

LEAP: Challenges & Lessons learned

Concerted Action on the Energy Efficiency Directive

Croke Park, Dublin

19th Mar 2026



Presentation agenda

- LEAP Project overview & current status
- Challenges & lessons learned (to date)

LEAP Project overview & current status

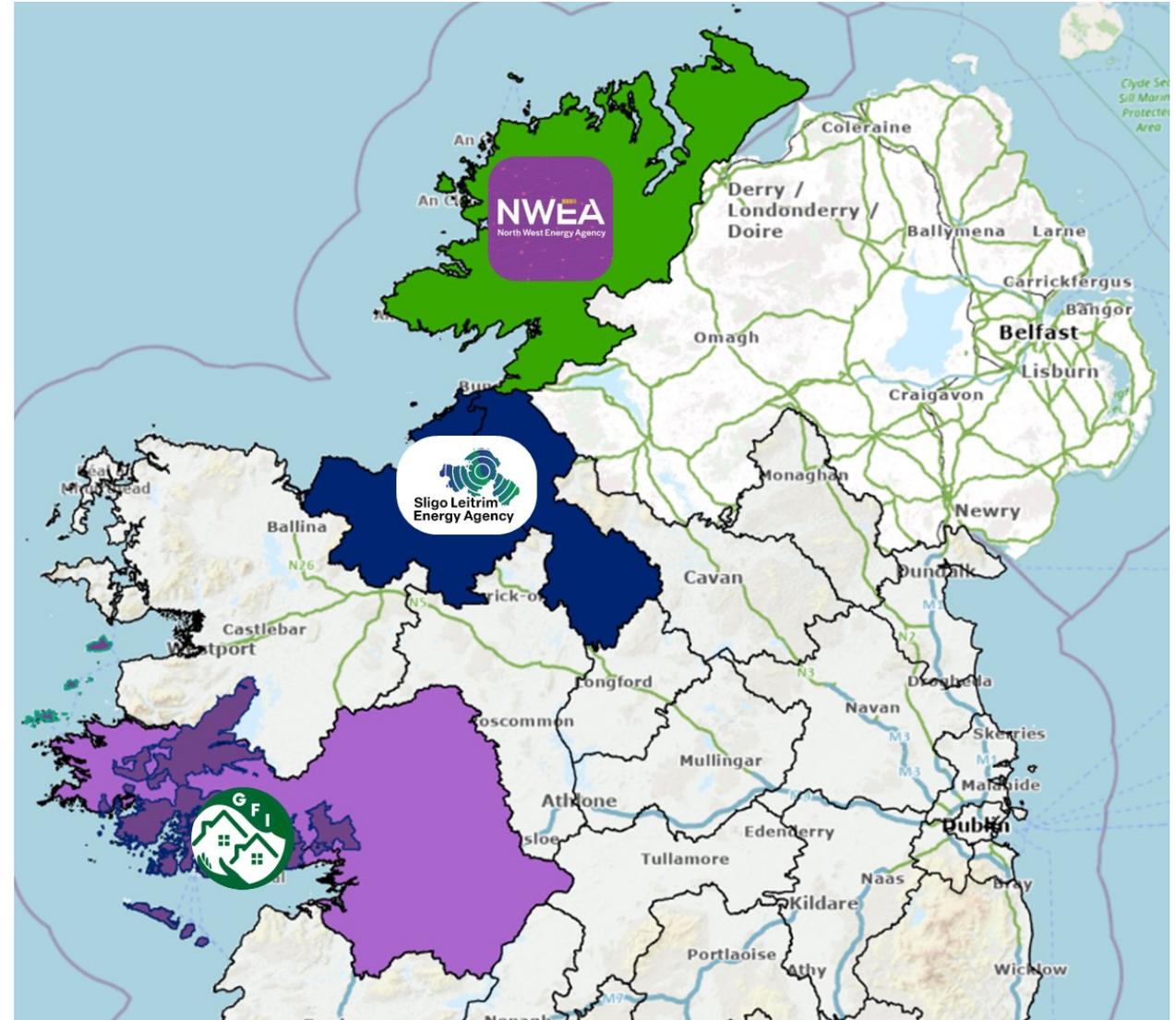
Regional Context

Challenges:

- Peripheral areas and island communities
- Dispersed homes
- Remote from current (2021) Energy Agency / One-Stop-Shop activity
- Small, fragmented supply chain

LEAP project:

- EU LIFE funding secured (Integrated Home Renovation Services)
- Establish local Energy Agencies to take on a geographical dedication for home renovation
- Replicate successful models e.g. Tipperary Energy Agency, South East Energy Agency, Codema



Local Energy Agencies for Peripheral regions (LEAP)

3 new Local Energy Agencies supported by regional stakeholders

Non-profit CLG model

Project Steering Group



Ollscoil
Teicneolaíochta
an Atlantaigh
Atlantic
Technological
University



SLIGO
COUNTY COUNCIL
COMHAIRLE CHONTAE SHLIGIGH



**Comhairle Contae
Dhún na nGall**
Donegal County Council



*Údarás
na
Gaeltachta*



Comhairle Chontae Liatroma
Leitrim County Council



**Fuinneamh
Oileáin Árann**
Aran Islands Energy



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council



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[Atlantic Technological University](#)

Project Lead
Technical support



[Gníomhaireacht Fuinnimh an Iarthair](#)

Gaeltacht & Islands
Piloting the island projects



**Sligo Leitrim
Energy Agency**

[Sligo Leitrim Energy Agency](#)

Warmer Homes Contractor
Piloting Area-based campaigns



NWEA
North West Energy Agency

[North West Energy Agency](#)

Covering Donegal
Piloting the Local Authority Catalyst

Local Energy Agencies for Peripheral regions (LEAP)

EU LIFE funding

- ❖ Total project cost C.€2m
- ❖ EU LIFE grant €1.7m
- ❖ C.€1.5m toward initial staffing for the Local Energy Agencies for 3 years

LEA Team structure:



Ollscoil
Teicneolaíochta
an Atlantaigh
Atlantic
Technological
University

[Atlantic Technological University](#)
Project Lead
Technical support



[Gníomhaireacht Fuinnimh an Iarthair](#)
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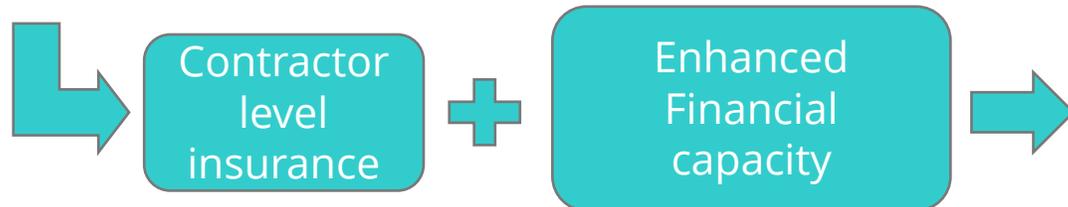


[North West Energy Agency](#)
Covering Donegal
Piloting the Local Authority Catalyst

Energy Agency Service / One Stop Shop

Increasing service level

EU INNOVATE: [How to set up a One Stop Shop](#)



Business model	Roles & responsibilities	Practical example of what the one-stop-shop offers to homeowners
1 Facilitation model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness on energy renovation benefits • Provide general information on optimal renovation works • First advice at the 'orientation stage' 	It advises on how to renovate your house and can provide you with the list of suppliers.
2 Coordination model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate existing market actors (suppliers) • Make sure all one-stop-shop services are offered to homeowners • No responsibility for the result of renovation works (only overlooking the whole process) • No responsibility for the overall customer journey (just the first part) 	It advises on how to renovate your house and will push suppliers to comply with their promises. Suppliers remain responsible for the final result.
3 All-inclusive model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a full renovation package to homeowners • Bear responsibility for the result of renovation works • Bear responsibility for the overall customer journey 	The one-stop-shop is a contractor that sells you the whole service package and is your main contact point in case something goes wrong with suppliers.

LEAP Implementation Strategy

Based on Energy Agency vision and the HOMERENO topic

Establish Local Energy Agencies



Support enhanced local supply chains in the region - create Home Retrofitting Delivery Frameworks



Activate homeowners in the region by providing independent advice and an integrated home renovation service



Work with multiple grant and finance providers to develop innovative mixed funding models for area-based home retrofitting projects - all homeowners get an option to participate



Work with Local Authorities and Social Housing Bodies to kick-start a multi-year workplan of area-based home retrofitting projects, inviting private homeowners to participate

Area-based home retrofitting

Service packages based on homeowners' budget

Budget range	Typical measures	Funding routes (currently available)		Target outcome
<€5,000	Shallow Stage: Attic, CWI, heating controls Stove / new boiler*	SEAI Individual LA Housing Aid*		Home comfort Pathway to B2
€5,000 to €30,000	Deep Stage: EWI, Windows & Doors*, Air tightness, Mech Vent	SEAI Individual LA Housing Aid*	Home upgrade loan (if required)	Staged Retrofit Pathway to B2 'Heat Pump ready'
>€30,000	Full B2 retrofit	SEAI BEC/CEG OSS Partner	Home upgrade loan	B2 or better retrofit

Project status Q1 2026

- 3 LEAs established
- Homeowner service for retrofit management operational
- Supply chain agreements in places
- Business Plans in place for continuation

Warmer, healthier homes

150+ homes upgraded (to date)

Regional investment

C. €2.5m

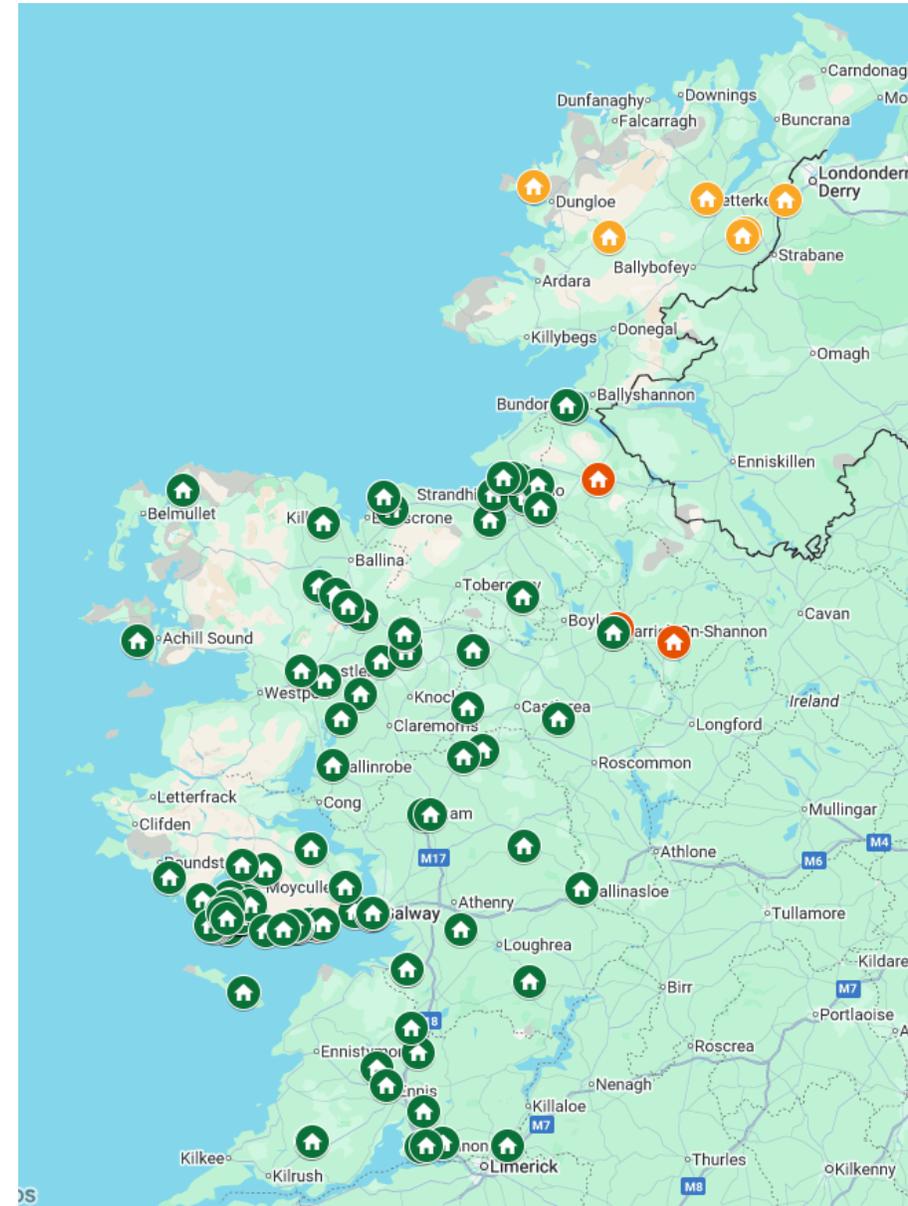
Energy Savings & CO₂ reduction

>1,400 MWh/yr
>350 tCO₂/yr
BER/EPC Average uplift 90 kWh/m²/yr

Jobs

9 FTE (internal) supported

20 FTE (external) supported directly per year to date



Challenges & lessons learned



External challenges & lessons learned

Area-based model trials

Local Authority Catalyst:

Leverage retrofit contractor capacity in place for Local Authority (LA) Homes, as a service to private homeowners

- Private homes in LA housing areas generally are less affluent
- Engagement plan must fit with the LA Programme
- Service offering is less viable for shallow retrofitting

Lessons learned / changes made:

Builds supply relationships

Establishes engagement process

Private home targeting should be extended beyond the LA housing estate – to capture homes with higher investment capacity

Model is not crucial once supply capacity is established

External challenges & lessons learned

SEAI Warmer Homes Scheme

Early opportunity for SLEA:

The SLEA team successfully tendered for the SEAI Warmer Homes Framework in 2023 – targeted to Energy Poverty

- Little control of home locations – may be allocated in areas outside your region
- Negligible input on Home Assessment
- Takes up considerable capacity in a small team*
- Income margins are small per home

Lessons learned / changes made:

Established a pipeline of work early in the project for SLEA

Plan home surveys by proximity to minimise time & travel costs

Develop step-by-step in-house processes

Ideally assign a dedicated staff member to this scheme*

Establish robust QA processes with subcontractors to minimise reworks

External challenges & lessons learned

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Lessons learned:

Are we adding value to the SEAI Warmer Homes Scheme?

Regional delivery model in development – post EU LIFE funding

External challenges & lessons learned

SEAI Home Energy Grant schemes

LEAs must be able to navigate SEAI scheme terms for homeowners and subcontractors, whilst also managing the Quality of the works

- SEAI grants change from time-to-time
- Many less visible terms & conditions, e.g. island home grant top-ups
- Opportunities to combine with other grants sources can be very complex, e.g. vacant property grants

Lessons learned / changes made:

Significant part of the LEA service value to homeowners AND sub-contractors

Develop step-by-step in-house processes

In-house training on SEAI schemes – refresh regularly

Establish robust QA processes with subcontractors to minimise reworks

**SEAI are an important stakeholder
Build a positive relationship**

External challenges & lessons learned

Area-based retrofitting

LEAP aimed to develop home retrofitting on an area-based approach

- Homeowners with varying investment capacity
- Service offering is less viable for shallow retrofitting
- Many homes focused on single measures: Solar PV, Windows

Lessons learned / changes made:

Using a local community group / SEC as the engagement partner works better



External challenges & lessons learned

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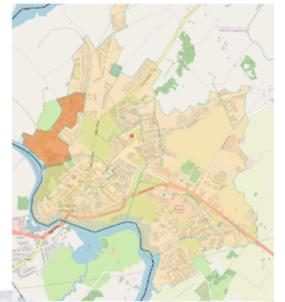
Lessons learned / changes made:

Prepare local specific Home Data and indicative costs for the engagement

CoS DZ, Breffni Cres.

Typical deep retrofit costs (B2 or better)

Measure	Mid-terrace			End of terrace / Semi-D		
	Cost	Grant	Net cost	Cost	Grant	Net cost
Attic Insulation	€1,961	€1,200	€761	€1,961	€1,300	€661
Cavity Wall Insulation	€1,961	€800	€1,161	€3,323	€1,200	€2,123
Windows	€7,718	€1,800	€5,918	€9,080	€3,000	€6,080
Doors	€3,178	€1,600	€1,578	€3,178	€1,600	€1,578
Heat pump system	€13,280	€8,500	€4,780	€13,280	€8,500	€4,780
Mech Ventilation	€5,902	€1,500	€4,402	€5,902	€1,500	€4,402
3.5 Kw Solar PV	€7,200	€2,100	€5,100	€7,200	€2,100	€5,100
Post-works BER	€246	€50	€196	€246	€50	€196
Project Management	€1,476	€1,200	€276	€1,476	€1,200	€276
Totals	€42,922	€18,750	€24,172	€45,646	€20,450	€25,196



Internal challenges & lessons learned

Start-up companies & small teams:

- Not building on any existing capacity
- Limited pool of skill sets & experience
- Over reliance on Admin role to manage all communications and processes
- Vulnerable to staff loss



Lessons learned / changes made:

Initial Admin role was undervalued at application stage

Strong admin builds processes for start-ups

ICT skills for all team members are crucial

More scrutiny at recruitment

Build starting ICT training into project programme at early stage

- **Shared Files and Admin structure**
 - **Site-to-office information**
 - **Sub-contractor comms**
 - **Homeowner comms and CRM**

Internal challenges & lessons learned

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Lessons learned / changes made:

Don't expect to hit the ground running

Identify skills gaps - training

Setup candidate panels from recruitment processes – replace lost staff

Leverage guidance & support from existing Energy Agencies (& EU PEERS)

Primary business plan aim (mid-long term) to grow the in-house teams

+ 1 team member = broader skill set

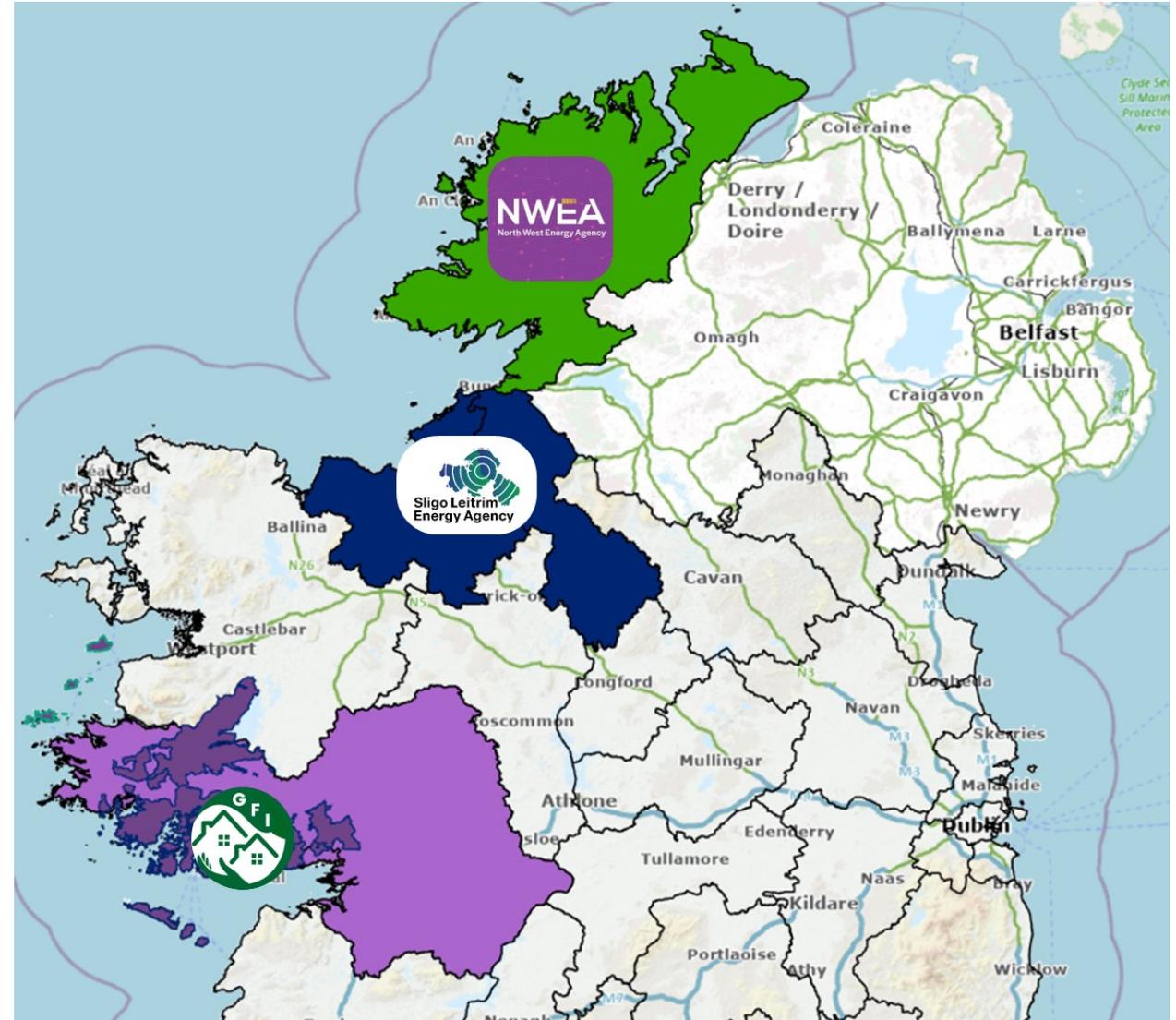
Internal challenges & lessons learned

Beyond EU LIFE (initial funding):

LEA status is 'Viable but Vulnerable'

Develop the Local Authority Strategic Partnerships to align with policy evolution

Maintain and build on the LEAP Regional Partnership post EU LIFE grant



Thank you

Q&A



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