

NPF Submissions,
Forward Planning Section
Dept of Housing Planning Community and Local Government
Custom House
Dublin
D01 W6X0

RE: Ireland 2040 Our Plan – The National Planning Framework

Dear Antonia,

I refer to my colleague's Liz McDonnell submission on 15th March 2017. The Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine would also like to submit the following:

With regards to Section 4.3 in relation to "The Potential for Rural Ireland".

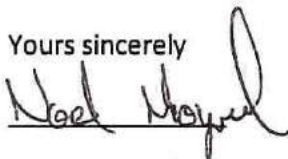
Below is some background on the Rural Innovation and Development Fund under the CEDRA process:

- In response to the recommendations emanating from the 2014 CEDRA Report the Rural Innovation and Development Fund was established. The RIDF was established in 2015 with a budget of €1m that increased to €1.5m in its second year in 2016.
- The budget allocation for this fund for 2017 is €1.5m and is administered by DAFM to target and support "innovative, small scale pilot initiatives that explore the diverse range of potential identified through the CEDRA process".
- The RIDF schemes are aligned to contribute to the overall objectives of the CEDRA report to energise the rural economy as well as to align, where possible, the schemes with the goals of the Department's Food Wise 2025 strategy. The current schemes administered by DAFM include: Nascent Female Rural Entrepreneurs, Social Farming Activities, Agri-Food Tourism (incl. Rural Markets). Continued support for these schemes is proposed for 2017 along with a pilot initiative proposal for the reduction of food waste in rural areas.

In relation to the questions under Section 4.3 (p.34) of the NPF Issues and Choices document, some observations are presented below in relation to rural schemes/programmes:

- Emphasis on the identification of synergies and complimentary activities (e.g. agriculture and climate action initiatives) within and between schemes will be important to maximise the use and effectiveness of these funds/resources. Capturing these within the national strategic policy context will be essential. Cross-cutting approaches to the co-ordination of activities between different rural programmes would also be useful in the NPF to target and link-up activities. To note - establishment of "joint interest" on cross-cutting issues between different Depts., Agencies and other organisations is crucial and requires central co-ordination. For example this can be decisive for a scheme initiative moving from establishment and development phases to a standalone/sustainable phase that is incorporated into other established government budgets.
- Prominence to the design and development of schemes that promote and encourage NPF objectives such as resilience in rural areas should be key. For example, longevity and durability of schemes and funding is an important aspect for rural initiatives to both establish, develop and become sustainable in rural areas that allows long-lasting benefits and wide-scale impacts.
- The inter-dependence of rural-urban areas should also be a key part of the NPF. However, whether rural parts of Ireland close to urban areas need to be "protected" from development as stated in the issues and choices document seems to contradict this notion. Whilst protection is true for designated historical, cultural and environmental areas that have legislative protection; the links and flows of people, resources, services between urban and rural areas should be explored and promoted where appropriate. Identifying these areas as "separate" may prevent important synergies or development opportunities from being established. The NPF should look to see how urban innovations/ideas can permeate into the rural context and also how rural activities/ideas can attract urban visitors/resources/investment.
- The role of towns and villages can act as a focal point for contributions to rural and national growth through targeted investments and jobs. However, the role of discrete farms with diversified or innovative activities should also be included as centres for supply, employment and growth.
- Solutions for maintaining or increasing populations that have experienced decline should be multi-faceted (economic, social, cultural etc) and diverse across different areas and sectors (agriculture, service provision, infrastructural). The solutions should where possible be evidence-based or seek to glean information on the relative success of an initiative/activity (such as pilot projects).

Yours sincerely



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