



An Roinn Gnóthai Eachtracha  
Department of Foreign Affairs



## RURAL ACTION AND IRISH RURAL LINK ANNOUNCE NEW COLLABORATION

Two leading regional rural bodies have announced a new collaboration which will offer opportunity for cross border learning and development.

Rural Action and Irish Rural Link have announced a new joint initiative which will be launched this morning, **Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> October at 9.30am** in Buswells Hotel by Tánaiste, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Defence, Micheál Martin. This initiative is funded under the initial round of the Irish Government's Shared Island Civic Society Fund.

The project entitled 'Synergy: Rural Collaboration Project' will bring the two organisations together to consider current issues facing rural communities and more importantly to collaborate and devise possible solutions to address the issues identified.

Speaking about the project, Tracey McNally, Chairperson of Rural Action, said *"We are really pleased to be working with Irish Rural Link on this year long project, funded through the initial round of the Shared Island Civic Society Fund. Our two organisations have worked closely together in the past and it is hoped this project would allow for greater collaboration and joint working opportunities whereby North/South relationships could be maintained and enhanced, ultimately benefiting the rural communities we serve."*

The project, whilst working to deepen North South links between two regional rural organisations, will also have a wider reach into rural communities and provide opportunities for grassroots communities to work together and engage in North South cooperation.

The project will be delivered through a range of activities from consultative approaches, such as meetings, workshops, focus groups and regional rural surveys through to study visits, sharing practice and thematic working groups.

Also commenting on the project Seamus Boland, CEO Irish Rural Link said *“We recognise there is a significant amount of untapped innovation potential in rural communities. Our aim, through this project, is to tap into that potential and support the development and progression of projects and programmes on a North South basis.”*

Tánaiste, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Defence, Micheál Martin said: *“I’m delighted to launch this new collaboration between Rural Link and Rural Action, which has been funded under the Shared Island Civic Society Fund. Through the Shared Island initiative, which I established as Taoiseach, this Government is committed to embracing the full potential of the Good Friday Agreement to build a shared, reconciled future on this island. The issues faced by rural communities do not stop at the border. We can be far more effective and far more impactful when we work together, to confront shared challenges and take advantage of opportunities.”*

-----ENDS-----

### **Notes to Editor**

1. The Shared Island Civic Society Fund was launched in January 2023 to promote practical North South cooperation and engagement across a range of sectors and themes, consistent with the objectives and commitments of the Good Friday Agreement.
2. The Fund aims to encourage and support civic society and community organisations to further strengthen existing partnerships and/or to develop new cross-border links, to build connectivity, and to work together to ensure an inclusive and diverse island.
3. Applications are required to have a clear North South dimension, involving cross-border partners collaborating on a project to strengthen North South civic, economic, cultural, and/or political links.

4. Rural Action was formed in 2019 as a not-for-profit social purpose company and became a registered charity in March 2022. It was established to meet an identified need for a regional delivery organisation with a focus on supporting grassroots communities. It seeks to make a positive contribution to the everyday lives of rural communities.
5. Irish Rural link was established in 1991 to represent the interests of locally based rural groups in disadvantaged and marginalised rural areas at local, National and EU Level.
6. Rural Action is the lead organisation for the Synergy: Rural Collaboration Project, which is a 12-month project funded by the Irish Government's Shared Island Civic Society Fund. It is one of 20 projects funded in the initial round of the Fund.