



IRELAND BALLYHOURA DEVELOPMENT LTD

General details

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Details of activity

Background to the case study	<p>Location:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established in 1989, Ballyhoura Development Ltd is located in South East Limerick and North East Cork. The area covered by Ballyhoura Development Ltd is known as Ballyhoura Country.¹ With a population of 55,500 at a density of 38/sq.km, the area comprises of 50 local communities with 8 towns and 12 villages. With traditionally strong agricultural and food processing sectors, the area is now in transition. <p>Ballyhour Ltd.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As an area and client focussed agent of development, Ballyhoura Development Ltd aims to diversify the economic base of the locality and to assist people living in the area to improve the quality of their lives through Community Development, Education and Training, Economic Development and Research across targeted sectors. Resourced by a number of programmes (LEADER+, National Rural Development Programme, Local Development Social Inclusion Programme, Millennium Partnership Fund, Cohesion Funds and the Rural Social Scheme), the company also brokers considerable resources from other bodies for projects and pilots animated through core programme activities. In our economic development remit, we are a stakeholder in a variety of economic related projects, at an individual, community, social economy level and in terms of both soft supports (technical support, training and mentoring) and infrastructure related projects.
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¹ www.ballyhouracountry.com



- A key concern is that those displaced from agriculture are not forced to migrate, but are given the confidence and skills to earn a good living in their locality, that persons are encouraged to live in rural areas based on the provision of quality services and quality employment opportunities in the area, and that educated experienced young people are attracted to return to rural areas to develop profitable businesses offering high quality jobs in a desirable rural environment.
- We concur with a recent report in that future rural development policy must be targeted towards selected areas of enterprise and employment rather than the broad brush approach. The cluster and targeted approach applied to inward investment is equally valid for indigenous industry in remote rural areas.

Leader:

This case study highlights elements of the **LEADER methodology** and local development through an example of animating and supporting the development of small-scale local infrastructure for economic diversification. Bottom up review, consultation (by target group, sector and across the rural communities) and planning have supported the development of integrated strategies, for which community development and partnership are the engines of economic development and social cohesion.

Case Study: Development of enterprise space with a focus on the development of 10,000 sq ft Food Units in Mitchelstown, Co.Cork:

Aims and objectives

- Create workspace /enterprise units in the area as a space for development of enterprises
- Develop a community led partnership project
- Develop an enterprise culture in the area
- Provide much needed 'food grade' space for emerging businesses in the food sector and at the same time contribute to supporting the general development of the Mitchelstown area.
- Help Small and Medium enterprise (SME) food producers to meet and exceed the increasing regulatory challenges that they face

Brief rationale:

A report compiled in 1998 concluded that “lack of diversity in the

² ADOPT: The ADOPT Model, developed by Dr. Pat Gibbons, UCD in association with Ballyhoura Development, emerged from a process of action research. It provides a framework to guide local development strategies. ADOPT is an acronym for “Audit the local area – District Selection – Organisation - Planning – Training “



rural economic base is the kernel of the rural development problem in Ballyhoura”.

The report saw the challenge as the development of a strategy which would result in a more “effective harnessing of the full range of the natural and social capital in the area” and to implement an organisational model that facilitated co-operation and joint activities with statutory bodies, community and business/enterprise.

In addressing this, Ballyhoura Development animated communities to **build human capital and develop integrated community action plans**, with the participation of all of the groups and interests in a community and relevant public bodies. This provided communities with a vision and agreed action plan that reflect the local context, local needs and local opportunities, appropriate structures and the ADOPT model.² This process also identified the merit of socio-economic planning for natural districts – a town as the service centre and its natural hinterland, of partnership, networking, building social capital and enhancing local governance.

Due to a dependence on the agri-food sector for the past number of years, the area has failed to develop adequate enterprise space to attract alternative enterprises to the area. This “shortage of available work-space as a key deterrent to expansion by indigenous industries in Ballyhoura or the attraction of new industries into Ballyhoura”, as identified in the 1998 report, has been addressed by **animated empowered communities working in partnership**. They have supported the development of strategies and implemented projects, which have both economic and social impacts.

Community animation has led to four communities – Ballylanders, Charleville and Mitchelstown each attracting €1.26m private investment (Business Expansion Scheme) and managing the development of advance factories, each of approximately 25,000 sq.ft., and more recently, Kilmallock where the planning is processing. Partnerships of varying interests including community, private, statutory and local development led to the development of food units in Hospital and Bruree (17,000 sq.ft and 5,000 sq.ft respectively). This case study focuses on the development of food units of 10,000 sq.ft. in Mitchelstown which commenced in early 2006.

Small food producers have become a new force of wealth creators – a source of innovation, employment, rural and urban development as well as key contributors in the positioning and image of Ireland as a Food Island internationally. The area covered by Ballyhoura





	<p>Development is in a transition phase as the agriculture and agri-food sectors are changing quickly. There is a relatively strong skills base in the area but there is a need to diversify the economic base of the locality.</p> <p>The demand for and scarcity of high-quality food grade premises led Ballyhoura Development to investigate enterprise space and has led to the development of many successful enterprise units and food units.</p> <p>For example, the need for suitable food grade premises which adhere to food safety legislation requirements is undoubtedly the biggest challenge that food producers face. The development of Food Units in Mitchelstown will generate considerable incremental employment for the Mitchelstown area and add to its reputation as a centre of food excellence.</p> <p>Implementing organisation Ballyhoura Development Limited is leading the project in conjunction with Mitchelstown Community, supported by private investors, and grant aided by Enterprise Ireland.</p> <p>Funders The project is being led by Ballyhoura Development Limited, in conjunction with Mitchelstown Community, and is grant aided by Enterprise Ireland. They are located on a prime 1-acre site, which has been provided by Cork County Council</p> <p>When activity started / end date? Mitchelstown Food Units: 2005 due to be completed August 2006</p>
Description of activity	<p>Outline of programme / activities and approaches used The construction of four high-tech food units totalling 10,000sq ft at Coolnanave Industrial Park, Mitchelstown, County Cork. The units have been designed to the highest standards in line with the rigorous requirements demanded of contemporary specialised food production facilities</p> <p>Origins – how it came about – bottom up / top down, grew from previous initiative (if so what) In 1998, a lack of enterprise space in the area was identified as a barrier to enterprise development. This led Ballyhoura Development to work in partnership to develop enterprise space in the area to attract small and medium enterprises.</p> <p>The development of the Mitchelstown Food Units addressed the need in the Mitchelstown area for high-quality food grade premises. Small food producers have become a new force of wealth creators – a source of innovation, employment, rural and urban development</p>



	<p>as well as key leaders in the positioning and image of Ireland as a Food Island internationally This project emerged from a two way process – Ballyhoura Development’s previous experience in developing enterprise space and a community desire to address local gap in enterprise space.</p> <p>Who was involved in the design, management and delivery of the programme Community led, Ballyhoura Development, Enterprise Ireland, Cork County Council and a team of professional staff</p> <p>Recognition – has the programme been recognised as good practice? If so, by whom? The enterprise strategy of Ballyhoura Development has been recognised at a national level as a Model with transferable elements.</p>
<p>Policy context within which the programme operates</p>	<p>Is there an explicit relationship between policy priorities / local activities? The Business Expansion Scheme (BES), allows individual investors to obtain income tax relief on investments in each tax year to 2006. There is no tax advantage for the company in receipt of the BES, but securing this funding may enhance their ability to attract other external funding.</p> <p>The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment has launched a “Report of the Small Business Forum” which highlighted the importance of infrastructure to facilitate enterprise development; the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs conducted a Rural Enterprise Study in 2005 ; the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources is overseeing the Group Broadband Scheme which promotes the rollout of broadband access through the establishment of sustainable broadband services in towns, villages, rural hinterlands and underserved areas of larger towns on the basis of local/regional authority coordination and community driven initiatives. Transport 21 is the Department of Transport’s integrated programme for modernising infrastructure over the next decade.</p> <p>County Enterprise Boards (which operate at a county-wide basis) also promote and support enterprise development in rural areas, together with regional bodies such as Shannon Development. Ballyhoura Development has a representative of both Limerick County Enterprise Board and Shannon Development on its Board of Directors.</p> <p>Is the policy context supportive / prohibitive? Generally supportive</p> <p>There is a need for the Government to put in place specific supports</p>



	<p>and incentives in the next National Development Programme, focussing on the development of economic infrastructure in rural areas to optimise the opportunities for well qualified experienced people with rural roots to return to develop new businesses and grow quality employment.</p> <p>We would also recommend a pilot rural tax designation scheme and that the next national development plan be rural proofed as it is being developed to ensure that the macro policies of all Departments support the rural policies</p> <p>Has the policy context changed during the life of the activity No</p> <p>Which came first – local activities or policy priorities (i.e. is activity leading or following policy priorities)? Mixture of local activity leading policy and vice versa We work within a framework of activity but also link with our programme funders in highlighting Models of Best Practise in a manner to influence policy</p>
<p>Geographical focus of the case study</p>	<p>At what level does the programme operate? Local Level – Ballyhoura Development covers an area with a population of 55,500 at a density of 38/sq.km, the area comprises of 50 local communities with 8 towns and 12 villages.</p> <p>Mitchelstown and its hinterland has a population of 11,968 persons.</p>
<p>Impact</p>	<p>Outputs – scale and scope of people reached through the programme Infrastructure developments provide economic diversification opportunity, are valuable infrastructure for local enterprises and provide employment opportunities locally</p> <p>Outcomes: at local level – what difference at local level and at regional and / or national level – what difference made?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focal point for enterprise development • Development of enterprise culture • Creation of local employment opportunities • Source of employment for those who suffered job losses due to restructuring • Potential to lead to creation of other employment due to secondary businesses <p>Any impact at European level? Creation of a Model and/or transferable elements which can be applied to rural areas.</p>



Partners' details	The project is being led by Ballyhoura Development Limited, in conjunction with Mitchelstown Community, and is grant aided by Enterprise Ireland. The Units are located on a prime 1-acre site, which was provided by Cork County Council
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Theme-Specific Questions

Who was targeted by the programme?	Community of Mitchelstown Start up/expanding food businesses
Which levels of government were involved, informed or consulted?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teagasc, Cork County Council and the Health Services Executive officials provided technical support to the project • The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs also assisted together with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.
What actions resulted in mainstreaming?	The enterprise infrastructure strategy of Ballyhoura Development has led to the development of four Advance Factories and 3 Food Units in the area. These projects have been significantly successful and the completed units are fully occupied by successful businesses. Each of these projects represent successful partnership initiatives and are models for other areas.
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through a partnership approach led by communities • High quality standard based units • The rationale underlying the design and implementation of each is that the development should be self-sustaining. Three phases have been identified in the design and implementation– catalyst phase, development phase and the commercial phase. This approach was highlighted in a report completed in 1999, which referred to the development of “a model of sustainable development where sustainable initiatives are market led, quality focused, partner driven and locally co-ordinated. (Partners – Structure Quality Partnership- Strategic Planning- Capacity Building- Action –Review and Re-planning).³
Successes / lessons learned	What contributed to the programme's success? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community led • Partnership with key players building on key strengths of each • Integrated approach

³ Best Practices in Local Development, OECD, Notebook 27, 1999

What lessons have been learned

- Infrastructure developments provide economic diversification opportunity, are valuable infrastructure for local enterprises and provide employment opportunities locally when complimented by ongoing **integrated supports** to entrepreneurs, training and mentoring,⁴ the creation of an enterprise culture and support for joint marketing. These integrated supports will generate sustainable employment opportunities in remote rural areas in the rapidly expanding (primarily urban based) services sector, new technology, leisure and the emerging renewable and alternative energy sectors
- The creation of quality local employment opportunities requires integration of infrastructure (soft and hard), research, investment incentives, supports, training and mentoring locally. Infrastructure investment is critical in creating/facilitating employment opportunities.
- Infrastructure relates to a broad remit from transport to ICT to sewerage to workspace/ incubator units/serviced sites, to heritage interpretation, to countryside recreation infrastructure. Provision needs to be supported from outside the Rural Development Programme (Larger) and within it (smaller).
- To maximise the opportunities in rural areas, we propose the development and delivery of an Integrated Service Model Process in rural towns and their hinterlands. This involves the development, through a process of consultation/ community planning of a Socio Economic Plan and also involves a community partnership with service providers. This process will maximise results if based on joint local participative planning involving plans of the community, of local development groups and of public bodies and will also minimise duplication.
- The application of the LEADER methodology in animating and supporting the development of small-scale local infrastructure for economic diversification has been extremely successful in our area.
- Community, tourism business interests, public partners and local development working in partnership have facilitated the development of these infrastructure developments.
- Supporting entrepreneurship, both private and community, is a key link in the success chain. Enterprises supported across manufacturing (food, crafts, and engineering), tourism (accommodation, leisure, wellness, visitor attractions) and the social economy (theatres and art centres, recycling businesses, IT training, home care) have

⁴ Mentor Programme, developed together with neighbouring local development groups and volunteers with business experience, which offers mentoring to start-up and newly established micro and community enterprises



	<p>demonstrated the need for the range of supports.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Importance and role of business networks which should be animated and facilitated• To provide a complete support service from initial contact through to employment / enterprise start up, there are a number of gaps. We are therefore currently piloting the delivery of a Rural Enterprise and Employment Service. The services required include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Employment Liaison Support Service is operated through the Local Development Groups which offers a support service to employers in the area to work with employers in the area to identify their needs and improve linkage to employment for our clients e.g. farm family members seeking to enter the workplace.○ One to one facilitation, career guidance, CV preparation, job search skills, basic skills training courses and a job linkage service or enterprise support through outreach. We feel that there is a need for an integrated rural enterprise and employment service, which will offer a comprehensive service to clients.
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