



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



# INTERFACE

Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Fragile Communities in Europe

## FRAGILE COMMUNITIES' SITUATION AND SELECTION IN IRELAND

*NATIONAL REPORT*





INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

FOR FRAGILE COMMUNITIES IN EUROPE

Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



# FRAGILE COMMUNITIES' SITUATION AND SELECTION IN IRELAND

## **NATIONAL REPORT**

**Project No. 2017-1-IS01-KA204-026516**

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.

*The present publication reflects the views of the author only, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.*

## **PREFACE**

The first step in the implementation of the INTERFACE project comprises the selection of the fragile communities, most suitable to be covered by project activities, in order to achieve a substantial and long-lasting effect for these communities in partner countries. This National Report presents the results of the fragile communities’ selection process in Ireland and includes an overview of the situation of the selected fragile communities, together with a description of the final fragile communities’ selection process and its outputs. The Report follows the generic structure, proposed by the IO1 ‘Competence Gap Analysis’ leader – Tora Consult, in order to allow for comparability of reported information and outcomes across INTERFACE partner countries, and includes the following chapters:

- Chapter 1: Fragile communities’ situation;
- Chapter 2: Final selection of the INTERFACE fragile communities – the selection process and its results.

In preparing this material, a variety of sources have been used, incl. statistical data, reports and reviews, together with the results obtained during the fragile communities’ selection process and the own insights/experiences of the authors. The Tipperary County Council Project Team would like to acknowledge the contribution of colleagues in the Council’s Community Development function in the selection of fragile communities.

*Tipperary County Council*

*January 2018*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	4
1. FRAGILE COMMUNITIES’ SITUATION IN IRELAND .....	5
1.1. Location and infrastructure .....	6
1.2. Demographic characteristics .....	10
1.3. Local economy and labour market.....	12
1.4. Community support initiatives and grant funding .....	15
2. FINAL SELECTION OF THE INTERFACE FRAGILE COMMUNITIES IN IRELAND – THE SELECTION PROCESS AND ITS RESULTS.....	16
2.1. Communities’ fragility mitigating factors assessment .....	16
2.2. Personal characteristics of attitudes assessment survey respondents .....	16
2.3. Perceived community problems and ways to address them .....	17
CONCLUDING REMARKS .....	19
ANNEXES .....	20
Annex A. Fragile communities’ mitigating factors assessment grid .....	20
Annex B. Fragile community members’ attitudes assessment – summary of responses.....	22
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES .....	26

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Report presents and explains the process of selecting a number of “fragile” communities to participate in the activities of INTERFACE project in County Tipperary. The three communities selected are Tipperary Town (area covered by Three Drives Family Resource Centre), Fethard Town and Hollyford.

Section 1 of the Report presents information about the initial identification of ten communities at project application submission stage. It then outlines concise information about the location, infrastructure, demographic characteristics, local economy and labour market in the three selected communities, as well as recent support initiatives that are available to these communities.

As the project’s overall methodology determines the “objective identification” of “fragile” communities, it was supplemented, in Section 2 of the Report, by considering, for each of the communities, a number of “fragility mitigating factors”, i.e. factors the importance of which, if appropriately appreciated and effectively combined with interventions, such as those to be advanced by the INTERFACE project, may “mitigate” fragility conditions and potentially reverse observed trends.

The factors distinguishing the selected communities from the other communities include, potential of the natural resources not being sufficiently utilised and they have growth potential in economic and social sectors.

For these three selected communities, a small scale survey was conducted using a standardised questionnaire for all the partner countries and partners. The survey aimed to collect initial perceptions from local stakeholders (persons associated with the local community/group) on the type of issues that the community faces, their severity and on ways to address them.

Despite its small scale, the survey provided some interesting findings, of relevance for subsequent project phases. Such finding are, for example, that no respondent was satisfied with the overall situation in their community; a majority rate the “general level of pro-activity in their community” as “rather high” or “high”; the categories considered most problematic for communities are “regional and local development policy” and “access to financial support for private and public projects”; the “skills” that respondents believe would be most beneficial to the community are analytical thinking, leadership and resourcefulness; and all respondents declared an interest to actively participate in any initiative directed towards boosting such skills within their community.

## 1. FRAGILE COMMUNITIES’ SITUATION IN IRELAND

The first Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2015-2020 for County Tipperary was adopted by Tipperary County Council (TCC) in January 2016. The key objective of the LECP is to promote a more integrated and targeted approach to addressing the strategic social, community and economic issues facing the County of Tipperary in a way that meets the priority needs of the community. It sets out, for the period to 2020, objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of the county, both directly by the County Council itself and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders.

For the purposes of the submission of the INTERFACE project proposal in early 2017, each partner identified ten provisional “fragile communities” that would be considered in relation to participating in project activity. The LECP (and particularly Section 3) was used as the basis for identifying these as indicators used in the LECP included Central Statistics Office Census of Population 2011 data (demographic; economic; social; etc); Pobal’s Deprivation Index 2011; Central Statistics Office Live Register Employment/Unemployment figures; and Central Statistics Office Income figures.

### Provisional List of ten “Fragile Communities” identified at project application stage for participation in “INTERFACE” Project

No.	County	Municipal District	Fragile Community	Type <sup>1</sup>
1	Tipperary	Templemore-Thurles	Roscrea	Urban
2	Tipperary	Templemore-Thurles	Littleton	Rural
3	Tipperary	Nenagh	Nenagh Town	Urban
4	Tipperary	Nenagh	Templederry	Rural
5	Tipperary	Cashel-Tipperary	Tipperary Town	Urban
6	Tipperary	Cashel-Tipperary	Hollyford	Rural
7	Tipperary	Carrick-on-Suir	Fethard Town	Urban
8	Tipperary	Carrick-on-Suir	Slieve Ardagh area	Rural
9	Tipperary	Clonmel	Cahir Town	Urban
10	Tipperary	Clonmel	Ardfinnan/Clogheen	Rural

The three communities now identified to participate in the project in County Tipperary are Tipperary Town (area covered by Three Drives Family Resource Centre), Fethard Town and Hollyford.

---

<sup>1</sup> Urban is >1,500 population; Rural is <1,500 population

### 1.1. Location and infrastructure

This chapter of the Report provides concise information about the location, infrastructure, demographic characteristics, local economy and labour market in the three selected communities, as well as recent support initiatives that are available to these communities.

The three communities selected are Tipperary Town, Fethard Town and Hollyford. The following map illustrates their geographic location in County Tipperary.



Map: County Tipperary and location of communities selected

Community	Tipperary Town <sup>2</sup>	Fethard Town <sup>3</sup>	Hollyford <sup>4</sup>
<b>Connectivity and access to markets</b>	Tipperary town is serviced by the N24 Waterford-Limerick National Primary Road Route which runs through the centre of the town and by the National Secondary Road Route N74 Cashel-	Fethard is situated at the intersection of a number of regional roads, principally the R689 road linking Urlingford to Clonmel, the largest town in County Tipperary, which passes through the main street of the	Hollyford is a small village located in the foothills of the Slieve Felim Mountains in the west of the county. It is situated on the regional road, R497. Hollyford is a traditional rural village, being

<sup>2</sup> Information from the Tipperary Town & Environs Development Plan 2013

<sup>3</sup> Information from the South Tipperary County Development Plan 2009 (as varied), including the Settlement Plan for Fethard

<sup>4</sup> Ibid and Settlement Plan for Hollyford

	<p>Tipperary Town which runs eastwards towards Cashel. The town is located on the Waterford- Limerick Rail Line and the train station is located to the south of the town. However, the number of trains running is very low. The town is also located 4 km to the north-west of Limerick Junction rail station, which provides strategic rail access to the Cork-Dublin and Limerick- Dublin rail lines.</p>	<p>town. Fethard lies 16 km from Cashel Town, at which point the M8 Dublin-Cork motorway can be accessed. Fethard can provide many of the service requirements for its population, though these can be augmented by the nearby county town of Clonmel.</p>	<p>primarily residential in character, and functioning as a service centre for the local agricultural hinterland. For the most part, the towns of Thurles, Tipperary Town and Cashel provide the service requirements for the local population.</p>
<p><b>Availability and quality of public services</b></p>	<p>A significant public Health Centre is located within the town. The town has a number of primary and three secondary schools. The Knockanrawley Resource Centre provides childcare, family therapy, education and training and community development services. The Moore Haven Centre is a Centre for adults in the mild to moderate range of intellectual disability and provides a day Centre and a residential service.</p>	<p>The town has one primary and secondary school. A community day care centre, which provides day care services and recreational facilities, operates from the Fr. Tirry Centre. A Youth Centre is located in the recently renovated Convent Hall. There is a childcare facility located in the town. Since 2011 there has been little construction of new houses in the town despite the upwards growth trend in population.</p>	<p>Hollyford has a primary school located to the west of the village. The school is a co-educational facility serving a large rural catchment. The village does not have a secondary school, however there are post primary education facilities located less than 10km away. There is no childcare/crèche facilities located either within or close to the village boundaries. The local community centre is also located within the village centre.</p>

	<p>Childcare facilities are available from a number of registered providers. The primary issue arising in relation to housing is the lack of private and executive housing in the town and the imbalance between social and private housing.</p>		
<p><b>Regional infrastructure facilities</b></p>	<p>The IDA (Industrial Development Agency) Park is located to the south east of the town centre. Sufficient water and wastewater facilities exist. There is a three-phase electricity supply available throughout the town. A number of public and private employers are present in the town; however, unemployment is an issue. A by-pass of the town has long been considered necessary to alleviate traffic congestion. A fibre-optic Metropolitan Area Network (MAN) is available throughout the town which can facilitate the roll-out of high speed broadband access.</p>	<p>Fethard is identified as a Service Centre in the Council’s County Development Plan which <i>“are robust settlements that have a capacity to accommodate new residential growth, employment and enterprise and other appropriate uses.... These towns and villages perform important roles as retail and service providers in their local economy and are targeted for continued growth”</i>. Recent upgrade works to the water and wastewater facilities have improved their operation. Fethard plays a key role in the worldwide equine industry through the operations of Coolmore Stud and much of the local</p>	<p>The village is serviced by a Municipal Waste Water Treatment System, however, the water supply may require upgrade works to service the perceived needs of the village. The largest employer in the village is the timber/saw mills, which are situated on the northern approach road, and linked to the extensive pattern of forestry in the locality.</p>

		<p>economic activity is stimulated by activities of the Stud. The recently restored Town Hall which now accommodates the Tholsel Visitor Centre and Horse Experience has added to this.</p>	
<p><b>Natural resources</b></p>	<p>The riverside location of Tipperary Town, the proximity of the Glen of Aherlow, the Galtees, Tipperary Hills, golfing facilities at Ballykisteen and Limerick Junction Racecourse in addition to its rich cultural, built and natural heritage and scenic views combined result in the town having immense tourism potential. The town also offers excellent sporting facilities.</p>	<p>Fethard is characterised by its medieval history and form, and its enduring association with the equine industry. The town is situated on a low hill adjoining the River Clashawley. The town is deeply characterised by its Norman history, its distinctive Norman form and in its almost complete circuit of upstanding medieval Town Walls. The historic core of Fethard remains medieval in its clutter of castles, churches, lanes, plots and features situated Walls.</p>	<p>Hollyford is a picturesque village, with the presence of the Multeen River which flows through the village, providing an attractive amenity. The river comprises part of the Lower River Suir Special Area of Conservation. The village is also close to the Multeen Way, a section of the Beire Breifne Walk, which is within 2 km of the village centre. There are opportunities in the village to build on the natural heritage assets and to further develop and enhance the amenity facilities.</p>

## 1.2. Demographic characteristics<sup>5</sup>

Tipperary Town - In 2016, the population of the settlement of Tipperary Town was 4,979 people, with there being 53 more females than males. A breakdown of the age structure is as follows:

Age	Male	Female	Total
<15 years	543	510	1,053
16-64 years	1,546	1,566	3,112
>65 years	374	440	814

Dependents are defined by the Central Statistics Office as people outside the normal working age of 15-64. Dependency ratios are used to give a useful indication of the age structure of a population with young (0-14) and old (65+) shown as a percentage of the population of working age (15-64). The age dependency ratio is important because it shows the ratio of economically inactive compared to economically active. The total age dependency ratio for Tipperary Town is 59.99, which is above the State ratio (52.7).

The educational structure of the population in Tipperary Town is detailed in the following:

**Population aged 15 years and over by sex and highest level of education completed**

Education Level	Males	Females	Total
No Formal Education	40	33	73
Primary Education	309	251	560
Lower Secondary	373	323	696
Upper Secondary	400	432	832
Technical or Vocational qualification	142	201	343
Advanced Certificate/Completed Apprenticeship	97	72	169
Higher Certificate	44	60	104
Ordinary Bachelor Degree or National Diploma	64	89	153
Honours Bachelor Degree, Professional qualification or both	68	85	153
Postgraduate Diploma or Degree	26	72	98
Doctorate(Ph.D) or higher	5	5	10
Not stated	67	83	150
Total	1,635	1,706	3,341

Fethard Town - In 2016, the population of the settlement of Fethard Town was 1,545 people; there were 31 more females than males. A breakdown of the age structure is as follows:

Age	Male	Female	Total
<15 years	162	172	334
16-64 years	493	481	974
>65 years	102	135	237

<sup>5</sup> Figures and statistics in 1.2 and 1.3 are based upon the CSO Census of Population 2016, unless otherwise stated

The total age dependency ratio for Fethard Town is 58.81, which is above the State ratio. The educational structure of Fethard Town is as follows:

**Population aged 15 years and over by sex and highest level of education completed**

Education Level	Males	Females	Total
No Formal Education	18	10	28
Primary Education	86	69	155
Lower Secondary	148	135	283
Upper Secondary	118	119	237
Technical or Vocational qualification	26	50	76
Advanced Certificate/Completed Apprenticeship	41	20	61
Higher Certificate	20	27	47
Ordinary Bachelor Degree or National Diploma	28	32	60
Honours Bachelor Degree, Professional qualification or both	22	48	70
Postgraduate Diploma or Degree	14	28	42
Doctorate(Ph.D) or higher	0	3	3
Not stated	7	12	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>1,081</b>

Hollyford<sup>6</sup> - In 2016, the population of the electoral division of Curraheen, in which Hollyford is located, was 288 people; in this community there were 14 more males than females. A breakdown of the age structure is as follows:

Age	Male	Female	Total
<b>&lt;15 years</b>	27	35	62
<b>16-64 years</b>	100	80	180
<b>&gt;65 years</b>	24	22	46

The total age dependency ratio for Hollyford is 60.00, which is above the State ratio. The educational structure of Hollyford is as follows:

**Population aged 15 years and over by sex and highest level of education completed**

Education Level	Males	Females	Total
No Formal Education	3	0	3
Primary Education	23	12	35
Lower Secondary	30	14	44
Upper Secondary	19	22	41
Technical or Vocational qualification	4	10	14
Advanced Certificate/Completed Apprenticeship	7	1	8
Higher Certificate	5	6	11
Ordinary Bachelor Degree or National Diploma	5	6	11
Honours Bachelor Degree, Professional qualification or both	6	7	13
Postgraduate Diploma or Degree	3	6	9
Doctorate(Ph.D) or higher	0	0	0
Not stated	2	3	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>194</b>

<sup>6</sup> Figures and statistics are based on Curraheen electoral division, in which Hollyford is located

The Pobal HP Deprivation Index measures the relative affluence or disadvantage of an area using data compiled from various censuses. A scoring is given to the area based on a national average of zero and ranging from approximately -35 (being the most disadvantaged) to +35 (being the most affluent). Curraheen (Holyford) is classified as marginally below average; within Tipperary Town there are many small areas classified as very disadvantaged or disadvantaged; Fethard Town comprises small areas classified as disadvantaged or marginally below average

### 1.3. Local economy and labour market

In Tipperary Town, 32.44% of the population were at work in 2016. Over 15% of the working population were either unemployed or looking for a first regular job.

**Population aged 15 years and over by principal economic status and sex**

Principal Economic Status	Male	Female	Total
At work	831	784	1,615
Looking for first regular job	51	27	78
Unemployed having lost or given up previous job	323	214	537
Student	156	153	309
Looking after home/family	25	329	354
Retired	351	350	701
Unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability	203	166	369
Other	7	13	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,947</b>	<b>2,036</b>	<b>3,983</b>

In Fethard, 43.23% of the working population were at work in 2016. Over 13% of the working population were either unemployed or looking for a first regular job.

**Population aged 15 years and over by principal economic status and sex**

Principal Economic Status	Male	Female	Total
At work	277	253	530
Looking for first regular job	6	2	8
Unemployed having lost or given up previous job	104	49	153
Student	41	50	91
Looking after home/family	15	115	130
Retired	89	98	187
Unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability	65	56	121
Other	2	4	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>599</b>	<b>627</b>	<b>1,226</b>

In Hollyford, 43.40% of the working population were at work in 2016.

Population aged 15 years and over by principal economic status and sex

Principal Economic Status	Male	Female	Total
At work	81	44	125
Looking for first regular job	0	0	0
Unemployed having lost or given up previous job	7	5	12
Student	11	10	21
Looking after home/family	3	23	26
Retired	18	16	34
Unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability	5	4	9
Other	0	0	0
Total	125	102	227

Community	Tipperary Town	Fethard Town	Hollyford
<b>Labour market situation</b>	In the 2016 census male unemployment was >55% in some small areas; female unemployment was up to 48%.	In 2016 male unemployment was up to >30% in some small areas; female unemployment was up to 17%.	In 2016 male unemployment was 7.95%; female unemployment was 10.20%.
<b>Local economy</b>	The town has a number of main employers, both private industry and public organisations. There are also many smaller employers/businesses operating within the town and its environs. The economic recession took its toll on employment in the town with reductions in work forces and closures.	Employment is linked deeply with the heritage of the town, the surrounding agricultural hinterlands and the equine industry. The world renowned Coolmore Stud is located near to the town. Service sectors to support the industry are strong in the locality. The town also supports some retailing and other forms of industry (e.g. food processing).	Mainly an agricultural area (27% of persons in 2016 census described themselves as farmers). The largest employer in the village is the timber/saw mills linked to the extensive pattern of forestry in the locality.
<b>Growth potentials</b>	The strategic location of the town in close proximity to national transport corridors, the large catchment area and the availability of	To facilitate further growth of industrial/manufacturing enterprises, lands have been zoned for ‘enterprise and employment’.	There are opportunities to build on the natural heritage assets and to further develop and enhance the amenity facilities.

	<p>industrial floorspace provide opportunities for growth to the economy, employment and innovation of the town. Lands have been zoned for industry use to facilitate this. There is a IDA (Industrial Development Agency) Park located to the south east of the town centre. The town has immense tourism related potential, in view of its location close to rich cultural, built and natural heritage and scenic views.</p>	<p>Opportunities exist in the tourism sector to capitalise on the heritage aspects of the town. New enterprise and development in the town will be expected to be developed in synergy with, rather than compete with the archaeological and architectural character of the town.</p>	
--	--	---	--

All three of these communities (and elsewhere in the county) have access to the available business support infrastructure of a number of agencies/organisations, which includes training, mentoring, grant aid, networking, business planning and business growth services. Key county-level agencies/organisations in this are:

- The Tipperary Local Enterprise Office (LEO) provides a focal point as a One-Stop-Shop for enterprises and for potential entrepreneurs in the county;
- The Tipperary Economic Forum provides a mechanism to bring together the support organisations across the county;
- The Tipperary Education and Training Board (ETB) is a key stakeholder and support for entrepreneurship in the county through its training programmes;
- The two Development Companies<sup>7</sup> in the county, through the EU-funded Rural Development LEADER Programme, provides support for rural enterprise start-ups.

<sup>7</sup> South Tipperary Development CLG and North Tipperary LEADER Partnership Limited

## 1.4. Community support initiatives and grant funding

The two key local policy instruments whose priorities significantly cover and impact on the selected communities are:

- The County Development Plan, which details the overall strategy for proper planning and sustainable development of Tipperary County. The objectives of the Plan are the key determinant for the appropriate location and form of different types of developments. The Plan’s core objective is to provide a strategic policy framework for guiding physical development, promoting sustainable growth and improving the competitiveness of the county;
- The Local Economic and Development Plan (LECP) for County Tipperary 2015-2021, whose purpose is to set out, for a 6 year period, the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic, the local and community development of the county, both by the County Council itself directly and in partnership with other relevant stakeholders in the county. The LECP contains a number of high-level economic and community priorities and associated strategic.

A wide number of publicly funded grant schemes are available, which the selected communities could engage with, to sustainably develop projects/initiatives. Some of these grant schemes provide small-scale grants, whilst others, much larger amounts can be obtained. The location of a community (e.g. urban or rural) may be a determining factor as regards eligibility to these schemes, some of which are as follows:

- LEADER Rural Development Programme;
- CLÁR Scheme (for disadvantaged rural areas);
- RAPID Scheme (for disadvantaged urban areas);
- Town and Village Renewal Scheme;
- Outdoor Recreation Scheme;
- Community Facilities Scheme;
- Scheme of Capital Grants for Community Facilities and Amenities;
- Community Enterprise.

## **2. FINAL SELECTION OF THE INTERFACE FRAGILE COMMUNITIES IN IRELAND – THE SELECTION PROCESS AND ITS RESULTS**

This chapter presents the two stages of the final selection procedure, as it was implemented in the respective INTERFACE partner country, the challenges faced and the actions undertaken to address them, as well as the final list of fragile communities to take part in the project.

### **2.1. Communities’ fragility mitigating factors assessment**

The three (3) communities selected, as a result of undertaking the assessment exercise, for participation in the INTERFACE project activities are:

- Tipperary Town (and specifically the area with RAPID designation<sup>8</sup> covered by the Three Drives Family Resource Centre);
- Hollyford;
- Fethard Town.

This selection provides a mix of urban (Tipperary Town), peri-urban (Fethard) and rural (Hollyford) areas and, in terms of the Council’s Settlement Hierarchy, comprises a District Town (Tipperary Town) and 2 Service Centres (Fethard and Hollyford).

The factors distinguishing the selected communities from the other communities include, potential of the natural resources not being sufficiently utilised and they have growth potential in economic and social sectors.

### **2.2. Personal characteristics of attitudes assessment survey respondents**

The nature of the INTERFACE activities in the communities to take part in the pilot project “interventions” phase, will be determined, not only on the basis of statistically observed economic and social under-performance of certain communities, but also by considering cases in which specific “fragility mitigating factors” allow expectations that the interventions will have better prospects of creating conditions for alleviating the observed situation (*“pulling the specific communities out of their fragility”*). Besides this, it is also considered necessary to incorporate in the design and planning of interventions, some prior information on the extent to which local stakeholders of various types, possess a good understanding of the issues in their

---

<sup>8</sup> RAPID (Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development) is a focused Government initiative to target the most disadvantaged urban areas and provincial towns in the country.

locality, have made previous attempts to tackle these local issues and are, more importantly, favorably disposed towards intended INTERFACE interventions.

The presentation and assessment of such “fragility mitigating factors” in the previous section, was supplemented by a number of contacts, in each of the three selected communities. In particular three such contacts were made in each community, on the basis of a structured Questionnaire. The details of the findings of this “mini-survey” are presented in Annex B of the Report, while in this and the subsequent Section 2.3 are presented first the personal characteristics of the survey respondents and then their responses on perceived community problems and ways to address them.

The nine survey respondents were all female, except for one male respondent. One-third was aged 40-49 years; over 20% were aged 60+ years; 50-59 years; and 30-39 years respectively. Over 50% of respondents are educated to university/post graduate level. Two-thirds are affiliated to a voluntary organization; with one each to a development organisation, business organisation and individual community member.

### 2.3. Perceived community problems and ways to address them

The number of responses, being small, does not allow for a robust analysis. However, certain trends are discernible. The detailed distribution of responses is presented in Annex B. A summary of them is the following:

- No respondent was satisfied with the overall situation in their community (Question II.1).
- A majority (55%) rate the “general level of pro-activity in their community” as “rather high” or “high”; 45% rate it as “low” or “rather low” (Question II.2).
- The categories considered most problematic for communities are “regional and local development policy” and “access to financial support for private and public projects” (both 7/9); “human resources – age structure, level of skills, etc.” (5/9); and “infrastructure facilities” (4/9). The categories ranking lowest were “business sector productivity” (3/9) and “Natural resources” (2/9). (Question II.3).
- Two-thirds of the respondents are “aware of previous initiatives to address problematic fields in the community” (Question II.4). Mostly these related to “regional and local development policy” (Questions II.5), undertaken by various actors internal and external to the community (Question II.6), in which two-thirds of the respondents (4/9) were themselves involved.

- Nearly a full majority of respondents (8/9) confirmed that they would participate, if the opportunity presented itself, “in an initiative which would potentially serve to address one or more of the problematic fields” (Question: II.8).
- The skills that respondents believe would be “most beneficial to the community” are analytical thinking, leadership and resourcefulness (all 8/9); innovation and resilience (both 7/9); and creativity (6/9) (Question II.9).
- All respondents declared an interest to “actively participate in an initiative directed towards boosting” such skills within their community (Question II.10), indicating by a majority of over 75% that similar initiatives have not “already been implemented in their community” (Question II.11).
- The final question addressed what would be the community’s interest and support to such an initiative. There was nearly universal consensus (8/9) that it would be “high” or “very high”; interestingly though one respondent said it would be “rather low”. (Question II.12).

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Available statistics and other types of documentation of the prevailing socio-economic situation at community level are sometimes not sufficient for reliably detecting the degree of their “fragility” and, consequently, the direction and the urgency of interventions that might prevent further worsening of such situations. For this reason, the methodology adopted by the INTERFACE project is that of combining “objective/quantifiable” identification of relatively “fragile” communities (based, at least, on available statistics), with local experts’ insights and understanding of local strengths and weaknesses and of their determining factors. Furthermore, to allow design and implementation of cost-effective interventions that may lead to the improvement of communities, the same methodology argues for simultaneous consideration of “objective fragility detection”, with assessment of “fragility mitigating factors” and “assessment of stakeholders’ perceptions of problems and of ways to overcome them”. The latter will provide indications that resource investment is more likely to produce positive results.

Furthermore, it may also in subsequent project phases, guide the design and planning of interventions that are needed, not only consistent with the needs of local communities, but are very likely to be facilitated by stakeholders’ support and active involvement.

Using the described “fragile communities’ selection” procedure laid down for INTERFACE project partners, Tipperary County Council, the Irish INTERFACE partner, has selected three communities, Tipperary Town (and specifically the area with RAPID designation covered by the Three Drives Family Resource Centre); Hollyford; and Fethard Town, as the intervention areas for subsequent project activities. It is considered that in these areas there is the presence, most importantly, of persons in the communities with a level of interest for investigating and ready to participate and support a new set of interventions.

## ANNEXES

### Annex A. Fragile communities’ mitigating factors assessment grid

<i>Partner country:</i>		<b>TCC (TIPPERARY), IRELAND</b>									
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Community No.</b>		<b>Criterion scoring (on a 1-5 scale)</b>									
<b>Criterion</b>											
1.	The community has a strategic location in terms of connectivity and access to big markets and high-quality public services	4	4	5	2	5	3	4	4	3	2
2.	The community has access to high-quality public services and regional infrastructure facilities are favourable for the development of the local/regional economy	3	3	5	2	4	2	4	4	3	2
3.	Although in place, the natural resources’ potentials are not being sufficiently utilised for the betterment of the community	3	3	2	4	4	5	4	3	3	4
4.	The age and educational structure of the human resources in the community are relatively favourable, yet the local economy cannot fully utilise them	3	3	2	2	5	3	4	2	4	4
5.	So far, the grant funding, received by the community has been limited, mainly due to the lack of initiative coming from within the community itself	2	1	2	3	2	2	2	1	1	2
6.	The community has growth potentials in specific economic sectors, e.g. agriculture, tourism, etc., which so far have not been sufficiently utilised	3	4	4	4	5	5	3	4	2	4
7.	The business support infrastructure at local level (if any) does not seem to operate effectively to the benefit of local businesses	3	3	2	4	3	4	4	2	2	3
8.	The improvement of the socioeconomic situation in this and similar underdeveloped communities is among the priorities of Development policies at regional and national level	5	5	2	4	5	4	3	5	3	3
9.	The local/regional administration is apt to supporting activities, initiated by third parties or by community members themselves in support of local development	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
10.	The community’s situation is affected by external factors, such as economic crisis, geopolitical situation, etc., with little effort at local level to mitigate their adverse effects	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3
<b>Total score:</b>		<b>34</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>32</b>

**List of communities:**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Municipal District</b>	<b>Fragile community</b>	<b>Type<sup>9</sup></b>
1	Templemore-Thurles	Roscrea	Urban
2	Templemore-Thurles	Littleton	Rural
3	Nenagh	Nenagh Town	Urban
4	Nenagh	Templederry	Rural
5	Cashel-Tipperary	Tipperary Town	Urban
6	Cashel-Tipperary	Hollyford	Rural
7	Carrick-on-Suir	Fethard Town	Urban
8	Carrick-on-Suir	Slieve Ardagh area	Rural
9	Clonmel	Cahir Town	Urban
10	Clonmel	Ardfinnan/Clogheen	Rural

---

<sup>9</sup> Urban is > 1,500 population; Rural is < 1,500 population

Annex B. Fragile community members’ attitudes assessment – summary of responses

<b>Partner country:</b>	<b>Ireland (TCC)</b>								
<b>Community:</b>	<b>Fethard Town</b>			<b>Tipperary (Three Drives)</b>			<b>Hollyford</b>		
<b>Survey question:</b>	<i>Respondent 1</i>	<i>Respondent 2</i>	<i>Respondent 3</i>	<i>Respondent 1</i>	<i>Respondent 2</i>	<i>Respondent 3</i>	<i>Respondent 1</i>	<i>Respondent 2</i>	<i>Respondent 3</i>
<b>SECTION I. PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS</b>									
I.2. Gender	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Male	Female	Female
I.3. Age	60+	60+	40-49	40-49	30-39	50-59	50-59	40-59	30-39
I.4. Education	Secondary Sch/VEC.	Post Grad.	University	University	Secondary School	University	Secondary School	Secondary School	University
I.5. Affiliation	Voluntary Org	Volunteer Org	Volunteer Org	Reg. Dev. Org.	Ind. Comm. member	Voluntary Org	Voluntary Org	Voluntary Org	Business Org.
<b>SECTION II. COMMUNITY PROBLEMS AND WAYS TO ADDRESS THEM</b>									
II.1. Are you and those around you satisfied with the overall situation in your community?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
II.2. How would you rate the general level of pro-activity in your community with regards to issues of community importance?	Rather high	Rather high	High	Low	Very low	Low	Rather high	Rather low	Rather high

**INTERFACE – Fragile communities’ situation and selection in Ireland, National Report**

II.3. Which of the categories below do you consider most problematic for your community?	Infrastructure facilities HR Access to financial support Business Sector Regional and local dev.pol. External factors	Infrastructure facilities HR Access to financial support Business Sector Regional and local dev.pol. External factors	HR Business Sector Regional and local dev policy	HR Access to financial support Business Sector Reg. and local dev. pol.	Access to financial support	HR Access to financial support Regional and local dev. pol.	Infrastructure Access to financial support Regional and local dev. pol. External factors	Natural resources Infrastructure facilities Access to financial support External factors	Natural resources Reg & local dev. policy
II.4. Are you aware of any initiative(s), which has been undertaken in your community to address one or more of the problematic fields identified above?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
II.5. If the answer to the previous question was affirmative, what problematic area(s) did the initiative(s) address?	Infrastructure facilities Access to financial support Regional and local dev. pol.	Infrastructure facilities Access to financial support Regional and local dev. pol.	N/A	Regional and local dev. pol.		Business sector		Natural Resources	Natural Resources Regional & local dev. pol.
II.6. Was the action(s) initiated by actors from within the specific region or outside it and who was/were the main actor/s?	<b>Internal</b> Local Administration Reg Dev Org Voluntary Org <b>External</b> Reg Dev Org Social Ent	<b>Internal</b> Local Administration Reg Dev Org Voluntary Org <b>External</b> Reg Dev Org Social Ent		<b>External</b> Reg./Nat. Gov. Reg. Dev. Organisation		<b>Internal</b> Voluntary Org  <b>External</b> Reg./Nat. Gov. Training Org.	<b>Internal</b> Voluntary Org  <b>External</b> Voluntary Org	<b>Internal</b> Reg. Dev. Organisation <b>External</b> Voluntary Org.	<b>Internal</b> Local admin Voluntary Org <b>External</b> Voluntary org

II.7. Have you already been involved in any such initiative?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
II.8. If you had the opportunity to participate in an initiative, which would potentially serve to address one or more of the problematic fields identified above, would you take it?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
II.9. Raising the potential for responsibly and autonomously employing which of the following skills do you believe would be beneficial for your community?	Innovation Creativity Analytical thinking Resourcefulness Leadership Resilience	Innovation Creativity Analytical thinking Resourcefulness Leadership Resilience	Innovation Analytical thinking Resourcefulness Resilience	Innovation Creativity Analytical thinking Resourcefulness Leadership Resilience	Innovation Creativity Analytical thinking Resourcefulness Leadership Resilience	Innovation Creativity Analytical thinking Resourcefulness Leadership Resilience	Innovation Creativity Resourcefulness Leadership	Analytical thinking Leadership	Analytical thinking Resourcefulness Leadership Resilience

II.10. Would you or anyone you know be interested in actively participating in an initiative, directed towards boosting the level of the above skills within your community?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
II.11. Have any initiatives of such type already been implemented in your community?	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No.	No	No	No
II.12. If such an initiative is undertaken in the future, how would you rate the interest and support it is likely to receive in your community?	Rather high	Rather low	Rather high	High					

## **BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Tipperary Local Community Development Committee, County Tipperary Local Economic and Community Plan 2015-2020

Tipperary Local Community Development Committee, County Tipperary Local Community and Social Inclusion Plan 2015-2020

Tipperary County Council, Tipperary Town and Environs Development Plan 2013

Tipperary County Council, Fethard Public Realm Plan 2008

Tipperary County Council, County Development Plans (as varied)

# PARTNERS



**Aitoliki Development Agency S.A.**  
Greece



**Byggðastofnun**  
*Icelandic Regional Development Institute*  
Iceland



**CESIE**  
Italy



**Haskolinn a Bifrost**  
Iceland



**Tipperary County Council**  
Ireland



**Tora Consult Ltd.**  
Bulgaria



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.