

CREATIVE CLIMATE ACTION FUNDING

Funding secured to support community-led initiative in West Kerry

A €750,000 state grant has been awarded to West Kerry Food Futures, a project that brings creative practitioners together with local food producers to reimagine the region's food economy.

West Kerry Food Futures is one of a select handful of flagship initiatives nationwide to secure the maximum funding tier under Phase III of the state's prestigious Creative Climate Action Fund. The initiative will work with farmers, fishermen and growers to develop sustainable routes to market for local produce, while strengthening local livelihoods and reducing environmental impact.

Led by the Dingle Hub, a not-for-profit organisation, in partnership with the Maharees Conservation Association, the three-year initiative uses creative methodologies to design a low-carbon, resilient local food economy.

What is the Creative Climate Action Fund?

The Creative Climate Action Fund is a €6.5 million state initiative administered by the Creative Ireland Programme, funded through a partnership with the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications and the Department of the Taoiseach.

The fund exists to bridge the gap between climate science and public behaviour. Recognising that behavioural and cultural change is required to meet national climate targets, the fund provides financial support to projects that embed creative professionals, such as artists, designers, and storytellers, directly into communities. The goal is to use creative practices to make complex environmental issues tangible, helping communities co-design and implement practical, long-term sustainability solutions.

How Creative Innovation Will Shape West Kerry's Food System:

The €750,000 investment will fund a collaborative process where artists and designers work alongside local growers, farmers, fishermen, and consumers to deliver:

- *Community Workshops:* Using creative facilitation to bring producers and locals together, mapping out real-world solutions for regional food security.
- *Creative Engagement and Storytelling:* Developing public-facing cultural projects and narratives that make the benefits of buying local food clear, relatable, and socially impactful.
- *Co-Designed Shared Local Services:* Working with creative systems-designers to build community-led models for regional distribution, marketing, and administration, making small-scale production viable.
- *Pilot Market Transitions:* Testing highly visible, direct-to-consumer routes to market that reduce transport emissions and keep food profits within the community.

Creative Practice Grounded in the Community

The initiative builds on recent feasibility research showing that rural food networks thrive when local producers stop competing for distant markets and start sharing local logistics such as distribution, marketing and administration.

Over the coming months, the project will move into a proof-of-concept phase, where practical models, such as local food sales, shared services and coordinated supply chains, will be tested in real-world conditions. This phase will help determine what works best for West Kerry, with the long-term aim of establishing viable, community-owned approaches to local food production and distribution.