

Muintir na Tire

A Proposal to the Minister for Science
and Technology

Mr. Sean McCarthy, T.D

For a

LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

TO FURTHER THE OBJECTIVES OF THE

SERtec (Pilot) Programme

July 1988

Muintir na Tire makes this Proposal to the Minister for Science and Technology. Mr. Sean McCarthy, T.D. so as to assist in the mobilisation of all local forces and resources - human and physical - in endeavouring to achieve the objectives of the SERtec (Pilot) Programme; to harness the "regions existing technological strengths and advantages to support local enterprises. "

It does so:

- i. In the light of its experience and achievements over fifty years, both in the areas of organisation and research, in the process of Community Development, and
- ii. Because of the conclusions and recommendations found in the recent Study of 22 experiments in Ireland and in the Emilia-Romagna in Italy - The New Technologies and Local Development * (a copy of the Study is attached to this Submission by way of allied documentation).

The Study pointed out:

1. the need for a strong local supporting environment to ensure the successful creation of new enterprises through training and the dissemination of necessary information to make innovation and the introduction of the new technologies more easily acceptable to the people of the regions and local communities, and
2. that the process of Community Development (as for example, practised by Muintir na Tire in a number of the experiments examined) was an effective and appropriate means to mobilise the exploitation and full use of the potential of available indigenous resources as essential components with the new technologies for local and regional development.

THESE CONCLUSIONS UNDERPIN THIS PROPOSAL.

Muintir is further encouraged to make this Proposal because of the present approach of the European Community (especially having regard to the Regulation on the Tasks of the Structural Funds adopted by the European Council on June 23, 1988) which aims to involve the people of the regions in their relevant structures and at the appropriate levels of decision-making so as to encourage and stimulate indigenous development.

*Published by the Directorate-General, D.G.XII, Commission of the European Communities----
FORECASTING AND ASSESSMENT IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (FAST) , edited by Professor
C.K.Ward, Social Science Research Centre. University College, Dublin, 1987,

OUTLINE DRAFT OF MUINTIR'S PROPOSAL

For the purpose of the project set out in paragraph I, Muintir proposes that it be designated to act as the motivation and stimulation agent at the local community level in the S.E. Region. It would carry out its functions through the various Community Councils and other local structures so as to achieve by way of co-operation with the statutory bodies involved and the exploitation of local resources the aims and objectives of the Programme of the SERtec.

Muintir would carry out its functions in the project in the following areas:

1) Building on its experience and the results of the EEC-funded Pilot Project - A Training of Trainers Project, 1973-1977 - Muintir would undertake to make a positive contribution to the programmes of the SERtec through training and education aimed at all ages thereby expanding the pool of leadership and improving the educational support for community leaders and helping them to cope with local needs.

2) Muintir would help to develop appropriate education and training programmes in response to the identification of local needs so as to diversify the rural economic base and help to develop new sources of employment and income through, for example, local employment initiatives.

3) Through its Community Council structures, Muintir would develop programmes aimed at fostering an understanding of the work of SERtec.

4) Likewise, such programmes would aim at:

a. promoting an appreciation of the value of using local natural resources such as land, forestry (especially short rotation for biomass), fishing, tourism, heritage, the environment, etc, and

b. promoting an understanding or the need to apply to these areas the results of scientific and technological research as indicated by the Committee of SERtec.

5) Drawing on its experience in having pioneered the establishment of Community Information Centres in Ireland, Muintir would undertake through the Community Councils, a network of local centres for the transmission of the necessary data from the SERtec Committee so as to harness the full potential of the region to support local enterprises. The aim would be to focus on local socio-economic resources through the identification of local entrepreneurs especially in the area of crafts and small enterprises to which appropriate technologies could be transferred.

6) Through the training programmes and the dissemination of the necessary information so as to facilitate innovation and the introduction of the new technologies and make them more acceptable and understood by the people of the local communities in the S.E. Region, Muintir can give practical effect to the findings and conclusions of the FAST 21 Report of the European