

Guidelines to Developing your SEC Community Charter

What is a Community Charter?

A Community Charter is a **one-page overview of your Sustainable Energy Community's vision and goals**. It briefly outlines your commitments and **is signed on behalf of your SEC by nominated Steering Committee members**. Your signed Community Charter should be submitted as part of your Stage One Application to the SEC Partnership Agreement Programme. Once SEAI have received and approved your application, they will counter-sign your Community Charter signifying their commitment to work with you over the duration of your three-year partnership. The Community Charter is not a legal document; it is a statement of intent and represents the collective ambition of your community.

How do we create one?

Below we have outlined the typical components included in effective Community Charters. Overleaf, are two sample Charters – one for a fictitious group and another developed by the Dundalk 2020 Árd Easmuinn project. This information is intended to serve as a loose guideline rather than a blueprint. You should create your own Community Charter that suits your needs and goals. To help you, we have created a graphically designed template available [here](#). This can be personalised for your SEC by inserting your own content.

Typical Community Charter Components

Vision Statement

A one-sentence, aspirational statement describing what your SEC would like to achieve.

Tip: This could be collectively created by your Steering Committee using a visioning exercise. For this, everyone draws what their ideal 'picture' is for the SEC if everything went well and you had all the resources you needed (no artistic skills required!). People then discuss their images, identifying keywords to describe their core qualities. The group then discusses the similarities or differences that arose in this exercise and attempts to agree on a collective vision for the project. Post-its / flip charts are useful here.

Elaborated Vision / Goals

An explanation on the initiatives and high-level goals your SEC plans to pursue to achieve your Vision. You may like to include this to broaden your vision statement beyond one sentence.

Guiding Principles

A statement on how your group will operate to achieve its goals – this could relate to internal practices, how you will relate to other groups or partners, collaborate and create impact.

Community Support

A sentence to note the level of support within the community for the project and / or commenting on progress to date.

Commitments

A list of your SEC's key commitments. Commitments might relate to the following topics:

- *Partnerships and engagement* – commitment to collaborate and engage effectively: within your group; with the SEC Network and SEAI; with members of the public and other stakeholders and authorities locally, regionally and nationally.
- *Achievement of targets* – commitment to achieve specific targets for improving energy efficiency, increasing the share of renewables or reducing carbon emissions in your SEC (*Note that not all groups include specific numeric targets).
- *Integrated planning and reporting* – commitment to recording and reporting on progress regularly and to adopting an integrated, long-term planning approach.
- *Achievement of vision and goals* – commitment to achieve your Vision may be reiterated in this section.
- *Creating impact* – commitment to promote the project and the theme of sustainable energy across the community and Ireland.

Tip: For ideas on the kinds of Commitments you might like to include, you could refer to SEAI's Competency Evaluation Tool ([here](#)) that outlines the building blocks for a successful SEC.

SEC Community Charter – Fictitious Example

The Bally Town Co-operative

Bally Town
Logo

Our Vision...

Is to build a resilient, energy efficient community and a thriving local economy where everyone works together to create a more sustainable energy system.

Vision
Statement

We will do this by...

Improving the energy performance of our buildings, increasing our use of renewable energy, promoting better energy choices and sustainable transport.

Elaborated
Vision/ Goals

We will work together...

With all of our community representatives, energy users and the SEC Network to help maximise impact, share resources and knowledge. We will work to ensure Bally Town becomes widely recognised as being a leader in reducing carbon emissions in a rural town setting.

Guiding
Principles

We commit to...

- Collaborate to improve our energy efficiency by a minimum of 3% on average every year, for at least the next three years.
- Achieve 5% of our energy supply from renewable sources by 2020.
- Maintain records of energy use in our target buildings and homes to track and report annually on our progress.
- Collaborate with the SEC Network and SEAI to provide feedback, share knowledge and contribute to the national movement for Sustainable Energy Communities.
- Ensure there is a long-term strategy for Bally Town to promote a roadmap of integrated initiatives and continuous improvement.

Commitments

We the undersigned are fully supportive of the vision, aims and commitments outlined above. We sign this Community Charter on behalf of:

Bally Town Co-operative

11th September 2016

Signature:	Position / Title:	Signature:	Position / Title:
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Charter
should be
signed by
members of
your
Steering
Committee /
partners

SEAI Commit to supporting your SEC for the duration of this three-year Partnership Agreement to help you deliver your sustainable energy ambitions.

SEAI
counter-sign
Charter
following
receipt of
your Stage
One
Application

Signature:	Print Name:	Position / Title:	Date:
_____	_____	_____	_____



Community Charter – Real-life example

Dundalk 2020 Árd Easmuinn

Dundalk 2020

Our Vision...

Is to stimulate a national move towards sustainable energy practice through demonstration in an exemplar community.

Vision Statement

The Dundalk 2020 project seeks to demonstrate how a community can move to a more sustainable pattern of energy supply and use. This project is to be an exemplar, first within the town of Dundalk, then the surrounding region and ultimately to Ireland as a whole. The project will achieve a substantial increase in the use of renewable energy, a significant improvement in the energy performance of the built environment, the provision of intelligent management of the supply / demand balance, and greater energy autonomy for the community.

Elaborated Vision/ Goals

The residents of Árd Easmuinn housing estate fully support Dundalk 2020. In particular, Árd Easmuinn, through the use of a Structured Energy Management Programme, will achieve significant reductions in energy consumption through a campaign across 2008. SEAI and energy suppliers will actively work the Árd Easmuinn residents to help meet the challenge.

Community Support

Guiding Principles

The undersigned are fully supportive of the aims and objectives of the Árd Easmuinn Structured Energy Management Programme and the broader commitments of the Dundalk 2020 project and have each committed:

- To maintain records of electricity and gas and / or oil usage in our homes
- To collaborate fully with other residents in the project
- To collaborate with Power of One mentors who will provide assistance to the Resident's Association
- To collaborate with SEAI to provide feedback to the Dundalk 2020 project and other Residents Associations within Dundalk
- To ensure that this is a long-term strategy for Árd Easmuinn, such that energy efficiency improvements will continue after December 2008.

Commitments

Signature:

Position / Title:

Signature:

Position / Title:

Signatories



Community Charter - Template

[Insert Your SEC Name Here]

Our Vision...

[insert text]

We will do this by...

[insert text]

We will work together...

[insert text]

We commit to:

[insert text]

-
-
-
-
-
-

This is a screenshot of the template we have made for you to customise. The Template can be found at the following link: www.seai.ie/xxxx.

The template is created in A3 format to allow sufficient space for content and signatures.

It is not necessary to use the headings we have provided for you – please edit as required.

Please include your own SEC logo / imagery if you want to personalise the visual look.

You may edit this commitment statement to suit the text of the Charter above.

We the undersigned are fully supportive of the vision, aims and commitments outlined above.

We sign this Community Charter on behalf of:

[Insert name of your SEC here]

[Insert Date here]

Signature:

Position / Title:

Signature:

Position / Title:

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____	_____

You may add or remove lines for signatures. It is not necessary to fill in all of the lines created however it is recommended to have the Steering Committee sign your Charter along with any other key partners.

The section for SEAI's counter-signature is fixed and should not be edited.

SEAI Commit to supporting your SEC for the duration of this three-year Partnership Agreement to help you deliver your sustainable energy ambitions.

Signature:

Print Name:

Position / Title:

Date:

