allocated on county size

CLAR



- €7.5m allocation in Budget 2023
- Funding for small scale infrastructural projects in rural areas that have experienced significant levels of population decline
- Measure 1: Support for Community Facilities
- Measure 2: Mobility, Cancer Care, and Community First Responder Transport
- Measure 3: Our Islands.

Other Schemes outside RDIP



- Community Centre Investment Programme – new builds in 2023
- Community Funding Programme
 - Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme
 - Community Services Programme
 - Community Enhancement Programme
 - PEACE IV
 - Public library funding
 - Dormant Account Funding
- The Walks Scheme
- Social Enterprise Supports

Challenges / issues / themes



- Ensuring coherence – internal between schemes, with DRCD policies (inc the emerging Islands Policy), with national policies, timing of calls
- The appropriate funding model and VFM – geographical spread, competitive funding vs block grants, targeting, flexibility to respond to new challenges, communities accessing grants
- Evaluation and ‘telling the story’ of what our schemes deliver
- Audit, assurance and management of funds
- Challenges of ‘getting the spend out’ in partnership with key players such as local authorities.



Questions?