



NEW SUSTAINABLE ENERGY COMMUNITIES COMMIT TO ENERGY SAVING PROJECTS

~ Three Local Authorities to take lead in testing new technologies and policies to stimulate national move towards sustainable energy practice~

17th October 2011 – The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) today announced Tralee, Dublin City and Tallaght as the three new exemplar Sustainable Energy Communities (SEC), all of whom will commit to specific energy saving projects for the next five years. The communities were selected from 14 local authorities for having a visionary co-ordinated approach to energy savings and integrating sustainable energy into community planning and development. The selection of the three SECs follows a competitive selection process and builds on the success of Ireland's pilot SEC, Dundalk 2020.

SEAI's Sustainable Energy Communities Programme aims to develop a series of Irish communities as 'living laboratories' to establish a culture of innovation and facilitate the emergence of new sustainable energy technologies and practices that grow energy smart towns and cities. SECs involve everyone in the community, across all sectors, working together to enhance sustainability by being as energy efficient as possible, using renewable energy where feasible and developing indigenous energy supplies. The programme acts as a catalyst on the ground to help stimulate a national move towards sustainable energy practice and to deliver national energy targets.

Dundalk 2020 was established as Ireland's first SEC in 2007. Work to date has involved the installation of energy efficient technologies in a wide range of buildings as well as implementing energy efficient behavioural change. The project has led to savings of more than 5,000 tonnes of CO₂ per annum, while organisations together are saving in excess of €500,000 per annum.

Speaking at the announcement of the winning SECs, Professor J. Owen Lewis, Chief Executive of SEAI said: "The standard of the proposals we received was excellent. Tralee, Dublin City and Tallaght will, with the support of SEAI, champion the testing and deployment of new sustainable energy technologies and practices in their communities, involving people across all sectors. The aim of the Sustainable Energy Communities Programme is to replicate best practice throughout

the country and we will be helping other local authorities to improve the link between sustainable energy, economic development and planning, making significant energy savings in the process.”

SEAI will partner with the communities for five years, providing them with strategic guidance, as well as technical and project management support. As part of the programme, SEAI also set up an SEC Network to facilitate best practice and knowledge sharing among all local authorities that are progressing in sustainability.

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Notes to editor:

About the winning Sustainable Energy Communities:

The first SEC selected was **Kerry** which will, through local cooperative harvesting and marketing ventures in the Tralee area, secure a local supply of energy. This will offer a viable business opportunity for farmers. The indigenous supply of renewable energy has the potential to replace €8m of annual oil imports from the Kerry market and also the potential to provide up to 112 sustainable and permanent jobs.

As an SEC, **Dublin City** will become a test-bed for research, development and deployment of sustainable energy best practice. The community will work with both public and private sectors to re-engineer a sustainable energy future for the city. Priority projects for Dublin City SEC include the Ballymun Regeneration and the retrofitting of a number of public buildings including Kevin Street library, the Mansion House and Dominick Street. By engaging with industry and informing policy development Dublin City SEC will strengthen the country’s position on sustainable energy internationally.

For **South Dublin**, increasing energy efficiency, lowering the county’s carbon footprint and improving the economic profile will be a priority. Projects for this area include the refurbishment of up to 150 local authority owned homes, developing sustainable travel projects such as the Tallaght Cycle Network Plan and the appointment of a Sustainable Energy Executive to help local SMEs reduce costs by improving their energy efficiency. The projects will generate savings for both public and private users, create community networks that can meet energy targets and will serve as a valuable template to other communities in the future.

About SEAI:

The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) has a mission to play a leading role in transforming Ireland into a society based on sustainable energy structures, technologies and practices. The Authority is partly financed by Ireland's EU Structural Funds Programme co-funded by the Irish Government and the European Union.

About the Sustainable Energy Community Network:

The SEC Network is a voluntary network, facilitated by SEAI, that allows community champions to connect and share information with other communities in Ireland. The forum enables ongoing dialogue about best practice in sustainable energy and will strengthen links with funding and policy initiatives in Ireland and the EU.