What Is The Upper Shannon Erne Future Economy (USEFE) Project?

- The USEFE was founded in 2013 and is a joint initiative, between the Local Authorities of Cavan, Leitrim, Longford and Roscommon, Bord Na Mona and the ESB.

- The purpose of this initiative is to show how business led regional development can lead to economic growth and job creation across Cavan, Leitrim, Longford and Roscommon.
Operational Structure of USEFE

- **USEFE Steering Group**
  Consists of the CEs of the four Local Authorities and authorised personnel from Bord Na Mona and the ESB. The role of this group is to ensure governance and oversight of the project and to provide strategic direction on an ongoing basis.

- **USEFE Operational Management Group**
  Consists of members appointed by the CEs/CEOs on behalf of their organization. The role of this group is to provide governance of the project, oversee delivery of the agreed action plan and support the work of the sectoral groups to ensure worthwhile high impact projects are delivered.
Operational Structure of USEFE

- **USEFE Project Co-Ordinator**
  Reporting to the USEFE Operational Management Group, the Project Co-ordinator is responsible for:
  - Developing the USEFE project through business network building
  - Engaging with the project groups and other stakeholders such as Local Authorities, Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) etc.
  - Project development and co-ordination
  - Marketing
  - Administration duties
Through The Support Of The Project Partners, USEFE Can Assist Businesses By:

- Developing networking opportunities which can lead to possible new customers, markets and economies of scale to help to improve profit margins
- Providing mentoring support to smaller micro-enterprises from larger, more established businesses in the region
- Identifying opportunities for synergies across sectors and between various scales of business
- Developing projects of regional significance which can lead to job creation and attract skilled staff into the region
USEFE Sectoral Groups

- **FOOD**
- **FORESTRY & ENERGY**
- **TOURISM**
- **ICT & SERVICES**
- **CREATIVE**
- **MANUFACTURING**
- **HEALTHCARE/PHARMA**
- **DIASPORA**
• Leitrim Co. Co. has formed its own renewable energy group, chaired by the Chief Executive, consisting of both trade and agency staff.

• A Regional Forestry & Energy Agency Group consisting of LEO’S, Directors of Services, Bord Na Mona and ESB formed recently.

  • Suggested activities of the group included:
    • Each county was to go through their Local Development Strategy, their Local Economic Community Plan and the Regional Action Plan for Jobs and identify the key objectives/actions applicable to the energy and forestry sector.
    • Another group meeting will take place in late March 2016 to review what was contained in the summary documents and to identify what we can do to develop this sector further on a regional basis.
    • It was suggested that we hold a conference with a very clear objective and a clearly identified target market. Demonstration projects in the region may be a good selling point as it would show people what has been done and what is working well.
    • Job creation and economic development should be a key objective of the event.
Food Group

- Businesses of varying sizes brought together and identified an opportunity for mentoring
- USEFE Mentoring Partners:
  - Aurivo, a globally focussed agrifood business, has been offering mentoring support in the form of social media marketing, meeting the retailer, site visit to their plant etc.
  - Lakeland Dairies, a farmer owned dairy processing co-operative, are also involved with the initiative.
- Regional Networking Opportunities
  - A regional healthy food showcase & meet the buyer event took place on the 14th October 2015, in Drumshanbo, Co. Leitrim.
  - Producers from across the region got the opportunity to meet buyers as well as showcase their produce
  - Distribution Co-Op – Area of interest to be investigated further at the next food meeting
- Training
  - Potential for one to one mentoring support to be provided to food businesses. Each food company should be contacted to see what their needs are and see if support can be provided.
Tourism Group

- Key focus on the development of the Shannon and Shannon-Erne Blueway
  - The Blueway is a multi-activity trail running alongside water which links walking, cycling, canoeing, paddle boarding and cruising with local towns and villages.
- USEFE, in conjunction with our project partners Waterways Ireland, received funding to the value of €209,692 under the Rural Economic Development Zones Project (REDZ) to develop the Blueway across the USEFE region.
- REDZ Project Elements: Two capital projects (Development of Ballyleague Quay Wall, Co. Roscommon and multi leisure section between Drumleague Lock and Drumhauver Bridge, Co. Leitrim); regional & directional signage, capacity building workshops and the publication of food, craft, heritage and outdoor activity trails

TOURISM
- Ballyleague Quay Wall, Co. Roscommon

Drumleague Lock and Drumhauver Bridge, Co. Leitrim
Sample Blueway Trail Brochures
Tourism Group

- ‘Build Your Blueway’ Capacity Building Event – 13th April 2016, Carrick On Shannon
  - Display stands will be provided for attraction and activity providers across the four counties so accommodation providers can see what is on offer in the region
  - Presentations will take place in relation to developing packages and itineraries along the Blueway and on the importance of social media to promote the Blueway brand
  - Event to run from approx 11:00a.m. – 2:30p.m. with light lunch provided

- LAKtive Tourism Project (COSME Programme is the EU programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) running from 2014 to 2020 ) –
  - ISEO, Italy is lead partner. Other project partners include Ireland, Macedonia, Spain & Slovenia.
  - Leitrim Co. Co., as the Irish project partner, would be responsible for implementing all test activities across the USEFE region in Ireland.
  - Design and develop a specific tourism product focused on senior target groups travelling in low/medium seasons towards small towns along the waterways.
  - Pilot test activities in Ireland will take place in USEFE region – mainly focused on walking and water activities for seniors.
  - Project is due to start in March 2016 and has a duration of 15 months
Creative Craft Group

- Creative Craft Group primarily consists of people from the craft sector:
  - Group received a tour of Leitrim Design House – Viewed as an example of best practice
  - Group are kept updated of any funding opportunities or support available to them (I.E. Creative Momentum, WDC; Creative Frame – Follow on from Harnessing Creativity; LEO training etc.)

- Networking element is important for this sector – starting from a low base
- Regional craft brochure was developed as part of REDZ project
- Training – Work with LEO’s to develop a training course which looks at challenges people face when applying for funding. Leitrim LEO has offered to lead on this.
- Leitrim Design House has offered to be a launch pad for new products around the region.
  - Products do not need to be displayed in the shop to avail of this service. For example there could be a week where a visiting guest showcases their product in the Design House.
- Group are interested in providing a touring arts and crafts exhibition around the region
Diaspora Group

- Very passionate about retaining jobs and encouraging investment into the region
- Group are looking at ways to entice businesses to come to the region (i.e. Team building days; international meetings etc.). Once they are here people will get to experience what the area has to offer.
- Each county received funding in 2015 under the Local Diaspora Engagement Fund, in conjunction with Connect Ireland, to develop some marketing materials.
- Diaspora group & USEFE Co-Ordinator will work together to organise an event in Oct 2016 which will look at hosting an official launch of the Blueway to the Regions Diaspora in Dublin and the East Coast. There will be a specific focus on targeting people in companies who might be interested in organising team building events along the Blueway.
  - Proposed location for event – Waterways Ireland Building, Grand Canal Docks, Dublin
- Local Diaspora Engagement Fund –
  - Apply for funding to develop a regional USEFE DVD, hold Diaspora workshops with festival organisers and agency staff; produce marketing material (i.e. key rings, mouse mats, pens); develop a brochure on projects in the region that require assistance in terms of funding.
  - Due to be notified if successful in late April/early May.

Diaspora
Other Sectoral Groups

- ICT & Services, Manufacturing and Pharma/Healthcare
- Pharma/Healthcare and ICT & Services sectors will be progressing over the coming months
Next Steps

- **Tourism** –
  - ‘Build Your Blueway’ regional capacity building and networking event – 13th April 2016

- **Forestry & Energy** –
  - Develop regional objectives having due regard to both national and county strategies
  - Regional conference focusing on forestry and energy sector

- **Food** –
  - Investigate potential for one to one mentoring support to be provided to food businesses.

- **Creative/Craft** –
  - Training to help people apply for funding
  - Touring arts and crafts exhibition around the region
  - Leitrim Design House has offered to be a launch pad for new products around the region

- **Diaspora** –
  - Plan event in Oct 2016 which will look at hosting an official launch of the Blueway to the regions Diaspora in Dublin
  - Apply for funding from the Local Diaspora Engagement Fund

- **Angel Investors Event** –
  - Hold a regional angel investors event
  - It is crucial that the right people with the right projects who are willing to release equity in their business are identified and invited
  - Businesses need to be trained in how to make a bid before the event takes place
We are always open to new businesses joining so please contact me if you or anyone you know would like to get involved with this project.

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Thank You