Social Enterprise Development Strategy

Údarás na Gaeltachta

Gaeltacht na hÉireann

More than any other rural region in Ireland, the rich history of community development in the Gaeltacht has resulted in it being particularly strong when it comes to social enterprise. While many of the 33 community development organisations under Údarás na Gaeltachta's remit started out with a single purpose, such as developing a public water supply, they have evolved significantly over the past number of years.

These organisations are now strengthening not just their own communities, but the Gaeltacht as a whole, with their strategic aims aligned with Údarás na Gaeltachta's strategy. From Oileán Chléire to Oileán Thóraigh, we find fantastic examples of social entrepreneurship, such as tourism projects, the management of gteic hubs, the implementation of language plans and the development of renewable energy projects. Gaeltacht cooperatives are operating summer colleges, setting up distilleries and teaching music, all for the purpose of making profit that can be re-invested into their Gaeltacht communities.

Social entrepreneurship is a valuable opportunity, in so far as it empowers communities to strengthen themselves, providing additional services, creating jobs and employment, and strengthening the community development organisation itself. This new Strategy aims to further strengthen social entrepreneurship in the Gaeltacht, and Údarás na Gaeltachta looks forward to building on the strong relationship between ourselves and the community development sector, with the aim of achieving our shared goals for the future of the Gaeltacht and the Irish language.

Micheál Ó hÉanaigh,
Chief Executive of Údarás na Gaeltachta

Contents

List of acronyms	
CE	Community Employment
CFS-G	Clár Fiontraíochta Sóisialta na Gaeltachta
CSP	Community Services Programme
DAF	Dormant Accounts Fund
DRCD	Department of Rural and Community Development
ILDN	Irish Local Development Network
LCDC	Local Community Development Committee
LDC	Local Development Company
LECP	Local Economic and Community Plan
LEO	Local Enterprise Office
SICAP	Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme
WISE	Work Integration Social Enterprise

1

Introduction and context

Introduction and context

1.1. Introduction

The National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland 2019–2022 defines social enterprise as:

> A **Social Enterprise** *is an enterprise whose objective is to achieve a social, societal or environmental impact, rather than maximising profit for its owners or shareholders.*
>
> *It pursues its objectives by trading on an ongoing basis through the provision of goods and/or services, and by reinvesting surpluses into achieving social objectives.*
>
> *It is governed in a fully accountable and transparent manner and is independent of the public sector. If dissolved, it should transfer its assets to another organisation with a similar mission.*

This social enterprise strategy for the Gaeltacht has been developed by Údarás na Gaeltachta, with the support of Method Consultants, specialists in social enterprise development.

Údarás na Gaeltachta is the State Development Agency with responsibility for the economic, social and cultural development of Ireland's Gaeltacht regions. The overall objective of Údarás na Gaeltachta is to ensure that Irish remains the main communal language of the Gaeltacht and is passed on to future generations. An tÚdarás endeavours to achieve that objective by funding and fostering a wide range of enterprise development and job creation initiatives and by supporting strategic language, cultural and community-based activities.

Údarás na Gaeltachta's community development strategy aims to empower Gaeltacht communities to optimise and develop their local resources, and to undertake a range of social enterprises. An tÚdarás recognises that economic development, cultural conservation, language enhancement and job creation are intertwined and central to sustainable development and maintenance of viable of Gaeltacht communities. An tÚdarás offers a range of schemes and initiatives to support and enable Gaeltacht communities to play an active role in the economic, social and cultural development of their communities.

The organisation's Community Development Unit works in close partnership and collaboration with 35 community Co-operatives and Community development companies throughout the Gaeltacht which assists them delivering an agreed community development work programme in their area.

Introduction and context

These organisations are central to the implementation of the Údaras na Gaeltachta economic, social and cultural strategy. They are also key players in advancing the social economy in the various Gaeltacht regions. These multi-purpose organisation, and other specific purpose community organisations, are leading on a range of enterprise and social development project in the Gaeltacht.

An tÚdarás provides operational and administration grants to all 35 groups and other supports such as social employment scheme placements and specific project grant supports from time to time (capital grants, training grants etc) if relevant / eligible to. Many of these Co-operatives and Community development companies are involved directly or indirectly in promoting and / or delivering social enterprise projects as part of their work programme. Based on a survey carried out in 2020, there were 93 full-time and 79 part-time employees employed in community co-operative and development organisations which are funded by Údarás.

An tÚdarás also supports a range of Gaeltacht-based community development projects which receive core-funding from POBAL under the Community Service Programme. These projects deliver social enterprise projects in the Gaeltacht as part of their work programme and receive support from An tÚdarás through social employment scheme placements and specific project grant supports (capital grants, training grants etc) if eligible.

An tÚdarás administers a number of social employment schemes which support social enterprise development including:

- Community employment (CE) scheme
- Rural Social Scheme (RSS)
- Tús scheme
- Job Initiative Scheme

The above schemes have a combined total of 1,000 participants across all of the Gaeltacht region.

Údarás provides funding to support pre-school groups, youth clubs, arts and language service centres. It works with the local community structures through the various social employment schemes to enhance the social infrastructure of the Gaeltacht and ensure the provision of services to the elderly.

The Údarás recognises the important role being played by development groups who are responsible for a range of community development projects in their respective areas. For example, these groups have been involved with the development of local services and infrastructure and also projects in sectors such as tourism and enterprise. The Údarás provides various supports to this important sector.

Introduction and context

In Autumn 2019, Údarás prepared a successful application for funding to deliver a social enterprise training and mentoring programme (administered by Pobal and funded under the Dormant Accounts Fund, on behalf of the Department of Rural and Community Development). This programme formed the initial phase of its social enterprise development strategy. It included detailed baseline analysis of the needs of the sector. The training and support programme identified the future needs and potential for social enterprise activity in An Ghaeltacht.

The preparation of this strategy builds on this work, and has been developed as a result of a wide-ranging consultation process with the following stakeholder groups:

- Staff of Údarás na Gaeltachta
- Community Co-operatives, Community Development Companies in receipt of Údarás Operational support
- Social enterprises funded under the Community Service Programme in Gaeltacht areas
- Voluntary Community Development Committees serving Gaeltacht communities.
- Local development companies, enterprise development agencies and local authorities in Gaeltacht areas
- The Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD)

These consultations started during the period of the training and support programme for social enterprise undertaken by Údarás in 2020, and this programme and its findings informed this strategy.

2
Policy context

Policy context

This strategy has been developed in the broad context of and is aligned with local and national policy measures. These are outlined below.

2.1. Údarás na Gaeltachta Strategic plan 2021–2025

The new Údarás na Gaeltachta Strategic Plan 2021-2025 aims to foster and support thriving, sustainable Gaeltacht communities, where Irish is the main community language, with an overarching aim of developing the Gaeltacht as a creative, innovative, and sustainable region. At the heart of the Strategy are three key themes which will underpin the work of the organisation, and which are intrinsic to the approach taken to realise the vision outlined by Údarás. These themes are:

- **Enable:** Providing the opportunities and resources for individuals, for communities and for businesses to develop and progress

- **Strengthen:** Strengthening and supporting the human, linguistic, cultural, economic and community infrastructure in the Gaeltacht

- **Sustain:** Supporting the development of Gaeltacht areas in a way that is sustainable and responsive to the cultural, economic and environmental surroundings in which we live.

Main objectives

Údarás na Gaeltachta has identified two main objectives (and five strategic objectives) which are:

- *Main Language Planning Objective* – Language plans being implemented in 26 language planning areas and 3 Gaeltacht service towns by the end of 2025.

- *Main Employment Objective* – 9,000 people employed in client businesses in the Gaeltacht by the end of 2025.

The **five strategic objectives** are as follows:

1. The Gaeltacht as a place with strong and sustainable language communities
2. To make the Gaeltacht an attractive place for people to live
3. To develop the Gaeltacht as a place where the spirit of entrepreneurship is strongly promoted and entrepreneurs would wish to set up, locate and grow a business
4. To make the Gaeltacht a distinctive, vibrant place that is recognised as appealing in terms of culture, the arts and tourism
5. To develop the Gaeltacht as a place where high quality products, services and experiences are provided and are accessible to the whole Gaeltacht community

The potential for social enterprise to contribute to the above strategic objectives of an tÚdarás is evidenced in the following extracts from the strategic plan. These include the following actions which will deliver the above strategic objectives by:

Policy context

- Focusing on the empowerment of young people to become entrepreneurs and community leaders. This will be done in partnership with schools, Muintearas/Óige na Gaeltachta, youth groups and other stakeholders (*Strategic Objective 1, p. 24*);

- Developing a socioeconomic cornerstone in the Gaeltacht, fostering community development and other organisations, to enhance community services and action through social entrepreneurship, including in areas such as renewable energy, the digital sector and tourism facilities (*Strategic Objective 1, p. 24*);

- Developing a network of leisure facilities, based on natural resources, across the Gaeltacht, in partnership with community development organisations and other stakeholders (*Strategic Objective 2, p. 25*);

- Developing a social entrepreneurship strategy to enable community-based organisations to engage in social/community-based entrepreneurship (*Strategic Objective 3, p. 26*);

- Developing arts and tourism facilities in partnership with community-based and State organisations (*Strategic Objective 4, p. 27*).

Social enterprise is identified as a growth sector in the strategy, which includes the following commitment:

> *We will build on the work of the Community Development Unit, which supports community-based organisations in developing their local areas. Emphasis will be placed on empowering community development organisations in engaging in social enterprise and a Gaeltacht strategy for social entrepreneurship will be published. An tÚdarás has been at the forefront of this sector from the outset, primarily through cooperatives/community development organisations and we will redouble our efforts during the lifetime of this Strategy. We will also work with other stakeholders operating in this sector to ensure that the appropriate supports are available to Gaeltacht communities to foster and enhance their own communities. (p.34)*

In addition, the strategy identifies seven strategic projects will be progressed during the lifetime of the strategy. Some of these are directly relevant to social enterprise development and four are identified below:

- *gteic – Gréasán Digiteach na Gaeltachta:* The establishment of Digital Hubs with 31 innovation and enterprise centres with high-speed broadband connectivity operating throughout the Gaeltacht is a central element of the Strategy.
- *Gaeltacht Ghlas:* a comprehensive programme of initiatives and actions will be undertaken to achieve this objective, leading to a reduction in carbon and promotion of renewable energy projects.

Policy context

- ***Páirc na Mara:*** The construction and marketing of this important, sustainable facility will begin during the period of this strategy which will create opportunities for local entrepreneurs and employees.
- ***Tourism Strategic Projects:*** Tourism projects and products and tourism packages will be developed throughout the Gaeltacht and advertised to the domestic and international markets. Údarás will continue to invest in the Tourism Management Development Scheme to ensure that skilled people are available for this sector. The development of Branda na Gaeltachta is an important element in developing projects in various sectors.

2.2. National Social Enterprise Policy Context

In 2019, the Department of Rural and Community Development published Ireland's first **National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland 2019-2022**. The policy is part of a suite of policy initiatives which will complement the Department's *Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities: A Five-Year Strategy to Support the Community and Voluntary Sector in Ireland 2019-2024*[1] and the *National Volunteering Strategy 2021-2025*[2]. The social enterprise policy is focused on three objectives:

- Building awareness of social enterprise
- Growing and strengthening social enterprise
- Achieving better policy alignment

There is a total of 26 measures under these three objectives. One of the first measures implemented was a social enterprise training and mentoring programme. Údarás na Gaeltachta was one of 14 organisations selected in Ireland to deliver training and mentor to social enterprises.

---

01. This policy was launched in 2019. Its vision is 'to create vibrant, sustainable, inclusive, empowered and self-determining communities that support the social, cultural and economic well-being of all members'. The strategies set out 11 objectives to achieve the plan's ambitions which are to ensure that communities are enabled to build a shared understanding of their own needs; community members are afforded the opportunity to participate in and influence the decisions that affect their communities; Government supports for communities are underpinned by a consideration of societal value and community need; communities are supported by a vibrant and thriving community and voluntary sector and a thriving volunteering culture; and high quality services based on a community-statutory partnership and delivered. **https://assets.gov.ie/26890/ff380490589a4f9ab9cd9bb3f53b5493.pdf**

02. The National Volunteering Strategy 2021 – 2025 sets out a long-term vision for volunteering and volunteers in Ireland. Its purpose is to recognise, support and promote the unique value and contribution of volunteers to Irish society, and comprises five high level objectives and 56 associated actions. The five strategic objectives are 1) To increase participation and diversity in volunteering including embracing new trends and innovation, 2) To facilitate, develop and support the volunteering environment so that it contributes to vibrant and sustainable communities, 3) To recognise, celebrate and communicate the value and impact of volunteers and volunteering in all its forms, 4) To promote ethical and skills-based international volunteering to deliver results for beneficiaries and to enhance Global Citizenship in Ireland, and 5) To improve policy coherence on volunteering across Government both nationally and locally. **https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/3cba6-national-volunteering-strategy/**

Policy context

The national policy specifies the following forms of social enterprise:

- Work Integration Social Enterprises (WISEs), which support disadvantaged people to prepare for, and participate in, the labour market.
- Enterprise Development social enterprises which support the creation of other enterprises (e.g. through the provision of office space and facilities).
- 'Deficient Demand' social enterprises which seek to meet a demand for goods and services within a community where there is insufficient demand for the operation of a regular market due to inherent economic and social disadvantage or low density of population.
- Environmental social enterprises which focus on environmental sustainability.
- Social enterprises contracted with the public sector to deliver public services in disadvantaged areas and communities.

The national policy is complemented by policies such as **Our Rural Future**, Ireland's rural development plan 2021-2025. This acknowledges the role of social enterprises in rural economies, and their capacity to fill gaps in markets that are not attractive to commercially focused companies. Action 30 in the plan is 'deliver a suite of new measures to support the development of Social Enterprises in rural areas to increase their social, economic and environmental impact and contribute to job creation locally'. It also commits to 'expand the use of socially responsible public procurement contracts, where feasible, which will incentivise the engagement of social enterprises and circular economy organisations.

Other national policy developments of relevance include **Working to Change – social enterprise and employment strategy 2021–2023**, launched by The Probation Service and Irish Prison Service (IPS) in November 2020. This aims to increase employment opportunities for people with criminal convictions. It includes a KickStart fund to support social enterprise development. Under this strategy, the Department of Justice also commits to introducing Socially Responsible Public Procurement clauses in contracts.[3]

The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (**SICAP**) is a key intervention for disadvantaged communities, offering supports to both individuals and local community groups, and which has a social enterprise support function. There are 14 SICAP implementers in the Gaeltacht.[4]

03. There is a dedicated website associated with the strategy: https://www.workingtochange.ie/

04. These are Comhar na nOileán Teoranta, Forum Connemara Limited; Galway City Partnership Limited and Galway Rural Development Company Limited (all in Galway); Donegal Local Development Company Limited and Inishowen Development Partnership (both in Donegal); IRD Duhallow Limited, West Cork Development Partnership Limited (both in Cork); Mayo North East Leader Partnership Company, South West Mayo Development Company Limited (both Mayo); Meath Community Rural and Social Development Partnership Limited; South Kerry Development Partnership Limited; and Waterford Leader Partnership Limited.

Policy context

The recent **Climate Action Plan** and the **Renewable Electricity Support Scheme** includes specific community provisions of relevance to social enterprises. The SEAI provides a range of supports in this sector including the development of Sustainable Energy Communities. Ireland's **Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy** aims to shift the focus away from waste disposal and intends to preserve resources by creating a circular economy. The government intends to draft an All of Government Circular Economy Strategy in 2021. A recent study by the European Environment Bureau (EEB) suggests that 180,000 jobs could be created in Europe in the re-use sector by 2030.[5]

2.3. European policy context

The European Commission's **The Social Business Initiative** (2011) has been among the EU's most significant initiatives supporting social enterprise and social innovation in recent years. This recognised the contribution of social enterprise to inclusion, sustainability, and social innovation, while also acknowledging barriers faced by the sector. Support measures included micro-finance and supports to access public procurement opportunities.

In 2016, the revised **Public Procurement Directive** (2014/24/EU) was transposed into Irish law. It enhances social procurement provisions (e.g., reserved contracts, smaller contract 'lots', and clarity around including social considerations in award criteria). The potential of public contracts[6] as a driver of economic development is significant, as public authorities' expenditure accounts for an estimated 16% of GDP.[7] Subsequent policy measures noted above (Working to Change, and Our Rural Future outlined above) include commitments to support social procurement. **The National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland** includes actions to support capacity-building for social enterprises in relation to procurement processes through workshops and training (Action 16); commitments to work with stakeholders to identify how to improve opportunities for social enterprises in the business-to-business supply-chain and in public procurement (Action 17); and through the Social Considerations Advisory Group,[8] commits to help policy makers to better understand how procurement can be used to facilitate the advancement of social policy objectives within appropriate and structured public procurement guidelines (Action 18).

---

05. 'Circular Economy', *European Environment Bureau*, **www.eeb.org/work-areas/resource-efficiency/circular-economy/**

06. The acquisition of goods and services by the State, usually by means of a contractual arrangement after publication competition.

07. Lalor, T. (2012) 'Procurement and social enterprise', in Doyle, G. & Lalor, T. Eds. (2012) *Social Enterprise in Ireland: A People's Economy?* Cork: Oak Tree Press.

08. Established by the Office of Government Procurement (OGP)

Policy context

2.4. Support context for social enterprises

Table 2.1 below provides an overview of some existing supports for social enterprise. Údarás intersects with these supports in all its geographic areas[9].

Table 2.1 Examples of supports for social enterprise in Ireland	
Category	**Example**
Staff and labour market supports	The Community Services Programme (CSP), is administered by Pobal on behalf of the Department of Rural and Community Development. The aim of the CSP is to support community organisations to provide local social, economic, and environmental services.[10] It is a dedicated support for social enterprises and provides employment grants to approximately 400 community organisations in Ireland. Labour market programmes operated by the Department of Social Protection (DSP) offer part-time placements to those who are long-term unemployed or underemployed (farmers and fishermen/women) in rural areas with community initiatives. These are the Community Employment (CE) programme, which also provides supervisor grants, materials grants and training grants; Rural Social Scheme (RSS) and Tus (the latter two being implemented by local development companies). There are 23 social enterprises accessing CSP funding in the Gaeltacht area.
LEADER and other capital funding	LEADER programme funding[11]. The LEADER programme provides a combination of capital supports, training, and other supports. LEADER funding is open to community groups interested in developing social enterprises, and it funds such initiatives in the areas of tourism, renewable energy, crafts and artisan food production, and services for hard-to-reach communities. Funding of up to 75% is available for eligible projects such as as capital projects and other supports (to a maximum level of €200,000, or where a community group has no economic activity €500,000), and training programmes are eligible. Other programmes in rural areas include the Town and Village Renewal fund, the Rural Regeneration Fund and CLÁR). In addition, loan finance from dedicated social finance institutions such as Clann Credo, Western Development Commission and Community Finance Ireland provide an important enabling role for social enterprise development.

---

09. Additional supports can be included in here such as support for Green Enterprises and the Circular Economy provided by the EPA.

10. https://www.pobal.ie/FundingProgrammes/ CommunityServicesProgramme/Pages/CSP-FAQs.aspx

11. The LEADER transitional programme (2021-2022) will be followed by a new LEADER programme (2023-2027). There is some discussion on changes to the funding model for LEADER that might present significant potential for larger scale social enterprise initiatives.

Policy context

Table 2.1 Examples of supports for social enterprise in Ireland	
Category	**Example**
DRCD capital supports	The DRCD provide various supports to the social enterprise sector. For example, in February 2021, a COVID-19 Social Enterprise Regeneration Programme was announced. Through the DAF, the scheme provided grants for LDCs to provide training and mentoring to social enterprises with a focus on strategic planning, digital innovation, capacity building and governance. The DRCD has also established (and continues to establish) capital grants schemes for social enterprises, funded by the Dormant Accounts Fund, for equipment, repairs or refurbishments. Social enterprises can also avail of other capital grants schemes if they are relevant to their area of activity (for example, capital grants relating to community facilities).
Local Development Companies (SICAP and Social Enterprise Regeneration programme)	The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) is a key intervention for disadvantaged communities, offering supports to both individuals and local community groups, and which has a social enterprise support function. There are 14 SICAP implementers operating in Gaeltacht areas.[12]
Rethink Ireland: Supports to expand and develop social enterprises	Rethink Ireland manages the Social Enterprise Development Fund, which is a €3.2 million Fund being delivered from 2018–2022. The fund was created by Rethink Ireland in partnership with Local Authorities Ireland and funded by IPB Insurance and the Department of Rural and Community Development through the Dormant Accounts Fund. 40 beneficiaries of the award have been announced, Fand funding includes cash grants, business support, and strategic support for social enterprises to help expand their impact.
KickStart programme	The KickStart funding is an initiative of the IPS and Probation Service (and funded under the Dormant Accounts Fund). An additional €1.5 million to support social enterprise development and employment measures was announced in 2020. In 2021, the Department of Justice launched its Working to Change: Social Enterprise and Employment Strategy 2021 – 2023. The Probation Service, in collaboration with the Irish Prison Service, invited applications from social enterprises in Ireland for Round 3 of its KickStart fund to support implementation of the strategy. Funding has been provided for feasibility studies and market research as well as for job creation.

12. These are Comhar na nOileán Teoranta, Forum Connemara Limited; Galway City Partnership Limited and Galway Rural Development Company Limited (all in Galway); Donegal Local Development Company Limited (in Donegal); IRD Duhallow Limited, West Cork Development Partnership Limited (both in Cork); Mayo North East Leader Partnership Company, South West Mayo Development Company Limited (both Mayo); Meath Community Rural and Social Development Partnership Limited; South Kerry Development Partnership Limited; and Waterford Leader Partnership Limited.

Policy context

Table 2.1 Examples of supports for social enterprise in Ireland	
Category	**Example**
Training and mentor support for social enterprises	Under the National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland 2019-2022, the Department of Rural and Community Development established a training and mentoring programme for social enterprises in 2019 and subsequently in 2021. This was administered by Pobal (funded under the Dormant Account Fund) and 14 programmes were established throughout Ireland. The CFS-G programme, operated by Údarás was one of the 14 initiatives funded throughout Ireland under the first strand, and provided training and mentor support to 35 trading and 19 start-up social enterprises and 96 individuals during 2020.
Supports for community energy production	The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) provides funding to community organisations to reduce the reliance of their communities on fossil fuels, as part of the Sustainable Energy Community programme. It is funding a network of over 130 communities around Ireland who are pursuing community energy production. One organisation in the Aran Islands (The Aran Islands Energy Co-op / Comharchumann Fuinnimh Oileáin Árann) has received funding and support under this programme.
Other sectoral supports	There are sector specific funding programmes which would be accessed by some social enterprises. For example, programmes for childcare are accessed by social enterprises as well as mainstream enterprises (for example, the Community Childcare Subvention (CCS) Programme targeting disadvantaged parents and parents in training, education or low-paid employment and the universal Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE)). Childcare is one of the most significant sectors that social enterprise activity operates in. B.I.M. administer and manage a community led local development initiative for fisheries and aquaculture communities (FLAGS). The support programme is focused on promoting innovative approaches to create growth and jobs in designated coastal areas. The overall objective of the programme is to promote economic, environmental and social sustainability in coastal areas and to maintain and improve employment prospects. Local Authorities offer a number of supports, including training and capital funding programmes, aimed at community development groups.
'Networks	▪ The Irish Social Enterprise Network aims to enhance the visibility of social enterprise in Ireland (**www.socent.ie**). ▪ The Social Enterprise Republic of Ireland (SERI) is the newest social enterprise network, formed in 2020 to promote the concept of social enterprise in Ireland (**www.socialenterprise.ie**). ▪ The ILDN (Irish Local Development Network) is the representative body for local development companies in Ireland. It delivers a social enterprise specific programme (outlined above) **https://ildn.ie/** ▪ The Community Resources Network Ireland (CRNI) is the all-island representative community-based body for community-based re-use, recycling and waste prevention organisations (**https://crni.ie/**). ▪ The Community Enterprise Association of Ireland (CEAI) is a network of 120 community enterprise centres in the Republic of Ireland. Its primary role is to support and develop the interests of community enterprise centres on a national basis (**https://communityenterprise.ie/**)

3

Findings of the consultation process

Findings of the consultation process

The preparation of the Strategy involved a wide consultation with stakeholders outlined on page 8 of the strategy. The findings of the consultation progress is also based on the results of a questionnaire that was circulated to relevant stakeholders, such as the network of development groups supported by the Údarás. The consultation process findings are grouped according to a number of themes, which are summarised in this section.

3.1. Opportunities for social enterprise development

Social enterprise opportunities identified in the research arise from the following:

- Gaps and needs in service provision in rural Gaeltacht communities
- Enterprise opportunities with employment or labour market opportunities
- Infrastructure / enabling social enterprises including those that relate to policy priorities (enterprise development, remote working and tourism infrastructure)
- Environmental opportunities, including those that relate directly to policy priorities (e.g. the circular economy, renewable energy, diverting waste from landfill).

These opportunities are generally not commercial and so do not present a risk of displacement. With a combination of voluntary labour (e.g., voluntary committee or board members), in-kind supports and some subsidies (e.g., labour market programmes) the social enterprise ideas could achieve viability and deliver important benefits to Gaeltacht communities.

The opportunities as identified in the research process are classed according to the national social enterprise policy classifications of social enterprise.

Findings of the consultation process

Table 4.1 Social enterprise opportunities based on classifications of social enterprise	
Classifications	**Examples identified**
Work Integration Social Enterprises (WISEs), which prioritise employment / labour market opportunities	▪ Manufacturing (new uses for wool including bioplastics industry, insulation and fashion) ▪ Marine-based and aqua-culture (seaweed harvesting,, drying and processing, compost replacement, nutraceuticals and pharmaceuticals, native oyster restoration) ▪ Local upskilling and training programmes to access jobs and to develop local capacity in aquaculture and marine businesses ▪ Specific sectors, such as mariculture and renewable energy initiatives, offers potential to provide services to the development such as security, transport and employment support services, childcare, catering, cleaning etc. ▪ Mariculture
Enterprise development social enterprises that support the creation of other enterprises (e.g. office space and facilities)	▪ Tourism infrastructure to attract visitors ,cultural and marine-based tourism,[13] ▪ Community space (remote working, digital hubs, 3D printing, social enterprise development space) ▪ Festivals, cultural and arts-based social enterprises ▪ Asset transfer initiatives (community property and community space) ▪ Shared services social enterprise[14]
'Deficient Demand' social enterprises focused on service provision in areas of market failure and no private sector provision	▪ Community cafes for social outlets ▪ Community shops and health centres ▪ Childcare provision ▪ Replacement, community takeover of underused assets such as local pubs, public buildings and public space. ▪ Community transport initiative ▪ Home care services and repair services with housing related activities
Environmental social enterprises which focus on environmental sustainability	▪ Circular economy activities – 3R repair, reuse & recycle (furniture restoration, recycling, textile upcycling, repair of bicycles and other products, diverting waste from landfill) ▪ Renewable energy initiatives
Promotion of Sustainable Agriculture Techniques	▪ Biomass Projects ▪ Horticulture ▪ Biodiversity
Cultural and Language Resource Development	▪ Irish Language Colleges ▪ Art and Cultural Centres ▪ Life Long Learning

---

13. Including facilities such as showers, community café, local transport, maintenance and signage. Incubator units, community owned tourism accommodation. Examples of community owned accommodation include Sliabh Beag hotel in Knockatallon, Co Monaghan and Ballymacarbry community centre and hostel in Co Waterford.

14. This is based on the prevalence of small social enterprises that duplicate effort in terms of administration, HR, payroll, compliance and other administration and operational management issues. A cooperative model could be adopted to provide services on a collective basis for social enterprises on a subscription basis. Models such as Crann Support Group and Voluntary Housing Support Services could be considered.

Findings of the consultation process

3.2.   Challenges

Challenges are considered in terms of challenges faced by existing social enterprises, as well as challenges affecting the development of the sector as a whole in the Gaeltacht area.

- Lack of awareness of social enterprise: there can be limited (or sometimes conflicting) understanding of the concept of social enterprise and the potential contribution it can make to local economic development was highlighted – and an absence of this clarity was believed to limit the development of the sector.[15]

- The lack of time, staff and other resources to bring a social enterprise to fruition and then to manage it was noted as a significant challenge by some social enterprises. Sustainable social enterprises (delivering services within their community) in the Gaeltacht typically engage in multiple activities. Ongoing development presents further challenges given inadequate resources.

- The first three years are crucial for any enterprise development, and particularly so for social enterprises which may be operating in new markets. Start-up financial and operational support during this period is required.

- Long-term funding is an issue for existing initiatives, as few have multi-annual funding (most plans are based on yearly applications for funding and funding from different sources). This is a drain on resources.

- A lack of operational funding was a noted challenge. On the one hand, while this indicates that social enterprises experiencing this challenge are simply not viable in the first place, it was also believed to indicate a lack of state commitment to fund essential services, and that this should be challenged. A comparison was made between different expectations that some stage agencies have of community organisations compared with private sector service providers, whereby community providers are not adequately funded for the delivery of services which are in the state's remit. This points to an advocacy role with the HSE and others.

---

15. This has also been found in other Irish research. For example, Hynes, B (2016) *Creating an Enabling Supportive Environment for the social Enterprise Sector in Ireland*. Report commissioned by Irish Local Development Network identified the need to increase awareness of social enterprise in Ireland.

Findings of the consultation process

- The lack of funding was a theme noted by some in relation to specific sectoral areas and by specific agencies and greater availability of CSP funding. In other cases, while the availability of capital funding was noted, groups in the Gaeltacht can 'fall between two stools', and that some development agencies – while having a remit in the Gaeltacht – can refer groups to Údarás for supports. However, the main gap was noted to be in technical support for start-up and operational funding.

- Difficulties in accessing new members of governance structures was noted by social enterprises as well as by development workers. This has implications for managers of community organisations, whose remit is widened to take on all functions, including governance compliance, and some noted may be at risk of burnout.

- Opportunities for social enterprise activity may not be matched by capacity or resources on the ground, or the presence of a group to pursue opportunities.

3.3. The support infrastructure required for social enterprise development

The type of supports that are required by social enterprises will vary according to the capacity of the communities or the social enterprises that are being developed or promoted. Research has found that community activists and community leadership are important stimuli for developing social enterprises.[16] In a Gaeltacht context, community capacity and social enterprise opportunity can vary depending on such factors as location, community resources and population.

In terms of the implications of this issue, a number of actions could be pursued:

- Generating an interest in – and awareness of – social enterprise opportunities through training, awareness raising and publicity measures among the "*movers and shakers*" in communities, and among community organisations. While it is acknowledged that the rural feature of low population in Gaeltacht areas can limit access to volunteers and leaders, the view was expressed that '*there are loads of young people and we need to look at a way to engage the young people*'.

- Supporting existing governance structures to upskill and meet compliance requirements. For example, developing a compliance checklist was recommended to establish the extent to which groups are not meeting good governance compliance as a starting point.

16. Cooper (2005). Amin, Cameron, and Hudson (2002)

Findings of the consultation process

- Explore how social enterprises could collaborate (including strategies to recruit and engage volunteers on governance structures) or even merge structures (e.g. through developing holding companies), to avoid local duplication of governance requirements. In this respect, the point was made that social enterprises will often achieve viability through multiple services and activities, some of which would not be viable on their own, but taken together can cross-subsidise less viable activities – this has implications for development as it indicates the need for continuous development which is a challenge.

- A social enterprise support infrastructure needs to provide direct and hands-on technical support to groups, and work with others to ensure that good practices are replicated and that learning is transferred, not only in terms of viable social enterprise activities, but in terms of organisational practices. Such a support function would need to extend beyond simply advising start-up social enterprises but would need to be prepared to take on developmental functions with start-up supports, for a period of time. In terms of managers of existing community co-operatives, a common point made with respect to forming new social enterprises was the need for additional people to undertake developmental work: This shall be explored by Údarás na Gaeltachta, possibly in collaboration with other agencies.

3.4.   The existing support infrastructure

Supports here include financial and 'soft' supports such as mentor and training support, as well as support from labour market schemes.

- Údarás na Gaeltachta provides a range of financial and other supports for the community /social enterprise sector in the Gaeltacht regions. A dedicated Community Development Support Unit has been established in Údarás and supports are also provided through the Údarás na Gaeltachta Regional Offices and other sections of the organisation as required. Údarás provides administration funding directly to a network of 35 Community Development organisations throughout the Gaeltacht areas and works closely with these organisations in preparing and implementing area development plans. These organisations can also avail of a range of other Údarás grants such as Feasibility Grants, Social Enterprise Small Grants Scheme, Employment grants, Mentoring programmes, Training and consultancy programmes etc. This sector can also avail of supports from other agencies and network of E.U. programmes as appropriate. **https://udaras.ie/en/ business/how-we-help/grants/**

- Údarás na Gaeltachta operates as a member of a number of European networks. These include ERNACT and the Assembly of European Regions (A.E.R.). Community groups involved take part in networks and collaborative projects.

Findings of the consultation process

- Labour market schemes represent a major form of support for social enterprise whose staffing costs are primarily met by either CE, CSP, Tús or other programmes, in addition to Údarás-funded grants. There are a number of CSP-funded social enterprises in the Gaeltacht, most notably in Donegal and Galway.

- The agencies most involved in social enterprise development tended to be local development companies, and those who were implementing LEADER and SICAP programmes. LEADER programmes covering Gaeltacht areas have played an important role in funding community and social enterprise projects. SICAP tended to take the form of support and training, for example, in preparation of funding applications, business planning, etc. Some local development companies have played an incubator and initiator role for social enterprise, and this has tended to be an important role undertaken where there is a local opportunity or need, but an absence of community volunteers or groups to take up this role.

- Technical and research support is offered by academic institutions, such as University College Cork (UCC). The university also expressed a commitment for increased collaboration, which is referenced in their strategic plan. Another social enterprise initiative worked closely with GMIT in its Letterfrack facility, providing catering services in this site. This relationship acknowledges the diversity of support and roles of institutions in social enterprise development, which includes technical support and advice, but also service and procurement relationships, including concession agreements for the operation of catering and other facilities.

- B.I.M. administer and manage a community led local development initiative for fisheries and aquaculture communities (FLAGS). The overall objective of the programme is to promote economic, environmental and social sustainability in coastal areas and to maintain and improve employment prospects.

- Local Authorities offer a number of supports, including training and funding programmes, aimed at community development groups.

Nonetheless there was an acknowledgement of the gaps in support experienced by social enterprises, and their support requirements, which are discussed below.

Findings of the consultation process

3.5. Specific support requirements of social enterprises

Because of their mission, and a range of specific barriers that they encounter, social enterprises require a different type of support structure to private enterprises (Daly, Doyle, and Lalor, 2012). At the same time, the social enterprise sector is diverse in need and activity, and a 'one-size-fits-all' approach should be avoided. Some of the key themes and support requirements are highlighted below.

The need for developmental and close project supports

- Technical support from developmental staff through 'hands-on' type support is a theme arising in discussions with social enterprises as well as other stakeholders. This type of support would need to be in place prior to trading and for the first crucial three-year period but tapered off during this period. This type of support is time-consuming and can be resource intensive. It may become particularly intensive in the period of pre-trading, when the social enterprise may yet to employ its own staff.[17]

- Social enterprises to be supported should include those which have a strategic importance (e.g. renewable energy as an important sector for An Gaeltacht), but should also include a mix of social enterprises to include high risk ventures, as long as they have the potential to achieve high social impact.[18]

Other supports required by start-up and trading social enterprises

- The management of community buildings (e.g., advice around reducing energy costs and overheads, planning services to meet community needs, and pricing policies).
- Advice regarding employment and human resource management.
- 'Creativity workshops' to assist the identification of new social enterprise activities.
- The deployment of renewable energy technology in their buildings.
- Business planning.
- The development of a social media presence.
- Developing and implementing a marketing campaign.
- How to measure impact through ongoing or periodic methods.

---

17. This will require supports in ideas generation, business development, legal structures, training, and capacity building, brokerage, and negotiation, and set up of the necessary financial and management infrastructure.

18. Social enterprises typically test new and innovative approaches to existing problems – and often can fall outside of (and challenge) traditional concepts of viability and feasibility.

Findings of the consultation process

Build awareness among potential social enterprise promoters

- A theme in the consultations and one which is consistent with the Údarás strategic plan is the need to engage young people in social enterprise development, in terms of new project promoters and participants (volunteers) in existing projects.

- The need for an awareness raising programme for people living in the Gaeltacht (as well as staff working in support organisations) to enhance understanding and appreciation of the potential of social enterprises to contribute to Gaeltacht communities' sustainability. This could include young people.

- Ensuring that existing community leaders are supported in the development of social enterprises through the technical supports identified above.

- Networking activities should be supported, as well as links with social enterprises in other areas, for example rural communities in Scotland.

Collaboration and limiting duplication of effort

Shared-service type delivery: a social enterprise could be formed to provide generic administration, management[19] and training services to social enterprises (regardless of the operational activity). This function would be relevant to trading social enterprises (as well as other community organisations) given their small size and relatively complex operational requirements (for example, given the high numbers of personnel and placement staff based in their services).

The point was made that social enterprises that are most likely to succeed are those that provide multiple services, or continuously develop new ones. This implies that single activity social enterprises would probably be more sustainable if they came together under one single operational or governance structure.

Regional approach to delivery

The importance of a regional approach was noted to avoid a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. A collaborative social enterprise strategy for each Gaeltacht area or county was suggested. This would include working with local development structures to harness the social enterprise potential (at community and agency level) to identify priorities, opportunities and resources to develop a thriving social enterprise sector.

---

19. Including book-keeping, payroll, human resources and employment advice, support around implementing policies and procedures, support around health and safety, etc.

Findings of the consultation process

Development of alliances and leveraging support

Údarás na Gaeltachta is in a unique position to identify the potential for leveraging private sector support for social enterprises through its client base of 400 domestic and multinational companies employing 7,000 people in the Gaeltacht areas.

The supports that can be available via these companies could include technical and business development support; contracting support; ideas generation and a scoping exercise with these organisations to determine opportunities and business relationships with social enterprises (including concept development) should be undertaken.

In addition, there is significant interest from local authorities consulted in engaging in social enterprise development. Údarás could play a role in seeking out opportunities and champions within the public sector for social enterprise activity – in areas of contracting and advancing social enterprise activity as a mechanism for advancing public policy obligations (e.g., circular economy measures).

Identifying social enterprise potential in activities close to the market

There may be opportunities that are specific to social enterprise, particularly in those areas which are being promoted by Údarás – these include marine, tourism, renewable energy, and other enterprise spaces. These may be social enterprise opportunities in the spaces where enterprises cannot quite reach commercial viability but which could be viable with some small subsidy, and which could generate significant social impacts. Social enterprises typically generate viability through either in-kind contributions or grants (volunteerism, expertise, capital grants, labour market supports or access to land or space at no cost, etc), and thus reducing the reliance on traded income as the sole source of income.

The consultation process within Údarás has indicated an interest and expertise among Údarás staff to identity potential market-oriented concepts suitable as social enterprises, which could provide employment or economic development opportunities, but which would not compete with the private sector or displace jobs. An ideas generation role for Údarás in identifying a range of concepts would build on its existing function and enterprise expertise.

In these instances, there needs to be a group or promoters who will drive the social enterprise. A question for this strategy is who will undertake this role, if existing community organisations are stretched in their own capacity, or do not have the appetite to develop new social enterprise activities?

Findings of the consultation process

3.6. Strengths, weaknesses, challenges and threats

Table 4.2 SWOT analysis	
Strengths	**Challenges**
- Strong community organisations and strong community infrastructure - Strong interest and opportunities in environment-related social enterprise - Commitment of community leaders and social enterprise promoters - Commitment of Údarás na Gaeltachta in supporting social enterprise development - Attractive landscape which provides opportunities for tourism	- Poor broadband connectivity in parts of the Gaeltacht - Limited operational funding for social enterprises and need for staffing support (to develop new social enterprises) - Lack of dedicated supports for social enterprises to support their initiation and development - Small-scale social enterprise activity with limited traded income potential - Duplication of effort and drain on resources for small-scale social enterprises around compliance, administration and operational requirements - Limited number of CSP initiatives in parts of the Gaeltacht - Lack of community infrastructure and leadership in some areas (resulting in limited social enterprise activity in these areas)
Opportunities	**Threats**
- Very strong and favourable local, regional and national policy context (re social enterprise and circular economy/renewables) - Funding available to improve capacity of communities - Potential for renewable energy initiatives supported by physical landscape and policy measures - Positive disposition of local agencies, including Education and Training Boards, local development companies, LEO, and others towards collaboration for social enterprise support - Potential for collaboration among social enterprises (in operational/administrative functions) - Post-Covid remote working could increase population in Gaeltacht areas - Tourism potential could provide social enterprise opportunities	- Reliance of social enterprises on short-term funding and labour market programmes impacting on sustainability - Lack of volunteers and lack of succession planning could undermine social enterprise effectiveness - Compliance and regulatory burden could undermine engagement of volunteers - Limited resources in social enterprises could undermine compliance with governance - Increased costs impacting on financial sustainability of social enterprises - Risk that the issue of potential displacement could arise for social enterprises with funders

Findings of the consultation process

3.7. Conclusions

The issues identified above present implications for Údarás in developing a social enterprise strategy. These include:

- Údarás role required in delivering 'close project support', coordinating a range of supports (feasibility, capital, soft supports), animating/ awareness raising as well as driving the development (if necessary) of new social enterprises.

- Additional core funding required for developing social enterprise concepts and business start-ups.

- Existing groups are limited in the extent that they undertake strategic / business planning and will need support in this respect. This was identified in the survey and also in the consultation process.

- A lack of sufficient operational funding and staff is a barrier to social enterprise development in existing organisations. Those organisations that have an interest in social enterprise development commonly referred to the fact that they do not need advice on how to progress enterprises, but the staff and developmental resources to do the work. Others note the need for specific technical advice to progress plans. Those community initiatives that have progressed social enterprises within existing resources report being close to burnout. This has been exacerbated by Covid.

- While agencies have mixed involvement in social enterprise, there is an interest in supporting social enterprise and collaboration (e.g. mentoring, training). A number of LEOs stated that they were interested in engaging with Údarás in terms of the strategy, and could offer soft supports such as training, etc. However, they are limited in terms of the funding that they can provide.

- In terms of funding gaps, it was asserted that gaps lay in operational staffing and funding. The Community Service Programme is identified as an important operational revenue source and additional support under this programme would be of major benefit to the social enterprise sector in the Gaeltacht.

4

Strategic action plan

Strategic action plan

The research and consultation process find that the support needs of social enterprises are varied, complex and differ significantly from private sector needs.

Social enterprises typically arise from social needs or social objectives, promoters of social enterprises may not necessarily have the experience in enterprise or project development. At the same time, achieving viability for social enterprises often involves a combination of trading, levering additional resources, using voluntary effort, and acquiring support through alliances, and state-funding. This means that achieving sustainability requires creativity, commitment, and resources.

As a result, the support requirements for social enterprises are complex – they usually include enterprise development with community development (involving group work, leadership skills, advocacy and negotiation). Community needs are also varied, and while an area-based approach to this strategic is recommended, to ensure collaboration and partnership between community and state sectors, this should be undertaken on a regional basis.

4.1.   Key assumptions

- Social enterprises emerge from community need, not necessarily sectoral knowledge

- While social enterprises may occasionally emerge from market opportunities, they tend to be viable on the basis of traded income plus some subsidy or grant support

- Social enterprise opportunities may be specific to areas where there may not be groups available to progress opportunities at initial stages

- Expertise required by the social enterprise may not be available locally

- Social enterprise is not a panacea for community needs – not all community needs can be met by a social enterprise approach

- Social enterprises involve risk, but can also provide significant social return and social impact

- Social enterprise supported should be based on a clear community benefit.
  These can be service related, employment related, or environment or economic.

Strategic action plan

4.2.   Strategic objectives

The strategic objectives below are aligned to the three national social enterprise policy objectives which are 1) building awareness of social enterprise, 2) growing and strengthening social enterprises, and 3) achieving better policy alignment.

National social enterprise policy – Objective 1 –
BUILDING AWARENESS OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Údarás is uniquely positioned to engage a wide range of stakeholders, internally and externally, in raising awareness of the potential and benefit of social enterprises. Its role would be to coordinate and initiate the following actions, with the support of a partners from all sectors (these are outlined below).

Objective 1 Raise awareness of the potential of social enterprise within Údarás and other state agencies			
Action	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
▪ Provide briefing sessions and workshops with key Údarás personnel and staff on the relevance of social enterprise to the Údarás strategy	●	●	
▪ Engage Údarás staff across all departments and roles in the implementation and delivery of this strategic plan (to include ideas generation, etc)	●	●	
▪ Provide opportunities for Údarás staff to avail of accredited and non-accredited training courses in social enterprise development.[20]	●	●	
▪ Subject to the availability of resources, Údarás should seek to influence and contribute to national policy and practice on social enterprise, through publishing position papers, undertaking sectoral analysis, and contributing to national structures.	●	●	●

[20]. For example, Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin) is developing online accredited and non-accredited courses in social enterprise development due to start in Autumn 2021. The training will be designed for social enterprise promoters and staff of local development companies and state agencies.

Strategic action plan

Objective 2 Engage community members including young people in social enterprise development			
Action	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**
▪ Explore the potential for youth actions undertaken as part of the Údarás strategic plan to include social enterprise elements		●	
▪ Explore the potential for community members (including young people) to access training on social enterprise development through sponsorship of fees.[21]		●	●
▪ Engage with organisations who have developed tools for schools and youth groups around social enterprise development and adapt these for the Gaeltacht[22]	●	●	
▪ Engage with youth projects and services (including schools) to develop initiatives and programmes around social enterprise actions (including awards)		●	●

Objective 3 Showcase and promote the work of Údarás and Gaeltacht social enterprises			
Action	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**
▪ Develop a suite of case studies highlighting examples of good practice social enterprises in An Ghaeltacht for wide dissemination both inside and outside of the Gaeltacht.	●	●	
▪ Develop an awareness-raising plan for state agencies who have limited exposure and understanding of social enterprise.	●	●	
▪ Promote social enterprise activity in the Gaeltacht through hosting social enterprise summer schools and cultural festival targeting a Gaeltacht and national audience, possibly in collaboration with other relevant agencies.			●
▪ Provide information regularly to Gaeltacht development groups on supports available to the social enterprise sector from other agencies	●	●	●

Objective 4 Establish a social enterprise award for the Gaeltacht			
Action	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**
▪ Develop a social enterprise award which would include financial and other awards and engage the community/voluntary, corporate, state and third level sectors in its development and delivery. Include an award category for young social enterprise promoters.		●	●

---

21. For example, through sponsoring the fees of training and education institutions.

22. For example, the Society of Cooperative Studies in Ireland are developing a schools' toolkit to promote co-operatives, and Foroige are developing materials and resources around social enterprise for youth groups.

23. For example, awards could also include access to technical and pro-bono supports from corporate sector sponsors

Strategic action plan

National social enterprise policy – objective 2
GROWING AND STRENGTHENING SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

Objective 5 Develop a tailored area-based approach to implementing this strategy through working with partners in the Gaeltacht regions and through developing local plans			
Action	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
▪ Develop local support priorities and partnerships in each of the Gaeltacht regions, including tailoring the objectives and actions of this strategic plan to local Gaeltacht needs. This would include: ● Forming partnerships with community cooperatives and groups, local authorities (including LEOs), local development agencies, state bodies, education institutions and others	●	●	
● Agree local **social enterprise development strategies** which would be based on meeting gaps in support, developing priority social enterprise concepts (based on community need), leveraging additional supports and adding value to existing supports.		●	

Strategic action plan

Objective 6 Provide dedicated supports to social enterprises and establish Údarás as a centre of excellence for social enterprise development in the Gaeltacht			
Action	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**
▪ Develop a social economy enterprise support programme for existing and start-up social enterprises, using a 'close project support' methodology that meet criteria for inclusion.[24]		●	
▪ Assign Údarás staff members to undertake the role of social enterprise advisers who would deliver close project and technical supports in each of the seven regions, to social enterprises that meet local priorities for the regions.[25]	●	●	
▪ Roll-out the delivery of a support programme in each of the three Gaeltacht regions (Connacht/Leinster, Munster and Donegal) to social enterprises (from idea stage) to include concept development, feasibility and business planning, funding applications, group development, training support, legal incorporation, board development and governance support, and updates on funding opportunities.		●	●
▪ The support programme should also deliver on other strategic objectives (research, case examples, building alliances, training, exploring collaborative models, facilitating networking, awareness-raising, policy work etc), subject to resources.		●	●
▪ Support each of the regional support centres and staff members to gain insight into specific topics of importance, to become centres of excellence, and promote transfer of this learning across all seven regions.[26]		●	●
▪ Adopt a close project support function and lead the development for selected social enterprise concepts (which have the potential for high social impact, can contribute to strategic objectives, and are likely to be demonstration projects[27]) where no group of promoters is in place and support a group or community organisation to form governance structures.		●	●
▪ Assign a budget for social enterprise start-ups and existing social enterprises. Also feasibility study analysis for key social enterprises (e.g. renewable energy, digital hubs, manufacturing and market-led social enterprises, etc), business plans, training and mentor support. Explore the possibility of partnering with other development agencies.	●	●	●

24. Criteria for inclusion of social enterprises for support could include 1) targeting of disadvantage and isolated communities in the Gaeltacht, 2) meeting a community need and priority (in the areas of service provision, creation of employment, and the potential to achieve an environmental impact) and 3) can achieve long-term viability (through a combination of trading income and grant or subsidy).

25. For example, these Údarás staff members may be development executives or may be additional staff members that need to be recruited. At least one staff member in each region would be dedicated to working with social enterprises.

26. For example, each region could develop expertise in specific areas including 1) social enterprise opportunities arising from emerging government policy (e.g. climate action); 2) EU Networks and EU project opportunities; 3) development of cross-sectoral and cross-border partnerships including philanthropy and private sector interests; 4) international case studies of practice in key sectors (tourism, eldercare).

27. For example, large-scale renewable energy initiatives or infrastructure projects.

Strategic action plan

Objective 7 Enhance capacity of existing social enterprises			
Action	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**
▪ Develop a series of 'master classes' to provide specialised expert advice on key issues and difficulties affecting social enterprises (e.g., relating to compliance, legal issues, human resource management).	●	●	●
▪ Use opportunities for online training delivery through Gaeltacht-wide training programmes to social enterprises based on common themes and experiences such as stage of development (e.g. pre-start-up, growth), turnover size or sector (e.g., community centres, childcare). This would also support transfer of learning in addressing common issues.			●
▪ Provide introductory non-accredited training on social enterprise to community leaders and youth workers.		●	
▪ Explore the demand for – and availability of – accredited training programmes for social enterprise promoters, including online training.		●	
▪ Case studies and examples from Ireland (and elsewhere) in sectors such as climate action/ circular economy (including renewable energy), tourism, and elder care could be presented via online workshops, which have the potential to draw in experience from a wide geographic area.	●	●	●
▪ Explore various options in relation to the feasibility of a 'shared services' social enterprise for community sector organisations and for social enterprises (HR, payroll, compliance, governance, etc) to avoid duplication, and enhance capacity of the sector.[28]		●	●
▪ Explore models of ownership and collaboration through holding company structures, joint ventures, mergers and other structural options (such as area-based social enterprise development companies) to add value to the sector and avoid duplication and promote these with social enterprises.		●	●

Objective 8 Develop local, regional and international networking opportunities for the sector			
Action	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**
▪ Support the development of a Gaeltacht social enterprise network which would facilitate social enterprises to address issues of common concern through training, workshops, joint initiatives, advocacy and other activities.	●		
▪ Support cross-border and transnational relationships and networking opportunities for social enterprise development including study visits (for example, to island and rural communities in Scotland).	●	●	
▪ Engage in networks in Ireland[29] and abroad[30] and partners with a view to developing initiatives, programmes and opportunities to share learning for the benefit of Gaeltacht communities.	●	●	
▪ Promote opportunities for the corporate and enterprise sector to engage with social enterprises around technical support and access to pro-bono support. This could be undertaken in collaboration with a Gaeltacht social enterprise network.		●	

Strategic action plan

Objective 9 Host ideas generation initiatives to identify new social enterprise opportunities			
Action	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**
▪ Utilise Údarás na Gaeltachta's internal expertise to identify potential enterprise ideas – particularly those that have employment potential and would be on the cusp of commercial viability.[31]	●	●	
▪ Engage with Údarás partners and others (including corporate sector interests) to host social enterprise ideas generation workshops, to include potential trading & supply chain opportunities for social enterprises with corporate sector and other partners.		●	

Objective 10 Assess infrastructure for social enterprise potential			
Action	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**
▪ Assess the need for social enterprise development space / facilities in the Gaeltacht		●	●
▪ Audit existing unused or underused space, including space owned by state bodies, and explore the potential for this space to be transferred to a community property social enterprise, or to be used for the purposes of providing space for social enterprises to occupy.			●

National social enterprise policy – objective 3
ACHIEVING BETTER POLICY ALIGNMENT

Objective 11 Add value to the work of Údarás na Gaeltachta by proofing actions for social enterprise relevance			
Action	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**
▪ Undertaking an exercise which will proof all Údarás strategic action areas for their relevance to social enterprise, and subsequently, integrate social enterprise actions into the relevant action area.	●		
▪ Integrate social enterprise actions into the relevant Údarás planning and implementation functions.	●	●	
▪ Explore how Údarás na Gaeltachta can include social enterprises in the delivery of their work (e.g. through procurement and services contracting, delivery of gteic and strategic projects, making available sectoral supports and training programmes, to social enterprises)	●	●	●

28. For example, the service offering of **Crann** could be explored for its relevance to the Gaeltacht.

29. For example, Irish Cooperative Organisation Society (ICOS), Irish Social Enterprise Network, Irish Local development Network (ILDN), SERI, and others.

30. For example, **SENScot** (Social Enterprise Network Scotland), **Diesis network**, **Euclid network**, **REVES** and **CECOP**.

31. This is based on the consultation process indicating widespread sectoral and enterprise expertise. There may be business ideas with employment potential which do not meet viability requirements for private enterprises but could be viable for social enterprises.

Strategic action plan

Objective 12 Develop alliances with policymakers and state bodies to advance social enterprise development			
Action	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**
▪ Forge alliances with semi-state bodies, education institutions and other bodies for local delivery of the strategy, and access to additional supports (e.g., soft and operational supports from LEADER, Department of Rural and Community Development, SICAP and others).	●	●	
▪ Undertake an advocacy role with agencies and central government for social enterprise development and engage with national structures established to progress the sector (including those established by the DRCD).	●	●	
▪ Engage with the Regional Assemblies and explore opportunities for collaboration and EU initiatives.	●	●	●
▪ Explore how procurement or commissioning may present opportunities for Gaeltacht social enterprises (within Údarás and other state bodies)		●	●

Objective 13 Demonstrate the scale and impact of social enterprises in the Gaeltacht			
Action	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**
▪ Undertake a mapping exercise of all social enterprise activity and its economic contribution to the Gaeltacht.		●	
▪ Impact measurement: gather data on economic and social impact of social enterprise in the Gaeltacht (e.g. employment, turnover and assets of the sector) bi-annually			●

4.3. Key Performance Indicators

These headline Key Performance Indicators (KPIS) are both qualitative and quantitative, and methods for capturing the impacts and performance of the strategy, as it relates to the broader Údarás na Gaeltachta strategy and benefits to the community, will be developed by Údarás na Gaeltachta.

Headline KPIs:

- Increased awareness of social enterprise among enterprise, community and policymakers
- Increased number of volunteers in social enterprise
- Number of new collaborations/ collaborative projects developed
- Number of new social enterprise activities targeting key communities and sectors
- Increased sustainability of social enterprises in the Gaeltacht
- Number of new jobs created by social enterprises

Strategic action plan

4.4. Implementation

Implementing the action plan that emerges from this strategy will require implementation mechanisms. The potential role for social enterprise differs from Gaeltacht region to Gaeltacht region in the capacity and resources that are available, the interest from community groups and others and in the activity that social enterprises will engage in.

The market or service orientation of social enterprise initiatives will also differ from Gaeltacht region to Gaeltacht region and may require region specific plans to maximise the potential for social enterprise across all Gaeltacht areas. The issue of aligning Údarás funding and supports with the funding and support programmes available to the Local Authorities, Local Development Companies, Local Community Development Committees, Public Participation Networks and Local Enterprise Offices must also be addressed.

The strategy shall come within the overall remit of the Regional, Community Development and Language Planning Directorate of Údarás na Gaeltachta. Elements of the strategy that are to be modified and tailored to local areas shall be implemented through local area-based working groups in each of the Údarás regions, which would draw in multiple stakeholders in order to leverage resources and add value to existing supports.

Given the local development context that Údarás works within, it may be possible for partner organisations to take a lead in some of the actions to be developed. Some actions may need to be piloted in some geographic areas, and once successfully implemented, Údarás could advocate for their replication in other areas.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS	
Community Cooperatives and Companies	Corporate sector entities engaged with Údarás
Social enterprises	Chambers of Commerce in Gaeltacht areas
Local Authorities (including PPN's)	Dept of Rural & Community Development (DRCD)
Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs)	Academic institutions
Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs)	Youth groups
Regional Assemblies	Education and Training Boards
Irish and international social enterprise networks	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI)
Leader Companies	Relevant Development Stage agencies
An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir, Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus na Meán	Local Development Groups

Case Studies

DONEGAL

1. Comharchumann Turasóireachta Árainn Mhór
P42

2. Comharchumann Thoraí
P46

3. Cill Ulta
P50

4. Forbairt Fhánada
P54

MAYO

5. Ionad Deirbhile
P58

GALWAY

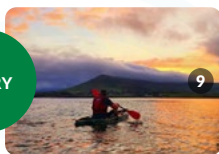6. Ionad Cuimhneacháin na nImirceach
P62

7. Comharchumann Mhic Dara
P66

8. Áras Éanna
P68

KERRY

9. Coláistí Chorca Dhuibhne
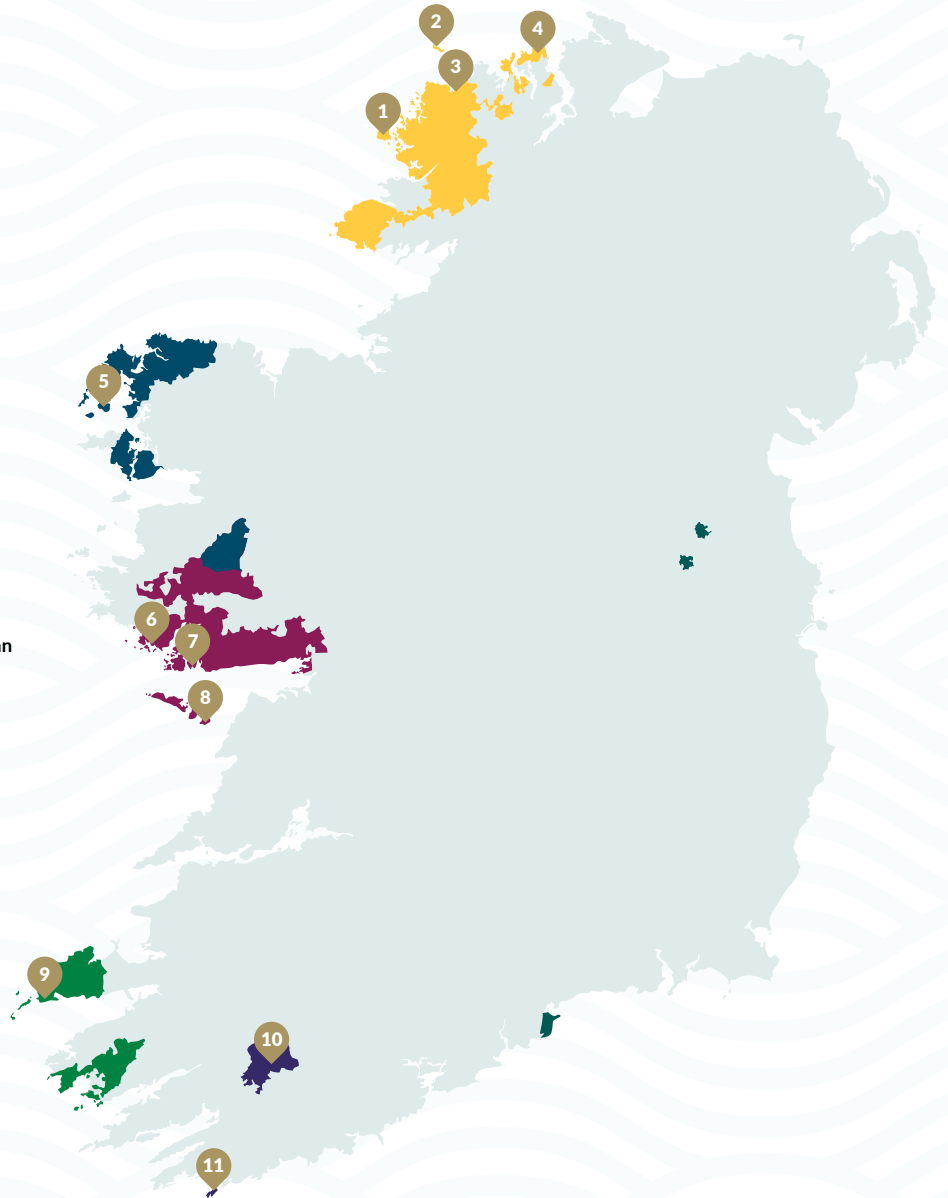P74

CORK

10. Comharchumann Forbartha Mhúscraí
P78

11. Drioglann Inis Chléire
P82

CASE STUDY #1

Comharchumann Turasóireachta Árainn Mhór

Developing tourism infrastructure and facilities on the island

Holiday village on Árainn Mhór

Background

Comharchumann Oileán Árainn Mhór CTR was established in 1977. It then established Comharchumann Turasóireachta Árainn Mhór in 1984 in order to develop tourism infrastructure and facilities and employment opportunities on the Island by providing self-catering accommodation for visitors.

Arranmore Holiday Village was constructed as a result of the first ever holiday home design competition in Ireland. The competition was organised by the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland on behalf of Comharchumann Oileán Árainn Mhór. The competition was won by O'Dowd, O'Herlihy and Horan Architects, Dublin. The homes were built through the FÁS scheme. The Holiday Village was officially opened by Jean Kennedy Smith in 1997

Árainn Mhór

Inis Caorach

Árainn Mhór

Development

2000 – The facilities of the Holiday Village were enhanced by the construction of a Cultúrlann on the site, with the support of the Department of the Gaeltacht (meeting rooms/classrooms, café, exhibitions, Language Services Centre and Visitor Information Centre).

2013 – Sports facilities were constructed on the site, with the support of the LEADER fund (tennis court, shower rooms and toilets).

2019-2021 – The Holiday Village's energy system was upgraded over a period of 3 years, with the support of the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (double-glazed windows, wood pellet stoves, solar panels, house wall insulation).

2021 – The Holiday Village was upgraded with the support of the LEADER fund, Údarás na Gaeltachta and Donegal County Council (landscaping, tarmac surfacing, drainage system, shower room upgrades, new furniture)

2021 – Planning permission was received for the development of a campervan site in the Holiday Village, aimed at visitors to the Island. Facilities available: parking facilities; electric charging points; toilet and shower facilities; and a freshwater source. Support was provided by Údarás na Gaeltachta.

In numbers

1984

Comharchumann Turasóireachta Árainn Mhór in 1984

1997

The Holiday Village was officially opened by Jean Kennedy Smith in 1997

2021

Planning permission was received for the development of a campervan site in the Holiday Village

Árainn Mhór Lighthouse

Structure

- Friendly society and subsidiary of Comharchumann Oileán Árainn Mhór CTR
- Voluntary committee

Finances

Stakeholders at the establishment of the Holiday Village included Comharchumann Oileán Árainn Mhór CTR, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Fáilte Ireland, Donegal County Council and the International Fund for Ireland.

Future plans

Develop camping facilities on site

CASE STUDY #2

Comharchumann Thoraí

Provision of enterprise space to encourage employment on Toraigh.

Club Óige, Toraigh

Background

Comharchumann Thoraí Teo. was established in 1971. The main purpose of the co-operative is to develop and nurture the social, economic, cultural, linguistic and environmental life of the people of Tory. Tory has been inhabited for thousands of years and is steeped in both history and mythology – including Balor na Súile Nimhe, the monastic settlement of Colmcille and Báidín Fheilimí.

The Island has survived hundreds of years of plundering, Penal Law income tax and the threat of depopulation. The people of Tory are self-reliant and resilient. They have faced many storms, always coming out on the other side. Today, Tory Island is home to a thriving community. It comprises teachers, artists, sailors and boatmen, handymen, builders, custodians, singers, performers and musicians – and the population is growing.

The Internet, remote working and the continuous development of the tourism industry will underpin the stability of the Island's population. Along with changing work practices, the Authority and the Language Planning Officer will work together to develop employment and to support and protect Tory Island's rich linguistic and cultural heritage. Tory is the gateway to a new era, ensuring its existence for another few millennia.

Toraigh

Aerial view of Toraigh

With the support of Údarás na Gaeltachta, Comharchumann Thoraí Teo. is the local body responsible for the maintenance of infrastructure on Tory Island and for the economic and cultural development of the Island and its people.

The co-operative consists of the Community Development Manager (Marjorie Uí Chearbhaill) and a group of nine locally elected volunteers.

The committee's volunteers are elected by the Tory Island Community (shareholders). The functioning of the co-operative is guided by the Island's constitution. The co-operative has three primary duties, namely:

- Promote the Island for the benefit of community development
- Maintain certain utilities and infrastructure services
- Encourage, develop and showcase cultural activities

In addition, the recently appointed Language Planning Officer (Seanán Mac Aoidh) will take responsibility for the implementation of the Tory Island Language Plan, which contains over 30 measures and will have a positive impact on life on Tory Island. Measures include those in the areas of education, community life, business, culture and tourism.

In numbers

1971
Comharchumann Thoraí was established in 1971.

€200K
Turnover is approx €200,000 per annum.

39M
The light is 39 metres above sea level.

€24.8K
Údarás na Gaeltachta grant of €24,856.50.

Earagail Arts Festival 2021, Toraigh

Services

Infrastructure Services
- The Island's Social Club
- Laundry Service
- Helicopter and Freight Services
- Forklift Service and Equipment Management
- Roads and Footpath Management
- Group water scheme
- Pre-school and playground/sports pitch
- Public Toilets
- Management of Household Litter Recycling/Hardware Recycling
- Information Technology Hub/Business Centre
- Administration Services

Cultural and Educational Events

- Tourist information and promotion of the Island
- Developing, presenting and supporting cultural events
- Managing, presenting and supporting educational events
- Supporting community events
- Summer Camp
- Youth Club
- Playgroup
- Tidy Towns

Management and Employees of Comharchumann Thoraí

- Full-time Community Development Manager (Marjorie Uí Chearbhaill)
- Management committee – a group of nine locally elected volunteers
- Laundry Centre – one part-time employee
- Day Centre – one part-time employee
- Group Water Scheme – one part-time employee
- Community employment schemes – four employees
- Helicopter service – six part-time employees

Finances & Funding

Turnover is approximately €200,000 per annum.

- Údarás na Gaeltachta (administration grant for Community Development Organisations)
- Rent – Coláiste Cholmcille
- Rent – Public Toilets
- Health Service Executive
- Donegal County Council
- LEADER
- FLAG – Bord Iascaigh Mhara

Community Centre & Offices of CC Thoraí

Gaeltacht Digital Network Project (gteic) – Extension to the Community Centre

We have received planning permission to build an Innovation Centre beside the Community Centre/Office of Comharchumann Thoraí. This project involves an extension to the Community Centre building. This new project will include the following services:

- Training room
- Office space
- Toilets
- Kitchen
- Main room – provision of 14 desks to facilitate remote working.

Last year, we installed a new high-speed broadband system at the Centre as part of the national broadband plan, with the support of Donegal County Council. We will link the new project with this system. This is a great opportunity to create employment, and we hope to be able to attract families back to the Island once the project is complete.

A grant of €248,565.00 was approved for the project, representing 95% of the total cost:

- LEADER: €186,423.75 (75%)
- Údarás na Gaeltachta: €24,856.50 (10%)
- Donegal County Council: €24,856.50 (10%)
- Comharchumann Thoraí: €12,428.25 (5%)

*We will co-operate with Údarás na Gaeltachta to develop this Gaeltacht Digital Network and to create employment on the Island.

CASE STUDY #3

Cill Ulta

Driving the bio-economy through sustainable indigenous resources

Eithne Nic Lochlainn, Manager at LAN

Background

Cloich Cheann Fhaola is a Gaeltacht community located in the extreme north-west of Donegal.

In 2003, LAN was formed to use and revive a site in the community (which was the location of eight acres of glasshouses developed as a tomato growing enterprise in the 1960s) in order to provide employment and work opportunities. The initiative provided locally grown, sustainably produced vegetables and herbs to shops, restaurants, and private households. It also hosted a FETAC level 5 training programme in Production Horticulture. Over the course of four years, 50 participants in the CE Scheme and 20 members of the public had availed of this resource. LAN now operates nine polytunnels, one acre of the original glasshouse site, an apiary, and multiple production fields, with another portion of the land being managed specifically as a demonstration and investigation site for suitable corncrake habitat.

Toraigh

Fán Mór

Mín an Chladaigh

Cill Ulta   An Fál Carrach

Gort an Choirce

Developments

Working through the medium of Irish to preserve the language and culture of the region, Cill Ulta now focusses primarily on three areas of advocacy:

- Promotion, production, and community upskilling in sustainable agriculture and horticulture
- Awareness and regeneration of local ecosystems, biospheres, flora, and fauna to preserve native resources and promote local eco-tourism industry
- Creation of a circular economy to limit carbon footprint and import dependency, promote sustainable resource use, and increase economic diversification and resilience within the community

Through these actions, Cill Ulta currently provides:

- **Employment and work experience:** providing work opportunities and training for almost 40 people, with the support of the Community Services Programme (CSP), Rural Social Scheme (RSS) and TÚS. It also delivers Préab san Úr, a youth work experience programme and delivers outreach youth programmes.

- **Produce:** it produces vegetables and plant sales and supplies 24 local shops and restaurants and approximately 100 households with pesticide free vegetables, herbs, seedlings, plants and plant advice. During COVID, it supplied vegetables to approximately 60 families weekly.

- **Training:** pre-COVID, it delivered training and education opportunities to over 500 community members of all ages in horticulture, bio-diversity, eco-tourism and crafts through a range of programmes.

- **Projects:** it is involved in a number of EU and national initiatives aimed at regenerative agriculture and heritage crops, and training. It has delivered an Energy Master Plan and has participated in the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland's (SEAI) Better Energy Community programme. It is developing a Community Biodiversity Action Plan and is a partner to a number of research projects with third level institutions, Teagasc and central government to map the food sector and develop new technologies to enhance traceability and to improve crop health.

> ❝
>
> *Cill Ulta produce vegetables and plant sales and supplies 24 local shops and restaurants and approximately 100 households with pesticide free vegetables, herbs, seedlings, plants and plant advice.*
>
> ❞

Structure

LAN CTR is incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee and is a registered charity. Its board includes expertise in food business & production, community development and advocacy, agricultural policy.

Finances

Sources include traded income from sales, Community Services Programme, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Dept of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, SEAI, Donegal Education and Training Board, and Donegal County Council.

Challenges

Generating match payments (20%) for funded projects, and this is particularly onerous for large initiatives. Also, recruitment: difficulties in accessing the technical expertise required for some of its projects, particularly given its rural location.

Future plans

- **Cill Ulta: Northwest Bioeconomy Hub** to strengthen and develop the growing bioeconomy sector in the Northwest of Ireland.
- **Social and Therapeutic Horticulture** – development of a social and therapeutic horticulture rehabilitation centre.

In numbers

2003

Formed to revive a site in the community in order to provide employment.

500+

Delivered training & education opportunities to over 500 people.

24

Supplies 24 local shops and restaurants.

40

Providing work opportunities and training for almost 40 people.

CASE STUDY #4

Forbairt Fhánada

The flagship visitor attraction of the Fanad Peninsula

Fanad Lighthouse by George Karbus

Background

Fanad Lighthouse is a not-for-profit social enterprise run by voluntary local committee Forbairt Fhánada Teoranta. It is the flagship visitor attraction of the Fanad peninsula, an area of outstanding natural beauty which has much to offer the visitor – secluded sandy beaches, hiking and hillwalking, kayaking, golfing, angling and a warm Donegal welcome. Fanad Lighthouse has been a working lighthouse since 1817. It has been open to the public as a tourist attraction since 2016 and also offers unique overnight accommodation in three beautifully restored lightkeepers' cottages.

The tower is 22 metres high from foundation to the top of the tower (not including the lantern). The light is 39 metres above sea level and there are 76 steps in the tower – 59 spiral granite steps and 17 ladder steps

Forbairt Fhánada CTR is a social enterprise operated by a voluntary board of directors from the local community with the aim of developing the area through tourism. Specifically, we offer guided tours of Fanad Lighthouse as well as the opportunity to rent the original lightkeeper's cottages. We also have a café and craft shop, stocking a range of mainly locally produced arts and crafts – sustainability and the environment are extremely important to us.

The Management Company at Fanad Head Lighthouse, (in close association with The Commissioners of Irish Lights, Udaras na Gaeltachta and Failte Ireland), provide year-round visitors facilities.

Fánaid

Structure of the organisation

Fanad Lighthouse employs a single tier board comprising of independent representatives from the local community and 1 representative of Údarás na Gaeltachta. Board members oversee the strategic management of Fanad Lighthouse including identification of risk and development of strategies to minimise risk, as well as monitoring the effective operational management of all Fanad Lighthouse activities. The 8-member board of Fanad Lighthouse meets on a monthly basis. At these meetings financial and operational reports are presented for all aspects of the enterprise. Our programme is constantly monitored in terms of efficient use of resources. This is achieved primarily through reporting of activities against performance targets for the forthcoming year in the framework of an agreed financial budget. We have recently appointed a finance sub-committee to receive and comment on ongoing outturn against budget, and to advise and assist the work of the board.

The board employs a manager who reports monthly to the board on all aspects of the enterprise and to whom other staff report. Currently, a tour guide and a marketing officer are also employed on a full-time basis as well as seasonal staff.

Staff

- Manager – Managing site, operations and other staff, liaising with board and other agencies.
- Marketing Officer – Marketing and Publicity
- Maintenance worker, General Maintenance of cottages, other buildings and grounds work
- Tour Guide & general worker, Delivering guided tours, helping to train seasonal staff, meeting and greeting visitors to stay
- Seasonal staff, approx 12 – Delivering guided tours, serving in café/shop/ticket office.

In numbers

1817
Fanad has been a working lighthouse since 1817.

2016
Open as a tourist attraction since 2016.

39M
The light is 39 metres above sea level.

20K
Approximately 20,000 visitors per year.

Activities

While Fanad is an area of spectacular natural beauty that retains a strong Irish identity, it has not yet developed its full tourism potential. Fanad Lighthouse represents the opportunity for a world class tourism project and the prospect of sustainable economic development for the area. Boosted by the Wild Atlantic Way (it is one of three Signature Discovery Points in County Donegal) and linking with the northern coast, this tourism initiative has the potential to stimulate regional tourism and to provide direct and indirect employment for local people. The iconic Fanad Lighthouse is now a focal point for visitors to the peninsula and is already sparking spin-off businesses in the area. We have an average occupancy of over 70% per year for the accommodation and around 20,000 visitors, all of whom may be encouraged to eat local, shop local, and avail of activities and services in the area.

The lighthouse has become a hub for the local community. Locals converge for events such as our Halloween 'Fright at the Light' the Shine a Light on Summer festival, free Heritage Week events for all ages and other events through the year. We collaborate with other community organisations on events such as the Fanad Festival. Other community organisations such as Fanad Clean Coasts and Gaeltacht Bheo Fhánada use our space for meetings and there is strong local involvement in Heritage week events. We have become the Ionad Seirbhísí Teanga (Language Services Centre) for the Fanad Gaeltacht. As the flagship social enterprise in the Fanad Gaeltacht, the Irish language is central to our policies and operation. A good proportion of our staff are Irish speakers, and Irish is spoken daily here. Over the years we have hosted many Oíche Áirneáil (music and social nights) for Fanad's Irish-speaking community and this year are planning a pop-up Gaeltacht at the Lighthouse for Seachtain na Gaeilge.

We also hold a tourism and services open day for Fanad community tourism providers to bring the various service providers together for exchange of brochures and information and for networking, so that we can work together for mutual benefit.

Finance / Resources

Turnover is approximately €300,000 per annum. Sources of funding:

- Údarás na Gaeltachta's Marketing officer grant
- Community Services Programme Pobal funding
- Rental income (Accommodation and Venue hire)
- Tours/Retail/Event

Future Plans

The property is owned by Commissioner of Irish Lights (CIL) and currently let to Forbairt Fhánada CTR (FFC). It is the objective of Forbairt Fhánada Teoranta to achieve funding under Category 1 of the Rural Regeneration & Development Fund (RRDF) to develop improved visitor facilities at Fanad Head Lighthouse – it is expected that an application will be made in 2023.

The objectives of Phase 3 are:

- To fulfil the potential of Fanad Head Lighthouse as a visitor's attraction, improve visitor experience and increase the use of the location as well as increase dwell time (and spend).
- To make sure whatever is done is economically viable.
- To ensure the sustainability of the future of the location through good design and management.
- The ability to promote the Irish language and culture.

Dunree View accommodation at Fanad Lighthouse

CASE STUDY #5

Ionad Deirbhile

Managing community initiatives, as well as tourism promotion.

Background

The co-op was formed in 1995 by the local community in the Mullet peninsula (North Mayo) and is registered as a cooperative. Its focus is on developing opportunities for the Gaeltacht region of Eachléim, An Gheata Mór Theas & Fód Dubh on the Mullet Peninsula.

It assists, advocates for and manages community initiatives, with a focus on the preservation of the Gaeltacht and the Irish language, and it plays an important role in tourism promotion.

To date it has:

- Constructed Ionad Deirbhile Heritage Centre,
- Developed a children's playground,
- Developed an emigration memorial garden,
- Renovated the community hall,
- Constructed a naíonra building
- Developed a gteic in the community hall and
- Opened Blacksod lighthouse for paying visitors.

Torán

An Clochar

An Eachléim

Leitir Beag

An Fód Dubh

An Fál Mór

An Fód Dubh Harbour

Activities

- Manages Blacksod Lighthouse as a tourist attraction (opened in 2021 with 1,800 visitors to date)
- Manges an information hub and coffee pod next to the lighthouse
- Operates gteic@AnEachléim
- Manages a community hall (which is used by the co-op's youth clubs and seasonal and family events)
- Operates Ionad Deirbhile Heritage Centre (currently closed awaiting reconstruction)

The co-op also undertakes language planning work, training services, and identifies new tourism and community development opportunities.

Operations and staff

Three full time staff are employed by the co-op, including the manager, the Tourism Officer and Language Planning Officer.

The lighthouse is operated by 1.5 staff positions (plus one Tus position). The information hub and coffee pod employ one part-time staff (with one Tus and one RSS position).

In numbers

1995

The year the co-op was formed.

2021

Blacksod lighthouse opened as a tourist attraction

1.8K

Blacksod lighthouse has had over 1,800 visitors since opening.

66

Blacksod Lighthouse and the information hub and coffee pod comprise the first phase of a larger project being developed by the co-op called Áras Scéalta an Atlantaigh. This includes an interpretive centre and tourism hub owned by the Co-op.

99

Finances and supports

- Údarás na Gaeltachta's administration grant.
- The lighthouse is owned by the Commissioners of Irish Lights (with a portion of the building leased to Mayo County Council which has in turn provided the co-op with a licence to open it to the public)
- The pod (coffee and information hub) is owned by the Co-op and the income generated is used to support community initiatives and to improve facilities.
- The co-op owns the community hall where gteic@AnEachléim is located, and also the heritage centre (Ionad Deirbhile) currently being extended.

Future Plans

Blacksod Lighthouse and the information hub and coffee pod comprise the first phase of a larger project being developed by the co-op called Áras Scéalta an Atlantaigh. This includes an interpretive centre and tourism hub owned by the Co-op (located in Eachléim, approx. 3 KM from the lighthouse). This will focus on the rich cultural and maritime history of the area.

Staff supported by the Community Services Programme and labour market schemes will be required to operate this new hub.

CASE STUDY #6

Ionad Cuimhneacháin na nImirceach

A Gaeltacht diaspora-based Explanatory Tourism Centre

Carna

Background

The community group Fóram do Phobal Iorras Aithneach met initially to develop and publish the magazine 'Iorras Aithneach' in 1990. Over the years the committee has played a central role in community development in the area. The journal published annually and other initiatives have been a great success to date. Over the years, a strong emphasis was placed on the communities of the area abroad and on the story of migration and its impact on the area over the years.

This led to the idea that migrants in the area should be given special recognition. Over time, a committee and then a company — **Ionad Cuimhneacháin na nImirceach Teo** – was established to take up the work, to build a space in memory of all migrants that left Conamara, on the site of the old hall in Carna.

Development

The first phase of this development was implemented in 2018, being the development of a new Community Centre with various facilities on the old hall site. A capital grant from the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, at the time, and the rest from the committee itself through donations and collections from the local communities and the diaspora, amounted to a total investment of approximately €1 million.

Carna

The centre was officially opened on 12 May 2018 and opened by Mayor of Boston, Marty Walsh, and Minister for the Gaeltacht Joe McHugh.

Since then the centre has served as a centre for the local community with exhibitions and events based on the culture and heritage of the place and the connection with the people of Iorras Aithneach and Connemara living in other parts of the world. The centre is widely used by the public and many community events take place there. The centre employs a manager under the Údarás Tourism Development Scheme and the committee has developed a tourism development strategy for the centre.

Activities

The Centre is currently serving as a central unit for the public providing facilities for:

- Local meetings, conferences and workshops
- Classes, Courses and Exhibitions
- Public events, Concerts and Theatre.
- Facility for Tourism initiatives
- Research and knowledge centre on History, Genealogy and migration
- Local Tourism Centre, manager employed and based in the centre under the Údarás Tourism Development Scheme implementing a tourism development strategy for the centre.
- Gaeltacht Diaspora Centre and Diaspora Development Officer based in the Centre

In numbers

2018
The centre was officially opened on 12 May 2018.

€1M
Total investment of approx €1 million.

Fishing boat on Carna Strand

Plans for the Future

The aim of the local community-based company and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht was to further develop the Centre to adapt it as a Connemara diaspora-based Explanatory Tourism Centre to provide a genetic resource for these people and their descendants and make it an attractive tourist attraction located on the Wild Atlantic Way in Connemara. Údarás na Gaeltachta is working in partnership with the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, the Gaeltacht, Sport and Media and with the local community to complete this second phase.

This project is also a priority in the implementation of a plan prepared on the basis of partnership between the communities of Iorras Aithneach and Údarás na Gaeltachta and in the Connemara and Aran Tourist Experience Plan published by Fáilte Ireland. An tÚdarás has also been involved in the development of this plan and focuses on experiences that can be developed across Connemara and Árainn to cater for the relevant target markets. This proposal is specifically mentioned in the plan.

New Development

As part of this development, the Centre will be extended to 160 square metres. A Tourism Explanatory Centre will be equipped and the Migrants Commemorative Garden will also be developed on the site, this work is due to commence in 2022.

Arising from a business development plan prepared by Kittywakes Solutions the new tourist facility will be based on a visitor experience telling the story and history of migration from the area through demonstrations.

The new tourist experience will be rooted in the local area and will be connected to and based on a variety of themes as follows:

- Language, culture (sean-nós singing, dance, storytelling) and heritage
- Migration — the Great Famine, the national/ international context, a better new world
- The People — when, in which route, where they went — America, England, Australia and what they did.
- Famous People — Marty Walsh, Martin O'Malley, Seán Ó Mainnín, Margaret Creaven, Joe Heaney

The business plan for the centre will be developing products that could be sold to potential visitors to the centre as well as a plan to support and collaborate with the sector and local tourism businesses.

The marketable products would be:

- The story of Migration Connemara — a self-guided explanatory experience based in the centre. A fee will be charged for admission.
- A guided migration walk from the centre showing and describing the local landscape, resources and workplaces long ago.
- Mac Dara's café.
- Local crafts and gifts.
- Education programmes linked to the new explanatory plan and local language, cultural, musical and historical resources.
- Genealogical Research
- Space for festivals, events and tourism information in the area.
- A Commemorative Garden beside the centre as part of the migrant story/experience.

The facility will also be marketed as well as support and guidance through Fáilte Ireland, the Wild Atlantic Way, Cósta Gaelach Chonamara & Árann and also under the umbrella of the Ireland's Gaeltacht na hÉireann and Diaspora na Gaeltachta brands.

Gaeltacht Diaspora Centre

The Gaeltacht Diaspora project will be based and operate from Ionad Cuimhneacháin na nImirceach in conjunction with the new tourism extension. The aim of the Gaeltacht Diaspora project is to build bridges and relationships with the Gaeltacht community who are migrating abroad. This link is expected to develop relationship opportunities to attract employment & tourism home as well as an opportunity to promote and disseminate our language and culture worldwide.

Ionad Cuimhneacháin na nImirceach & Diaspóra na Gaeltachta will operate as a resource for the Gaeltacht community, and as a centre for all national and international Diaspora communities that have links with the Gaeltacht.

Management and Staff

The Centre currently employs two full-time employees, a Tourism Manager under the Údarás' Tourism Development Scheme and a Diaspora Development Officer under the Údarás' Graduate Scheme.

The Centre is also working on local community schemes assisting the Centre's staff. The Centre has ongoing support from the Development Manager for the 5 Year Action Plan for Iorras Aithneach and the Manager of Forbairt Chonamara Láir, the local Co-op. A number of other (part-time and full-time) jobs are expected to be created in the future with the planned developments and events.

CASE STUDY #7

Photovoltaic Project

Developing and managing a renewable energy initiative

Background

Comharchumann Mhic Dara ('The Co-op') was established in 2010 and resulted from the merging of a number of local committees. Research undertaken identified need for a childcare service and a central study location for Irish language students. The co-op established a committee and purchased a building from Údarás na Gaeltachta. The facility hosts up to 60 children between pre-school and after school care.

Following the completion of a business plan in 2014, a second, underused building was purchased to accommodate the expanding Irish language activities, meeting rooms for rental and to meet the co-op's office requirements. The building contains a sports hall, eight classrooms and three offices.

The co-op secured a grant for 80% of the cost of the building and the balance (€300,000) was secured by loan finance. Income from the Irish College meets the loan repayments, and co-op projects that the debt will be repaid by end of 2022.

An Cheatrú Rua

Ros an Mhíl

Trá an Doilín, An Cheathrú Rua.

Activities

In addition to the childcare and community space rental activities include:

- Management of a gteic facility (on behalf of Údarás na Gaeltachta) in the building (comprising 12 cubicle spaces).
- Provision of back up studio space to TG4.
- Snorkelling and scuba-diving for (approx. 1,000) Irish college students
- Hosting of a Men's Shed.

The Co-op has already been successful in applying for approximately €400,000 in funding from the village renewal scheme for improvements to the village including footpaths and street lamps.

Renewable energy project

Comharchumann Mhic Dara Teo has embarked on an ambitious renewable energy and 'green estate' initiative on the Industrial Estate in Crompán. The Co-op have installed 120KW of solar panels Photovoltaic (PV) on the roofs of their own workplace on the Crompán Estate, and other buildings used by the Co-op in the estate and operated by Comharchumann Mhic Dara. Renewable energy actions include:

In numbers

2010
Comharchumann Mhic Dara was established in 2010.

120KW
120KW Photovoltaic (PV) solar panels installed on buildings.

€12K
Estimated saving on electricity and oil per annum.

€300K
Turnover is approximately €300,000 per year.

"

According to its five-year action plan for An Cheathrú Rua, the Co-op hopes to produce approx. 900,000 kWh in PV solar power by the end of 2026.

"

- Ireland's first carbon neutral Irish college.
- Installation of 120KW Photovoltaic (PV) solar panels on roofs of their facility and other buildings on the Crompán Estate.
- The estate is now zero carbon rated.
- Surplus energy generated will be sold to the grid.
- The annual savings on electricity and oil on the estate is estimated to be €12,000.

Management and operations

The above initiatives are managed by 1.5 staff positions (manager and part-time assistant) and delivered by a team of seven (including five part-time scheme workers). There is a heavy reliance on scheme workers for caretaking and maintenance for the building. Additional staff are employed as diving instructors on a seasonal and part time basis.

Finances/resources

Turnover is approximately €300,000 per year. Sources of funding:

- Údarás na Gaeltachta's administration grant
- Rental income (sports hall, education rooms, the Irish college)
- Management of the gteic digital hub
- Scuba diving and snorkelling fees
- Management of two burial grounds (contract with Galway County Council)

Future plans

According to its five-year action plan (launched 2021) for An Cheathrú Rua, the Co-op hopes to produce approx. 900,000 kWh in PV solar power by the end of 2026.

CASE STUDY #8

Áras Éanna

A theatre, Art Gallery and Artist residence.

Áras Éanna

Background

Áras Éanna Ionad Ealaíne was established in 2000. Áras Éanna is the Arts Centre for Inis Oírr and the only Arts Centre in the hinterland of the county of Galway. Inis Oírr is the smallest of the Aran Islands with a wild, free and rugged landscape and is the home to a resilient, vibrant and creative Gaeltacht and island community. This *sui generis* professional arts space has striven to preserve and maintain this vibrant Gaeltacht aesthetic, working primarily through the medium and the bedrock of the Irish language, which it daily transforms and reimagines in its programming to situate its unique and fragile culture into contemporary art making of excellence and innovation.

Áras Éanna through its curated programming and residencies challenges and provides the súil eile, the other eye. Its vision is inspired by the incomparable island landscape at the edge of Connemara and Galway Bay, and its Gaeltacht culture, a fragile context that gives art produced through and with Áras Éanna in an irreplaceable edge, a perspective and that is at once local, national and international.

Áras Éanna has a 75 seat theatre, an Art Gallery, an Artist residence (apartment and artists studio), meeting/work rooms and office space. Since September 2021 we have expanded our Artist in Residence programme with two additional studios and the rental of a house for accommodating artists.

Inis Mór

Inis Meáin

Inis Oírr

Cormac Coyne, Baile an tSéipéil, Inis Oirr

Activities

Áras Éanna promotes the Arts in a unique Island Gaeltacht setting for the benefit of artists and audience of the island, Gaeltacht, national and International communities.

Artist in Residence programme:

The Artist in Residence programme brings artists of all artforms to spend time on Inis Oírr as a place of inspiration. The island location and its vibrant Gaeltacht community along with Aras Eanna's accommodation and studio facilities provide the artist with an un-interrupted space to create great Art. Áras Éanna has several Artist in Residence partnerships which welcomes artists from various artistic organisations such as Ealaín na Gaeltachta, RHA, Irish Theatre Institute, ISACS, KCAT and NUIG to name but a few. Aras Éanna has an annual call-out to artists and it is with selected call-out individual artists and our partnerships that make up our residency programme. In 2021 Áras Éanna facilitated over 70 artists.

Exhibitions

Áras Éanna presents on average four exhibitions per year. During the past two years with Covid restrictions in place Áras Éanna curated several exhibitions both online and outdoors which included Inis Oírr's Cormac Coyne's online photographic exhibition 'Inis Oírr faoi dianghlasú', 'Curacha' an exhibition of 21 currach's painted by 21 artists that was exhibited throughout the island (mainly outdoor) and 'Ariel sparks' a collaboration between Galway 2020 and Aras Éanna that used locations such as the handball alley, the church, Áras Éanna and outdoor locations. Áras Éanna has a policy to support emerging artists, artists with disability, children and young people, artists with diverse backgrounds and established artists.

In numbers

....
2000
Arás Éanna was established in 2000.

....
75
Arás Eanna has a 75 seat theatre.

....
70
In 2021 Áras Éanna facilitated over 70 artists.

....
5,000
Average viewership during Facebook live concerts.

Concerts

Áras Éanna has hosted so many concerts over the years that includes Traditional music, Classical, Dance (traditional and Contemporary), Comedy, Literature, Poetry and Film. During lockdown we streamed over 25 weekly concerts on Facebook live that had an average viewership of 5000. Also due to the Covid restrictions we held 3 very successful outdoor concerts on the local football pitch that included the local talented musicians along with special guests

Partnerships

Áras Éanna recognise the importance of strong strategic partnerships for the development and sustainability of Áras Éanna. We acknowledge that our close alliances with The Arts Council, Ealaíon na Gaeltachta, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Galway Local Authorities and Comharchumann Caomhán, Inis Oírr, and a cohort of strategic artists and arts providers, need to be deepened and new creative partnerships formed.

Over the past four years we have formed partnerships with NUIG, ISACS, Irish Theatre Institute, Baboró, KCAT, Galway Arts Centre among others.

Children and Young People

Áras Éanna's programme facilitates for the participation of Children and young people. We run artistic projects with both the National school and secondary school on the island. Projects have included: 'Pé Scéal' a newspaper produced by the secondary school and an outdoor exhibition of paintings by the pupils of the national school in conjunction with 'Fighting Words Conamara'. We also programme visiting artistic companies for children and young people to perform and exhibit on the island.

Tourism

A tourism officer for Áras Éanna and Inis Oírr was appointed through Údaras na Gaeltachta in September 2020. The tourism officer has boosted the Art-tourism numbers by promoting Aras Éanna's programme and in particular off season events. Exhibitions such as 'Curacha' brought thousands to the island while partnerships projects such as October's workshop and performance involving special needs theatre companies from France, Poland and Ireland had both hotels booked to capacity along with two private house rentals. While Aras Éanna celebrated its 21st birthday in July, all accommodation on the island was booked out including the campsite.

Management

- Áras Éanna employs a full time Artistic Director/Manager and employs a Tourism officer through a 2 year Údaras na Gaeltachta scheme (Sept 2020-Sept 2022)
- Áras Éanna has one member of staff on a community Employment scheme (part-time)
- Áras Éanna is a limited company with charitable status.

Finances and resources

Áras Éanna receives grant funding from the following:

- An Comhairle Ealaíne
- Ealaín na Gaeltachta
- Comhairle Contae na Gaillimhe
- Foras na Gaeilge
- Áras Éanna generates a small amount of funding through ticketsales, rent and fundraising events.

Future plans

Áras Éanna reputation as the go-to arts centre for artists is growing with a phenomonal increase in programme content, residencies, online programme and audience. To view our 'Áras Éanna Strategic Plan 2019-2023' please go to **aras-eanna.ie**

Cuimhneachán speisialta ó 'Curacha'

Cormac Coyne 'Inis Oirr le linn ordaithe dianghlasála'

CASE STUDY #9

Coláistí Chorca Dhuibhne

The provision of Irish Language Courses in Corca Dhuibhne

Background

Coláistí Chorca Dhuibhne has been in existence in Baile an Fheirtéaraigh, West Kerry, for almost forty years. It is a subsidiary of Comharchumann Forbartha Chorca Dhuibhne the West Kerry Development Co-operative which was established in 1967. Since 1967, economic development was Comharchumann Forbartha Chorca Dhuibhne's main priority. It focused on the natural resources of the area, such as farming, and fishing at the time but has since widened it's scope. Today, CFCD's focus is on the preservation of the Irish language, heritage CE schemes; education and local developments are still a strong element of the brief as well as language planning.

Coláistí Chorca Dhuibhne is a financially stable well managed and successful entity which generates economic activity through the organisation of Irish Language Courses in all parts of the LPT. Coláistí Chorca Dhuibhne continues to this day to operate Irish Language Courses for students in the age group of 10–18 years and also for Trainee Teachers and Post-Graduate Trainee Teachers.

In terms of its ongoing contribution to the wider community, Coláistí Chorca Dhuibhne generates an direct income of over €2m per annum for the area and studies completed by Maynooth University calculated that a multiplier of this up to €7 million to the local economy. The model of accommodation which has been adopted for the course participants over the years have been that of accommodating students in homes in the locality along with a boarding school in Colaiste Íde. Both systems are operated successfully as part of the overall offering. The Coláistí's focus is on language immersion for these courses.

Daingean Uí Chúis

Description

Coláistí Chorca Dhuibne is an Irish College in the Dingle Gaeltacht providing Irish Courses for the 10-18 age group. Courses are held in Ceann Trá, An Fheothanach, Lios Póil, An Mhuiríoch, Baile an Fheirtéaraigh and Colaiste Íde – our residential Boarding College. Coláistí Chorca Dhuibhne employs 8 full-time staff and 200 seasonal staff.

Structure

In Coláistí Chorca Dhuibhne we have a hierarchical organisational structure. This structure allows for effective day-to-day operation of our business. The Manager will be responsible for all business related decisions. However the implementation of any major strategic or tactical decisions will require input from all members of the team as well as the Board of Directors (Coiste).

Finances/resources

Coláistí Chorca Dhuibhne only income is via fees charged for course operation. 100% income from trade operations. CCD pays a operation fee to CFCD to cover the usage of the entities owned by CFCD. CFCD is supported by Údarás na Gaeltachta's which is invaluable to the operation of the business; CFCD operates our own CE scheme which covers a catchment area from Castlegregory to Ballyferriter.

In numbers

1976
Coláistí Chorca Dhuibhne was founded in 1976.

€2м
Generates an direct income of over €2m per annum for the area.

100%
100% income is from trade operations.

Ballyferriter Bay on Dingle Peninsula seen from Clougher Head

Target markets/community

Creating seasonal employment for teachers, accommodation and other seasonal work in the Corca Dhuibhne Gaeltacht.

Does the social enterprise target particular groups or community needs?
Or is it commercial?
Coláistí Chorca Dhuibhne provides seasonal yearly employment for members in the local community whose primary focus is to enhance the Irish language. These include 44 Bean an Tí's, teachers and leaders, language assistants, local bus providers, local water sports providers and local tour guides. This in turn leads to employment in the local area for grocery shops and accommodation providers where family members stay during their visit to the Gaeltacht. There is a multiplier effect locally when those that attend courses return and parents visit their children during the courses. What is beneficial to the local community is the periods of peak for Coláistí Chorca Dhuibhne are quieter times in the tourism industry for the area, for example, January, May and June. Coláistí Chorca Dhuibhne has large numbers of students attending our courses at this time which in return this gives providers additional income in otherwise quite periods.

This was particularly evident when Covid-19 closed the colleges in 2020 and 2021 which resulted in a major loss of income for the Peninsula as a whole. From the above description its clear that it targets particular partners but the ripple effect on the community as a whole spreads the effect to the larger community.

CASE STUDY #10

Comharchumann Forbartha Mhúscraí

The provision of a gteic digital hub and enterprise space.

Background & Activities

The vision is to promote a vibrant and progressive Gaeltacht, where Irish is the living language of the community. The Comharchumann has five programme areas that intertwine to deliver this aim.

- **Gnó Mhúscraí** – promoting sustainable businesses in the area, including managing a digital hub
- **Stór Mhúscraí** – managing and administrating a five-year Language Plan for Gaeltacht Mhúscraí
- **Pobal Mhúscaí** – promoting community development by supporting local community organisations, events, local shows and festivals and the local day centres, as well as new projects such as developing the outdoor heated swimming pool, and supporting the build of a new Irish language creche
- **Múscraí Glas** – Promoting sustainable development in the area with a particular focus ón renewable energies (retrofit/one stop shop) as well recycling management projects.
- **Grá Mhúscraí** – Promoting cultural tourism development through a Working Group comprised of the key stakeholders – Statutory Sector, Political, Business and Community.

Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh

gteic

gteic @ Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh is bringing together hard-working, dynamic people - self-employed, start-ups and remote workers – who are all benefiting from the co-working space in our hub.

The gteic is based in Ballingeary, in the Múscraí Gaeltacht and operates under the auspices of Údarás na Gaeltachta. We, the Community Development Cooperative, manage the digital hub ón a daily basis. The gteic opened in November 2019 and we have 18 co-working spaces, reliable highspeed broadband, meeting rooms, AV facilitites and a canteen. We operate ón flexible terms to meet the needs of our clients. Our 10 Day Pass is the most popular option.

We used the gteic as a catalyst to create a digital transformation in our area and offer:

- Digital upskilling classes to groups, such as the Active Retired
- Laptop lending library facilities, supported by Cork ETB
- Techspace programme to young people 8+
- Village infrastructure facilities: supported setting up a BCP in one village and secured the funding to install AV facilities in four villages, to support great blending learning opportunties.

We also run courses, seminars and make the gteic available for meetings. We will be growing the range of services and courses available and have embarked on campaigns to support women in business (many who started during Covid) and to encourage young entrepreneurs under 35 years.

In numbers

2019
The gteic opened in November 2019

18
18 co-working spaces

€300k
Turnover is approximately €300,000 per year.

The Island Oratory Church of Saint Finbarr

Management and operations

Comharchumann Forbarthe Mhúscraí's manager oversees the day to day running of the gteic. 24/7 access to the gteic is available.

Finances/ resources

Turnover is approximately €300,000 per year. Sources of funding:

- Údarás na Gaeltachta's administration grant
- Management of the gteic digital hub
- Funding from other sources such as Cork Education & Library Board, Techspace, Cork County Council, Airtricty, Community Foundation,

Future plans

To expand the gteic space to include own-door offices, and increase the level of support services to the people using the gteic and the local communities
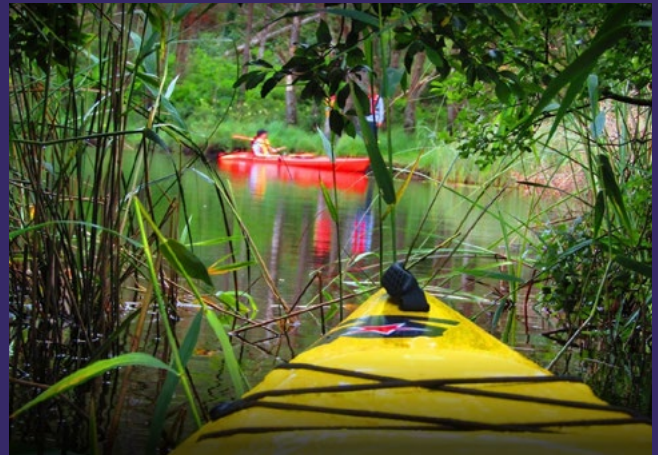
CASE STUDY #11

Drioglann Inis Chléire

*Providing long-term jobs on the island.*

Background

Comharchumann Chléire Teo ('the co-op') was established in 1969 to administer the new electrical system on the island and to create employment through the development and support of fishing, farming and tourism. It exists for the purposes of developing the island community and ensuring its sustainability.

It provides many basic services such as fuel sales (including coal, gas, petrol and diesel), provides building and construction services to islanders and local authorities and State bodies. It is funded through Údarás na Gaeltachta's administration grant and through various social enterprise activities including renting space and rooms in its community facility, and through its gteic digital hub.

The co-op initiated the distillery project as a partnership initiative with a private investor in 2009. Its overall purpose was to provide 10-15 long-term jobs on the island, in an industry that is compatible with the Island's environmental reputation and tourism industry.

Cléire
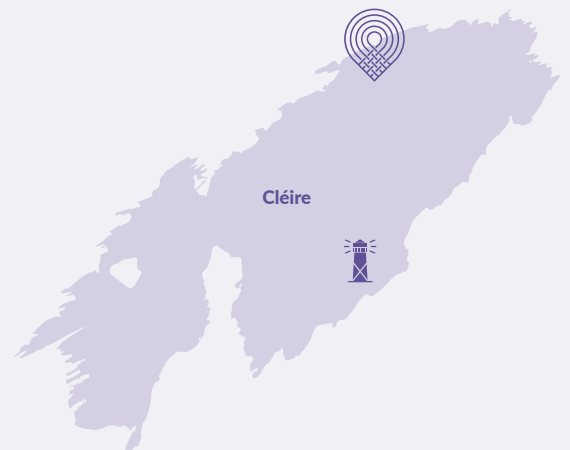
View Of Dún an Óir Castle

The co-op owned the site on which the distillery would be based, and it was envisaged that it would lease the land and assets for a charge or for a minority shareholder in the initiative.

The planning process started in 2009 but owing to delays in the granting of planning permission (eventually granted in 2016), the private investor pulled out. The co-op continued to pursue the initiative and sought another private investor.

In the meantime, the development of the distillery building started in 2018, largely involving local labour. When a suitable investor was not found by 2019, the co-op decided to build the distillery on a phased basis, starting with distilling gin.

A gin developer, Ruth Court, was employed and worked with islanders familiar with local flora. After seven months of incessant efforts, a recipe was developed and bottling 3 SQ. MILES gin started in November of 2019.

In 2020, private investment exceeding €300,000 was secured and the Comharchumann has developed a partnership with Salespoint Ltd.

In numbers

1969

Comharchumann Chléire was established in 1969.

15

Overall purpose was to provide 10–15 long-term jobs on the island.

2018

Development of the distillery building started in 2018.

300K

In 2020 private investment exceeding €300,000 was secured.

Cléire Harbour

Development

Following a successful launch in 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic seriously impacted on the social enterprise. However, it has adapted and recovered through innovation including the launch of the first range of personalized gin bottles in Ireland, and currently a cask-aged gin is being developed. In 2021, the distillery achieved export orders to both France & India.

The distillery enjoys strong community support: many islanders hold equity in the company, and continue to provide other in-kind support when needed. The next phase involves the completion of a cask store which will allow whiskey distillation to commence. 3 SQ. MILES gin is an international award winner, including a silver medallist at the 2020 *London International Spirit Challenge*, and at the 2020 *San Francisco World Spirits Competition*, and is a gold medallist at the 2020 *Bartender Spirit Awards*.

Structure

The distillery is incorporated as a company limited by share: the Comharchumann is a minority shareholder. As mentioned above, there are many local shareholders in the company, which is also gradually attracting significant commercial investment.

The initial investors who put money, other resources and time into the business will be rewarded by seeing a thriving business on the Island, knowing that they worked to secure this and by significant returns on their investments.

Finances

From the inception, the funding for the distillery project has been sourced outside the formal co-op structure with the initial local investors becoming direct shareholders in the business.

Future plans

- To expand into more markets.
- To achieve better penetration into the Irish gin market
- To seek opportunities through own label production
- To develop online sales, access duty free sales
- New product development and industry partnerships (e.g. pre-mixed cocktails)
- To build a cask store and commence whiskey maturation
- To build a whiskey distillery & visitor centre.

Appendix

Procurement

In April 2014, the new Public Procurement Directive (2014/24/EU) came into force. Member states transposed the Directive into national legislation by April 2016.[33]

Although the Directive provides contracting authorities with a vehicle to achieve social and environmental goals, they are not obliged to pursue those goals. Caima and Joseph (2015) sets out the following key points in the directive pertaining to social enterprise.

- The directive encourages the evaluation of bids on the basis of the Best Price-Quality Ratio, in particular those concerning social and health services. Value for money does not simply mean financial return – the social and environmental returns are equally important, if not more so.[34]

- A provision on reserved contracts in the directive (**Article 20**) enables contracting authorities to reserve the right to participate in tendering procedures to sheltered workshops and economic operators whose main aim is the social and professional integration of disabled or disadvantaged persons provided that at least 30% of the employees of those workshops, economic operators are disabled or disadvantaged workers

- Reserved contracts for social services provided are provided for in Article 77 of the Directive. The basis for this is outlined below.

33. Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26th February 2014 on public procurement and repealing Directive 2004/18/EC

34. MEAT (Most Economically Advantageous Tender) is the main basis for contract criteria and no longer cost or price.

Appendix

Articles 74-77 of the Procurement Directive deals with the procurement of Social and other specific services (including social and cultural services). This includes public contracts for social services and other specific services whose value is equal to or greater than €750,000.

Article 77 concerns the use of 'reserved contracts' for these health, social and cultural services, and provides that contracting authorities may reserve the right for organisations (meeting the criteria outlined below) to participate in procedures for the award of these public contracts.

These criteria are:

(a) its objective is the pursuit of a public service mission linked to the delivery of the services being provided

(b) profits are reinvested with a view to achieving the organisation's objective. Where profits are distributed or redistributed, this should be based on participatory considerations[35].

(c) the structures of management or ownership of the organisation performing the contract are based on employee ownership or participatory principles, or require the active participation of employees, users or stakeholders; and

(d) the organisation has not been awarded a contract for the services concerned by the contracting authority concerned pursuant to this Article within the past three years.

The maximum duration of the 'reserved' contract cannot be longer than three years. However, at the end of the threeyear period, the provider can take part in an open tender process for the delivery of the service.

According to Clarke and Christine (2016) the new Directives go some way towards improving the framework for sustainable public procurement and, in particular, some of the unhelpful ambiguities about social criteria have been tackled.[36] For example, the Directives facilitate contracting authorities to include social and environmental factors throughout the procurement process, i.e., they can now be included in award criteria (in line with European Court of Justice rulings).

In addition, contracting authorities, where feasible, can award contracts in the form of separate lots, in order to facilitate the participation in public procurement of civil society organisations, social economy enterprises, and SMEs (Article 46).
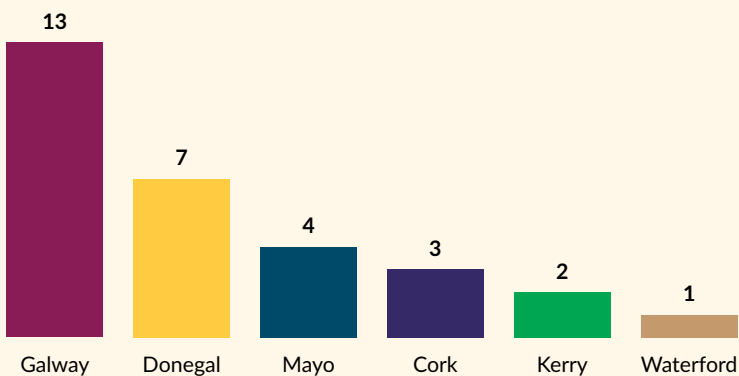
---

35. For example in the case of a co-op.

36. Clarke, P and Jakob, C (2016) 'The new EU Directives on public procurement: a step forward for green and social public procurement', article published by the European Public Service Union (EPSU), December 2016
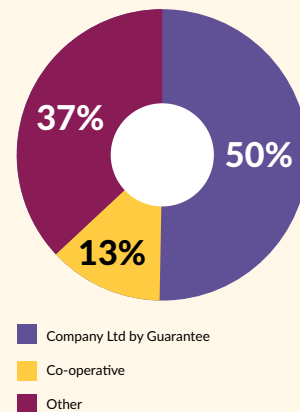
Appendix 2
Summary profile of social enterprises

The following profile summaries the findings of a survey of social enterprises undertaken by Údarás in preparation for the Clár Fiontraíochta Sóisialta na Gaeltachta (CFS-G) training and mentor programme and for this strategy. All community cooperatives funded by Údarás and Community Service Programme (CSP) funded groups in the Gaeltacht were included. A total of 30 responses were received

County where social enterprises are based

County	Count
Galway	13
Donegal	7
Mayo	4
Cork	3
Kerry	2
Waterford	1

Legal Form

- 50% Company Ltd by Guarantee
- 13% Co-operative
- 37% Other

Over half (57%) of the social enterprises were formed prior to 2020, and over three quarters (77%) were formed before 2010
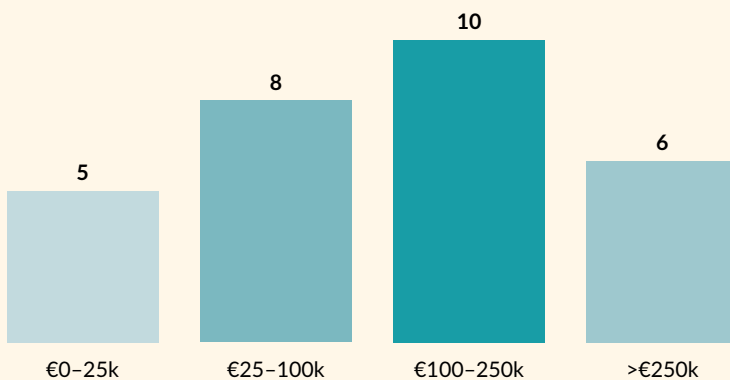
Employment

314 individuals employed or placed in 28 social enterprises. 41% of these are direct employees, and 59% supported through work placement programmes (Community Employment, Rural Social Scheme or TUS)

The Community Services Programme (CSP) funds 97 places in the 28 organisations

Appendix

Total Income for 2019 (29 Respondents)

€0–25k	€25–100k	€100–250k	>€250k
5	8	10	6

Traded Income

Traded income accounts for

- **less than 10% of total income for 11 of the social enterprises (38%)**
- **between 10 and 50% of total income for 14 of the social enterprises (48%)**
- **over 50% of total income for 4 of the social enterprises (14%)**

Activities that the social enterprises undertake

Community centre	**Eldercare**
Tourism services	**Sports and leisure**
Education and training	**Disabled people services**
Enterprise & work space	**Retail**
Environment	**Community transport**
Arts, culture & media	**Re-use & recycling**
Childcare	**Food & catering**

Top five challenges identified by the social enterprises (in order of importance)

1. **Lack of staff**
2. **Increase in costs**
3. **Lack of capital**
4. **Lack of grants**
5. **Compliance with regulations**

Údarás na Gaeltachta

Údarás na Gaeltachta
Na Forbacha
Co. na Gaillimhe
H91 TY22

www.udaras.ie

Fón: 091-503100
Rphost: eolas@udaras.ie