

# LEADER

## Introduction and purpose

Since the early 1990s, the European Union has pioneered LEADER – a bottom-up, partnership-based approach to rural development.

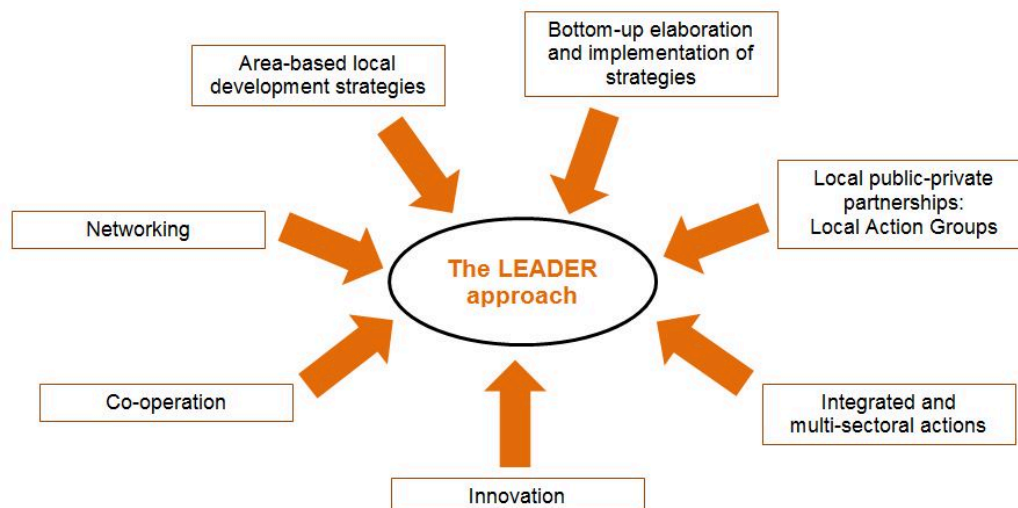
LEADER supports multi-sectoral community-based development. It helps individuals, communities and businesses to come together to design and implement Local Development Strategies.

The LEADER approach is about developing links between local people and, in doing so, building social and economic capital.

LEADER is also about the added value that flows from the bottom-up and partnership approach:

- better identification of local needs and local solutions
- more engagement on the part of local stakeholders
- greater scope for innovation

LEADER can be characterised by seven features designed to help people consider the long-term potential of their local area.



LEADER 2014-2020 includes many of the features of the previous programmes. This includes a distinctive, locally led approach implemented through Local Development Strategies by broad partnerships known as Local Action Groups.

Past projects have been as diverse as:

- community account management
- cultural events
- museums
- footpaths
- landscape initiatives
- skills
- employment and broadband

Examples of past LEADER projects can be found on the [Scottish Rural Network](#) website.

Twenty-one Local Action Groups will be implementing Local Development Strategies across rural Scotland over the next six years, with each Local Action Group adopting their own approaches to supporting local development and social inclusion.

## Approaching LEADER for funding

Any type of organisation can apply for LEADER funding, as long as you think your idea can support the aims and objectives of the Local Development Strategy in your area.

Electronic Expressions of Interest are available from the Scottish Rural Network website.

[Scottish Rural Network](#) - Electronic Expressions of Interest

If, at this stage, your project is judged to have the potential to meet the aims and objectives of the Local Development Strategy, it can be progressed to a full application.

Full guidance on how to apply for LEADER funding can be found on the Scottish Rural Network website.

[Scottish Rural Network](#) - How to apply

## State aid

We expect that most projects funded by LEADER, due to the local community based nature of the programme, will not distort competition or trade. However if LEADER funding is provided to a project which requires state aid cover, the aid offered through this scheme is made possible through European Commission Regulations (EU) 651/2014 and (EU) No 702/2014. More information on this is available below.

[State aid](#)

## Scheme delivery

This scheme is delivered through:

