



# Sustainable Energy Communities Handbook



# The Journey towards Net Zero



## SEAI Established

The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland was established as Ireland's national energy authority under the Sustainable Energy Act 2002 to work with householders, businesses, communities and government to create a cleaner energy future.

2002



## Sustainable Energy Community Network

The Sustainable Energy Community (SEC) programme was established by SEAI in 2015 to support a national movement of communities.

2015



## Climate Action Plan

Ireland's first Climate Action Plan (CAP19) set out ambitious actions to address diverse and wide-ranging impacts on Ireland's environment, society, economic and natural resources.

2019



## National Climate Policy Targets

CAP19 Targets: To achieve 1500 communities to be part of the SEC Network by 2030. Reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030. Nationally our annual greenhouse gas emissions to be halved.

2030



## Sustainable Energy Community Model

The concept originated in 2007 with Dundalk 2020, as part of the EU HOLISTIC project, led by SEAI and Louth County Council.

2007



## Energy White Paper

This White Paper sets out a vision for transforming Ireland's fossil fuel-based energy sector into a clean, low carbon energy system by 2050 and become carbon-free by 2100 requiring all energy users to think and act differently to effect change in energy use.

2015



## Sustainable Energy Community Network

The SEC network is now operating in every part of the country with over 1,000 communities taking local action.

2025



## National Climate Policy Targets

CAP19 target: Ireland's energy system must achieve net-zero emissions well before 2050.

2050

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**Cover photo:** Greystones & Delgany SEC - Energy Awards Finalist 2024

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# Welcome

The SEAI Sustainable Energy Communities (SEC) Network works to engage and enable active energy citizens.

This handbook helps you to shape the future of your community, guiding you through the crucial steps to plan and achieve your long-term vision.

It provides you with top tips, best practices and links to other resources and support you can access or download from the SEAI platforms.

You can dip in and out of this handbook depending on what stage your SEC is at.



Triple SEC (Connecting Cabra, StoneyBatter and Phibsborough Village SECs) - SEAI Energy Awards Winner 2024

# Energise your Community

## Connected communities creating a sustainable future

An SEC is a group of people working together locally to use energy responsibly and sustainably for the benefit of that community:

- Aiming to be as energy efficient as possible;
- Use renewable energy where feasible;
- Consider smart energy solutions.

Your SEC has the ability to lead, influence, engage and enable others living and working in your community.

By working together at a community level, SECs can deliver much more as a collective in reducing carbon emissions and realising a number of co-benefits for the community.



## The SEC Network

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You are now part of a national peer-to-peer network of close to 1000 communities. As a member of the network, you have access to a range of supports from SEAI for developing your knowledge and skills through to implementing energy projects.

You also have the opportunity to learn from other local communities and to share resources, knowledge and experiences with them. This enables long-term mutual benefits for all involved.

The SEC network enables communities to manage and save energy across all sectors. Being a member of the network enables SECs access to engage and learn from mentor support, peer to peer engagement opportunities, demonstration site visits and hearing other SECs stories.

## The SEC Mentor

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There is a community mentor located in each county of Ireland. The mentors work in one of four regions and are organised by one of four regional coordinators.

This provides capacity and resources as close to communities as possible. This means you receive local targeted guidance and support from an experienced mentor. The mentors also provide your feedback to SEAI to help us improve the programme and develop supports best suited to your needs.

The local SEAI mentor will reach out and introduce themselves to you. You may have already met as mentors are often involved in recruiting new communities into the network.



*"A network of active energy communities who will lead the societal transformation to a low carbon future"*

## The SEC Programme Stages

SECs have different ambitions and visions for what can be achieved locally.

Some are only starting out with a small number of people, whereas others are building on existing energy initiatives or have well established organisations on the ground to move initiatives forward. Regardless of what stage or scale you are at, SEAI provide support across the three broad stages of Learn, Plan and Do. This includes:

- **Learn Stage:** access to resources for getting started and access to a county mentor that provides one-to-one support
- **Plan Stage:** access to finance when developing a local Energy Master Plan that identifies how energy is used across your community and identify suitable next steps to lower carbon emissions.
- **Do Stage:** supporting in accessing community energy grants when you are ready to invest in sustainable energy initiatives
- **Share:** Engage with your peer network and the wider community to exchange expertise, support learning, and celebrate achievement.





# LEARN

Learn involves getting setup, meeting with your mentor and learning from the experiences of other communities. This document provides tools to allow you to assess your role, map out opportunities and start thinking about your community's vision in an informed way.

In this stage you will:

- ✓ Engage with your mentor and avail of peer and self-learning opportunities and attend events.
- ✓ Set up your committee and engage your wider community.
- ✓ Assess your committee's skillset and opportunities available to you.
- ✓ Set out your aims and vision in your community charter.



Arklow Town SEC



# 1 Establishing your community

## Working with your mentor

Your SEAI mentor will work with you to guide you through the Learn Stage. They will support you in getting the most out of the resources available to build your SEC and to establish your presence in the network and your wider community.

## Getting started

This document outlines best practice from your peer community network on getting started.

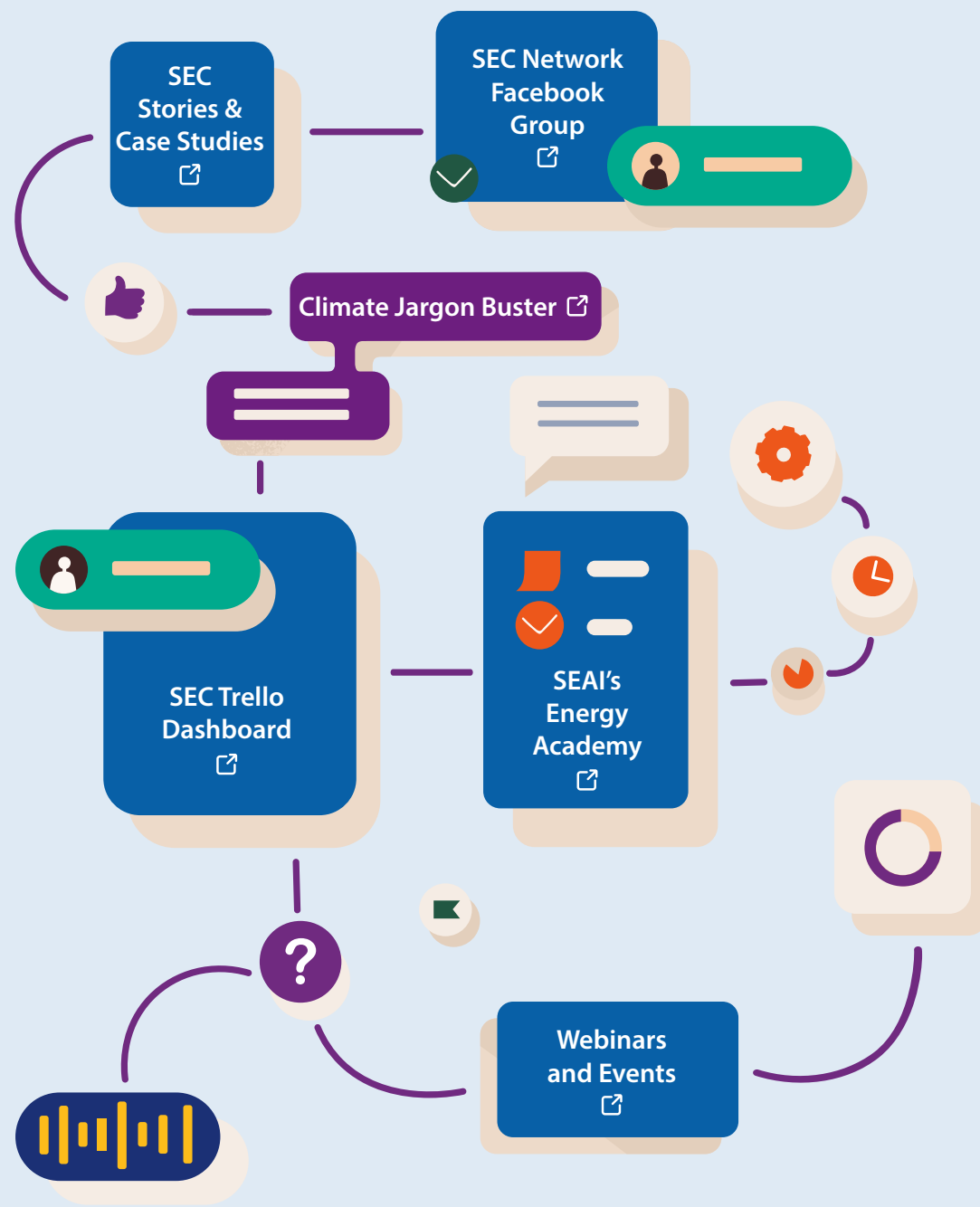
Allowing yourself some time at the start to establish your community is essential to enable you to:

- **Build** your knowledge through engaging with SEAI learning

platforms and other communities.

- **Manage** operations effectively within your community going forward.
- **Communicate** your message and presence effectively to your wider community.
- **Setup** your steering committee to represent and deliver the vision and targets of your community.

## Template to download



SEAI host a number of learning platforms, webinars and events for you to engage with in your own time.

## 2 Assess your skills and map your opportunities

### Skills Assessment

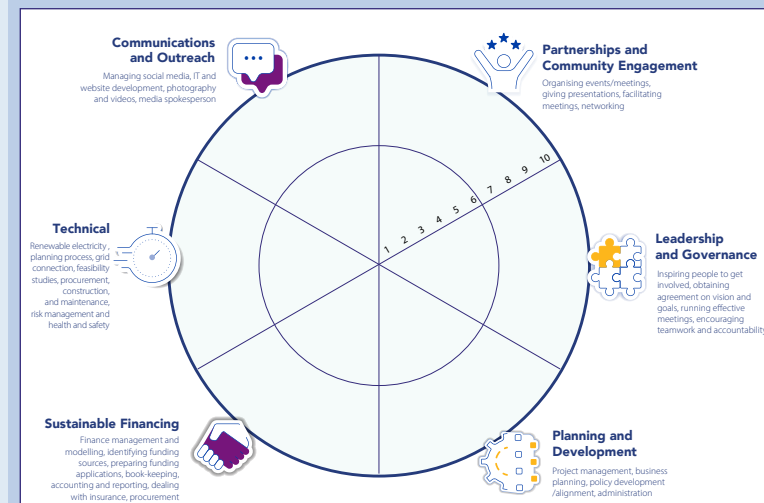
Building on your skills and availing of expertise is essential to moving through the Learn, Plan, Do Stages.

Existing communities have highlighted some skills for success, some of which your SEC members will bring to the table. Other skills will be drawn on from your wider community, from your SEAI mentor or from trusted advisors and contractors (e.g. legal, technical, financial) that you will engage with at various stages.

Take some time to assess your strengths as a group and identify areas for development in the linked resource.

### Opportunity Mapping

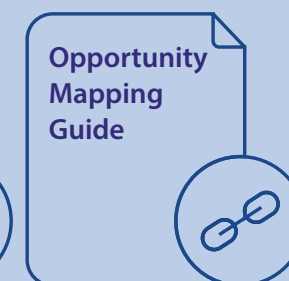
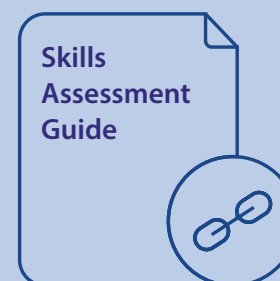
This approach builds on the previous skills analysis. Opportunity mapping is a process of identifying and documenting the resources, skills, and knowledge available within your wider community, to support you in sustainable energy initiatives and community development. It is to be worked through as a group activity with your committee and members of your SEC.



### Sustainable Energy Community Opportunities

Our Community Opportunities	People Focus on individual skills, knowledge, talents, and aspirations within the community (e.g. electricians, engineers, passionate advocates for sustainability)	Community Identify social relationships and networks within the community, organisations, institutions, and groups that are credible and environmental NGOs, city groups, GAA clubs, local businesses with sustainability objectives, active neighbourhood groups or resident associations, youth groups, faith-based groups	Place Look at the physical places and buildings in your community such as sports clubs, pubs, libraries, community buildings, active travel routes or local businesses
Strengths What do we currently have / do well?			
Weaknesses What do we need to improve or access?			

### Templates to download



## Setting out your Community Charter

The community charter is a useful tool to communicate your strategy to your wider community. The charter is not a legal document, it is for you as a community to understand and outline your commitment and to set out your clear intent to engage your wider community.

Having assessed your skills and opportunities you can now utilise this to set out your vision and goals for your community.

SECs have found that it provides clarity of purpose, aligning to the needs and goals specific to your community, providing a guiding light and outlining realistic collective ambitions. It should reflect your main areas of interest in improving energy efficiency and promoting and implementing sustainable energy practices.

Your community charter should be designed by, agreed upon and signed by all members of the committee.

You set this out early on but it is a working document that can be and should be revisited, and redefined as your SEC progresses and evolves over time.

There is no approval process of the charter but it will be submitted as part of your EMP application later. So you might wish to chat through the end result with your mentor for their feedback.

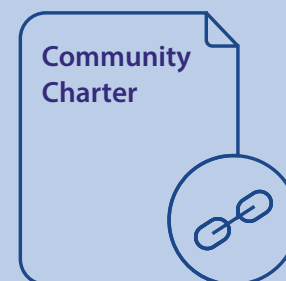
And remember! Have some fun doing this: get imaginative and be bold in your ambition, this is YOUR SEC.

See an example of a typical charter on the next page.

Sustainable Energy Community Charter			seai Sustainable Energy Communities Programme
Name: _____			
Vision <small>Our vision is</small>	Mission <small>Our mission is</small>	Goals <small>We aim to</small>	We the undersigned are fully supportive of, and commit to the vision, goals and implementing actions to realise our ambitions in and for our community.
<b>Our Actions</b> <small>We will deliver this through</small>			



## Templates to download



# Sustainable Energy Community Charter

Name: **Ballykelly Sustainable Energy Community**



seai  
Sustainable Energy Authority  
of Ireland

Sustainable Energy Communities Programme



## Vision

Our vision is:

A near zero carbon town where everyone is included and supported in the energy transition.

## Mission

Our mission is:

To provide energy leadership and inspiration to all members of our community to achieve a low carbon Ballykelly.

## Goals

We aim to:

- Engage with and listen to the energy needs of our community.
- Educate all members in the community on energy initiatives and supports available to them.
- Establish and understand Ballykelly's baseline energy demand and use to identify opportunities for low cost or no-cost efficiencies, retrofitting and renewable energy projects.
- Increase awareness and uptake of energy efficiency technologies to lower carbon emissions in our community.
- Build and contribute to, existing knowledge of what other communities have achieved in their journey towards zero carbon future.

## Our Actions

We will deliver this through:

### Community Engagement

- Collaborating and engaging effectively with the wider community through in person events, online surveys so we understand and support the needs of our community.
- Learning from our SEAI mentor, other communities experience in the SEC Network and, building relationships with key community groups and businesses.

### Assessing Ballykelly's energy demand and opportunities

Applying for 100% SEAI funding to develop an Energy Master Plan for Ballykelly in 2025.

- Working with our mentor and assigned contractor to develop and deliver the Energy Master Plan.
- Launch the Ballykelly Energy Master Plan to the wider community in 2026.

### Education and Awareness

- Host and attend online and in person events that are relevant to the community to educate and inform on steps they can take in their daily lives.
- Demonstrate uptake of energy efficiency projects and initiatives in our community to reduce our carbon emissions.

### Sharing impact

- Promoting our work and the theme of sustainable energy across the community and SEC network.

We the undersigned are fully supportive of, and commit to the vision, goals and implementing actions to realise our ambitions in and for our community.

*Nahman*

*Donny*

*Conny*

*Thom*

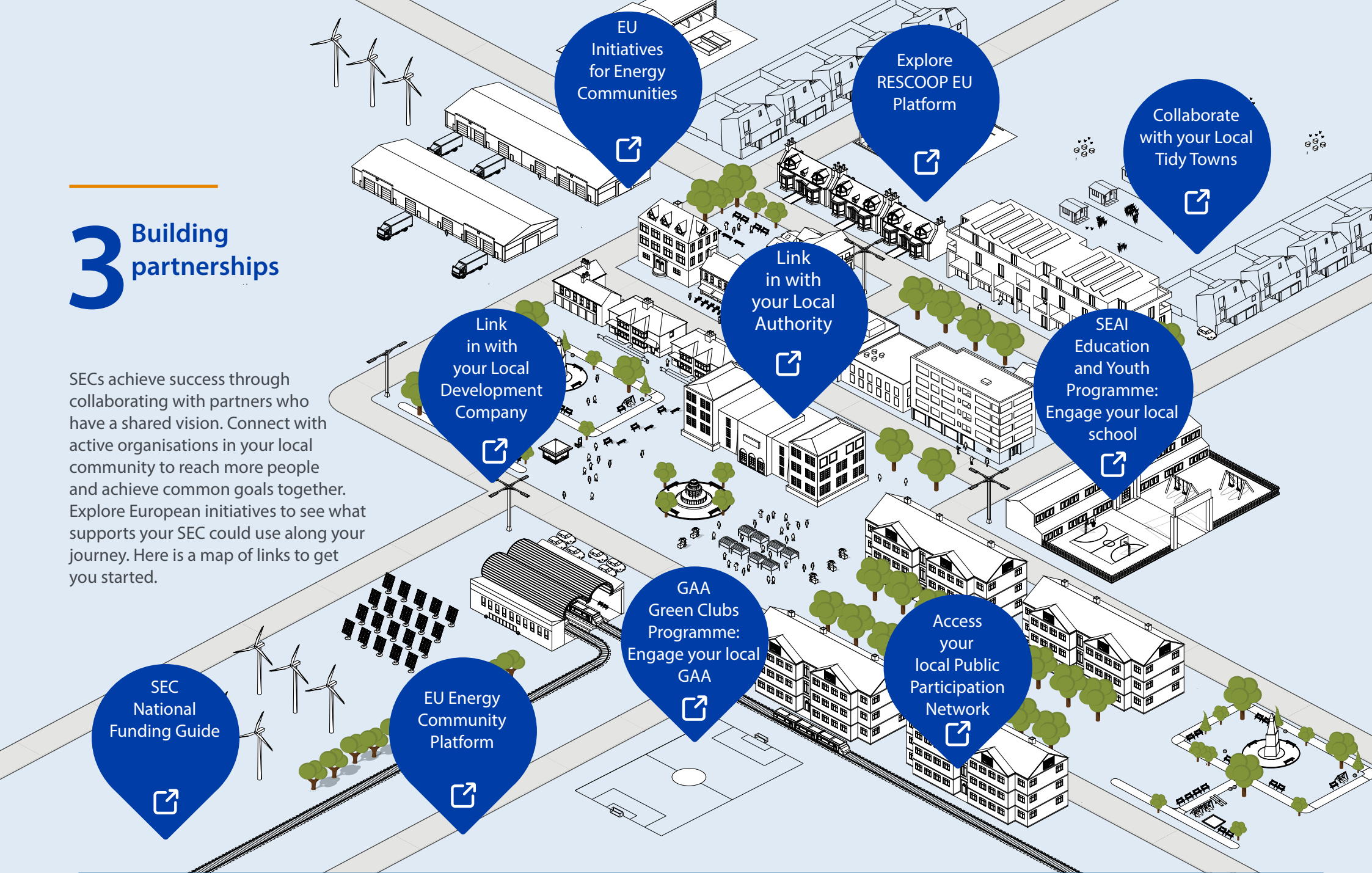
*Tyler*





### 3 Building partnerships

SECs achieve success through collaborating with partners who have a shared vision. Connect with active organisations in your local community to reach more people and achieve common goals together. Explore European initiatives to see what supports your SEC could use along your journey. Here is a map of links to get you started.



# PLAN

**In this stage, you can apply for 100% SEAI funding to develop your own Energy Master Plan (EMP).**

In this stage, with support from your mentor you will:

- ✓ Complete a pre-EMP scoping exercise and apply for funding.
- ✓ Appoint a technical consultant to work with you to complete your EMP.
- ✓ Hold a contract kick-off meeting and gain agreement on specific deliverables, responsibilities, timelines, and communication frequency for the project.
- ✓ Launch your EMP to your community, to support wider dissemination of your findings and inspire local action.

Wexford Town SEC



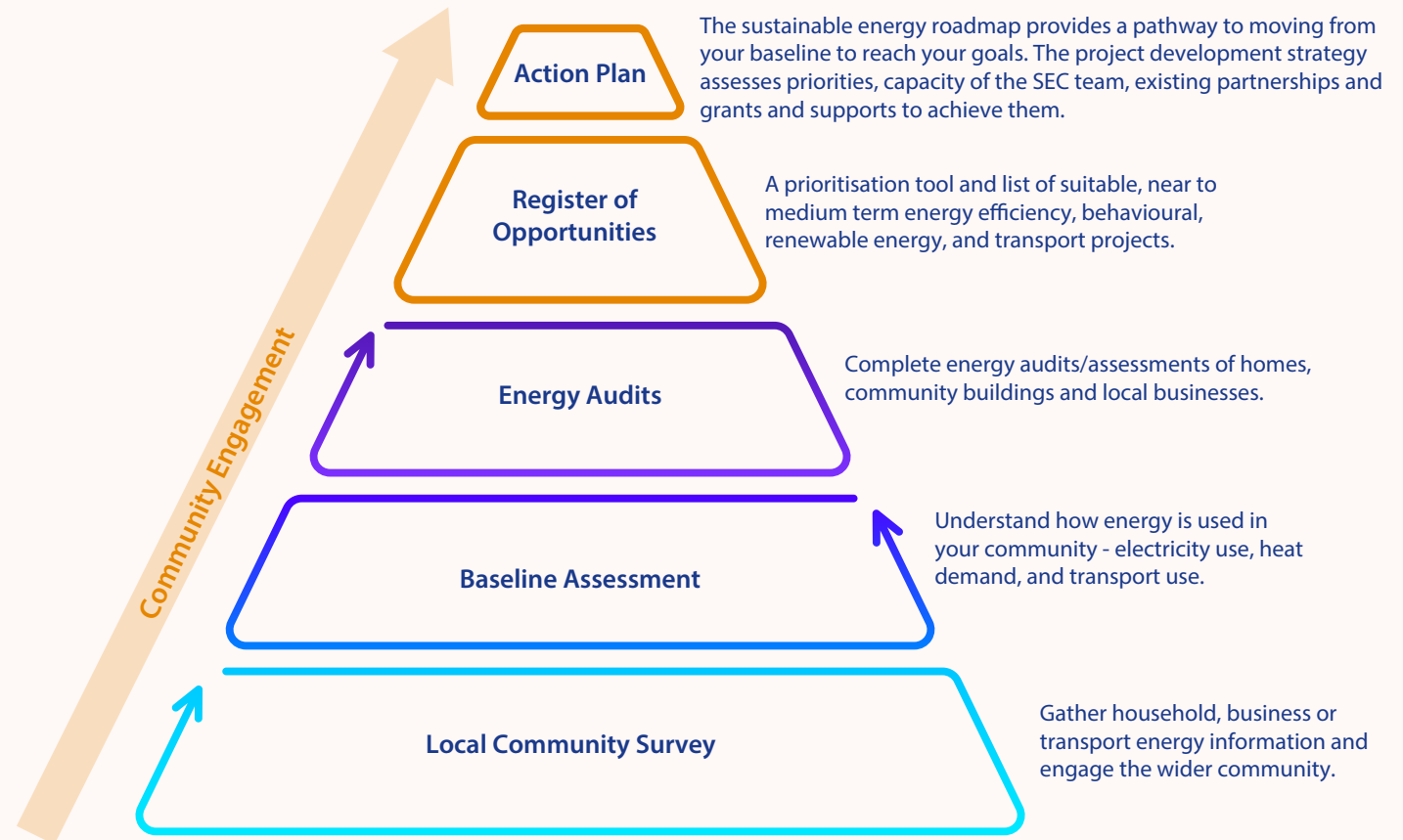
## What is an Energy Master Plan

An EMP helps you understand the current and future energy needs of your community and should align with your community charter.

Upon completion of an EMP, a community should have a good understanding;

- Of how energy is used locally,
- Be able to prioritise opportunities, and
- Have a clear, near to medium-term action plan outlining the practical actions to avail of these opportunities.

Communities should also be able to identify the energy baseline and be able to measurably improve on this baseline after they complete energy projects, for example, they should be able to see how many kilowatts or CO<sub>2</sub> emissions they can save following successful action.



## Roles and Responsibilities in EMP Development

Understanding and confirming the roles and responsibilities of each party in delivering the EMP is important for communicating effectively and producing a high-quality plan unique to your communities' needs and goals.

### EMP consultant

- Provide technical guidance
- Collate and interpret energy information and data
- Complete agreed energy audits / home energy assessments
- Produce EMP Report, roadmap and strategy for delivery of projects within Register of Opportunities
- Maintain a practical level of engagement with the SEC throughout the process
- Provide guidance and support with community engagement
- Deliver key EMP community events

### SEAI Mentor

- Support and guide the SEC throughout the EMP process
- EMP Grant Application
- CSO & BER baseline data collation
- RFQ, tender assessment report for Local Authority, EMP contract
- EMP Draft Reviews
- Coordinate the MoU responsibilities with the SEC and the Local Authority

### SEC Team

- Drive and direct the EMP Report
- Prepare the tender for consultant documents with you mentor
- Select buildings / homes to be audited and facilitate access from owners
- Gather building energy data and conduct community surveys
- If local authority provides financing support, keeping them informed of the EMP progress and confirm satisfactory completion for deliverables before payments issued
- In the case of an MOU, keep the LA informed of EMP progress/delays and confirm satisfactory completion of deliverables before the payment of invoices
- Review and approve EMP drafts and final report

### Local Authority

If the local authority provides financing support they:

- Provide letter of financial support (application stage)
- Issue request for quotes to potential consultants
- Issue EMP contract to successful consultant
- Make EMP milestone payments to consultant



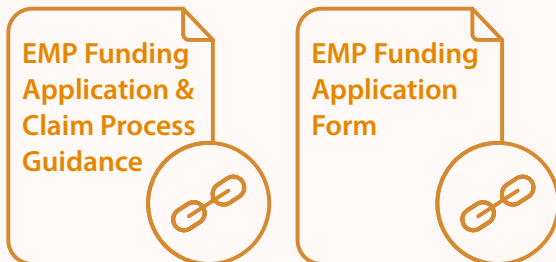
# 1 Apply for 100% Energy Master Plan funding

SEAI will provide a 100% grant to cover the costs of an external consultant to help your community develop an EMP.

The grant is retrospectively paid, is open for applications all year round, and ranges in value depending on the scale of your SEC. The table indicates the funding scale you can apply for.

A valid tax reference number (TRN) is required for all lead applicants at the time of application. This ensures the lead applicant's tax clearance certificate has been issued and avoids delay during the grant reimbursement process.

## Guidance & templates to download



## Local Authority financing support available

SEAI has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a number of local authorities, to advance funding for communities to aid in the preparation of the EMP.

This means that the Local Authority will also issue the Request for Quote (RFQ) and contract, make the payments to the consultant, and manage the drawdown of the SEAI grant.

This reduces the financial and administrative burden to communities. Your mentor will be able to advise if your county is signed up to this.

Level 04	Large town, city, region, national <b>Community Annual Energy Spend:</b> Over €20,000,000	<b>EMP Funding</b> €25,000
Level 03	Town, urban area <b>Community Annual Energy Spend:</b> Up to €20,000,000	<b>EMP Funding</b> €20,000
Level 02	Village, small town, island <b>Community Annual Energy Spend:</b> Up to €2,000,000	<b>EMP Funding</b> €15,000
Level 01	Street, small village, multi-unit development(s) <b>Community Annual Energy Spend:</b> Up to €500,000	<b>EMP Funding</b> €10,000

## EMP scoping and data collection

Your team should review your community charter and decide what the EMP is going to include. Be mindful of your capacity and reach.

With your mentor you will carry out an initial scoping exercise that will work out a high-level outline of the geographical areas, sectors, organisations, and facilities you wish to include in the EMP funding application proposal. This exercise will help you to determine the scale of EMP that you can support, and the energy spend with the various users in the community.

A mapping dashboard has been developed to allow you to explore and prepare key residential data, broken down at the community level for your EMP target area. The EMP dashboard will allow you to understand the current residential building stock within your target area in an intuitive visual way. It outlines detailed data on dwellings that have had Building Energy Ratings (BER) assessments carried out. In addition, you can download data into a spreadsheet for further analysis, print informative maps for reports and monitor the uptake of SEAI grant funding within your EMP area.

Your county mentor will assist you with training on how to use this tool and with sourcing and summarising data from other relevant databases such as the CSO Small Area Census Data and other online data tools.



## Letter of Offer

Once approved for the grant you will receive a letter of offer (also known as a grant agreement). Once you send back the signed letter of offer within 14 days of receipt, you are free to commence your EMP. The letter of offer sets out the terms of the grant.

Some key terms to note are:

1. The amount awarded
2. The start and end date
3. Conditions related to the Memorandum of Association (if applicable)

The documents that must be submitted for claims:

- Interim EMP reports (interim claims)
- Payment Request Form (every claim)
- Invoices (every claim)
- Bank Statements (every claim)
- VAT letter stating that VAT is not reclaimable on Revenue headed paper if claiming for the VAT portion of the project costs (first milestone claim)
- Tax Clearance Certificate
- A final version of the EMP report (with data protection considerations) for publishing (final claim).

The grant is valid for 12 months allowing you sufficient time to identify your priorities, find an external consultant, and develop your EMP in consultation with your community.

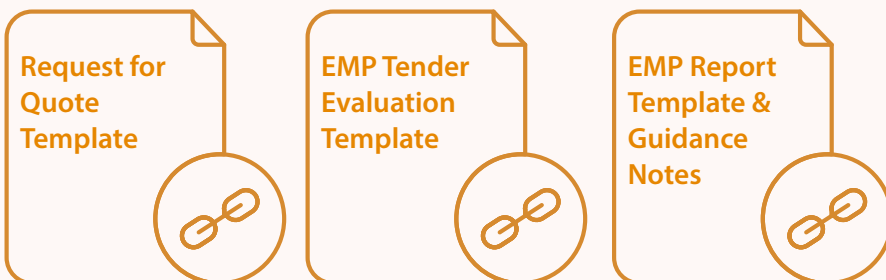
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## 2 Appoint a consultant

### Request for Quote

You will work with your mentor to develop a Request for Quote and evaluate responses to find an appropriate energy professional to carry out the technical aspect of the plan. Due to public procurement rules, we ask that you get three quotes in writing (for example by email) before deciding on the right consultant to work with you on this project. Your mentor will be able to guide you through this step and point you to the relevant guidance documents as well as the Request for Quote and Quote Evaluation templates available on the SEC Trello board.

### Guidance & templates to download



### Contract Kick-off Meeting

The first meeting with the consultant and your mentor is the forum to discuss and agree on the project deliverables, responsibilities, and timelines. This also gives clarity to everyone involved for the remainder of the process. Deliverables to discuss include, but are not limited to:

- The importance of the energy baseline to your project (as this will vary between SECs) and therefore the level of granularity and time required by the consultant.
- The number and types of audits.

- The level of assistance your SEC requires from the consultant to develop community surveys.
- The plan for how and when to engage the wider community, and strategic partners.
- Agreeing on the communication frequency throughout the project. Scheduling regular, brief check-ins will minimise delays.

### Your role and key supports

The lead EMP contact for your SEC is responsible for coordinating and monitoring the progress against the workplan and milestones agreed with your appointed consultant. In the case of an EMP being completed under an Memorandum of Understanding, the SEC lead is responsible for keeping the local authority informed of EMP progress and delays and confirming satisfactory completion of deliverables before payment of invoices.

Your mentor is there to guide and support you through the development of your EMP and your appointed consultant is there to deliver this with you.

## 3 Complete your Energy Master Plan

### Local community survey

Conducting the local community survey is important for ensuring you have good local level information and broader community interest.

The survey informs the community that an EMP is happening in their area, what is intended from it, and gives you feedback to put back into the plan. Examples of survey themes include transport or energy awareness.

Your county mentor will provide you with further guidance.

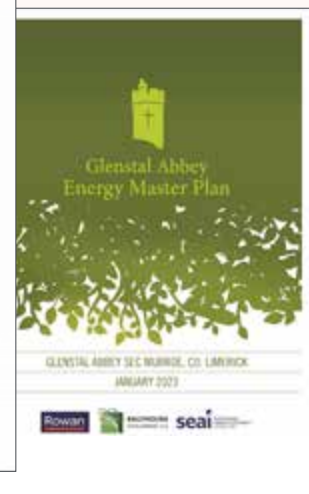
### Register of opportunities

All energy efficiency, renewable energy and smart technology projects identified during the EMP data collection and workshops will be captured by the consultant in a register of opportunities template. There is likely to be a wide range of potential projects from awareness campaigns to home energy saving and upgrade measures, through to renewable energy generation.

The SEAI template uses filters such as cost, kWh saved, CO<sub>2</sub> reductions and simple payback to allow for project prioritisation.

### Templates to download

Register of Opportunities Template



*"Any group embarking on the EMP process should be very clear on what they want to get out of it so that they benefit from it."*

**Comharchumann Fuinnimh Oileáin**  
**Árann Teoranta (CFOAT)**



## Community engagement events

Engaging the community throughout the development of your EMP is key to achieve wider participation and maintain momentum. Best practice is to host a minimum of three engagement activities with the wider community.

### Kick-off Event

Communicate your plans and the expected benefits of the projects to the community. This encourages participation in the community survey and in identifying homeowners for audits.

### Mid-Way Meeting

It can be useful to hold a mid-way meeting to update the community on progress. You can also combine this with a home energy upgrade clinic to build knowledge and awareness.

### Final Launch Event

Communicate the key findings and opportunities that your EMP has identified for your community. Launch events showcase a lineup of speakers and

exhibitors and can be combined with home energy expos and energy clinics.

Inviting key stakeholders allows attendees to learn about retrofitting and the sustainable energy activities in their locality, to network, and to explore energy-saving technologies and services – and some tea, coffee and snacks always go down well!

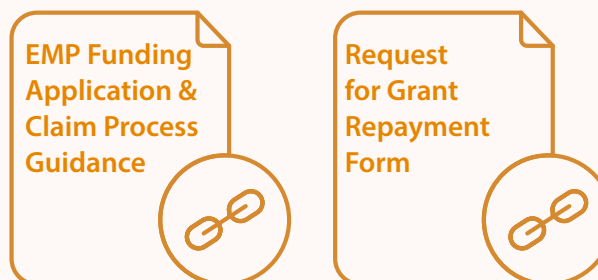
## Consultant Payments and Milestones

When the consultant issues the invoice and associated deliverables, the SEC EMP Lead is responsible for reviewing the payment request against the work done and the terms of the contract. Your mentor will be able to assist you as a technical reviewer. In the case of an Memorandum of Understanding, your mentor will provide the local authority a letter confirming that the work was done and has been accepted as per the terms of the contract, with a recommendation that the invoice can be paid.

## Grant Reimbursement Process

Payment requests along with the required supporting documents are to be submitted by the Lead Applicant. In the case of an EMP completed under a Memorandum of Understanding, the local authority will send it to sec@seai.ie. Up to four milestone payments are permitted. Your mentor can help you with the claim process. The following documents are available on the SEC Trello Board to assist you.

## Documents to download



# DO

**Congratulations, you have completed your EMP. You are now informed about your community's needs and the project opportunities available to you. Your mentor will support you to identify the resources and pathways to achieve your ambitions in your community.**

The Do Stage involves ongoing engagement with your community and receiving mentor supports to implement your next project or initiative by:

- ✓ Review progress and achievements - Maintain a register of opportunities, assessing next steps and documenting progress.
- ✓ Refine skills and ambitions - Regularly review your skills, opportunities, and charter to ensure alignment with evolving goals.
- ✓ Leverage support and resources - Use mentors, project tools, peers, and other resources to navigate pathways to action.
- ✓ Connect and share - Engage with your peer network and the wider community to exchange expertise, support learning, and celebrate achievement.

Ballyphephane SEC



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# 1 Identify Your Next Step

Having completed your EMP you are now more informed of your community's energy needs and the project opportunities available to support households, businesses and community development.

Now it is time to assess where your key focus is, what is feasible and achievable for you as a community. Re-grouping with your committee and re-assessing your vision is key at this point to enable what is the next, and best step, forward for your community.

## Review and Assess

### Review the register of opportunities and project development strategy to assess priorities.

- What are the key insights and projects from your EMP that you want to move forward with?
- What is the best first project or initiative that you can implement?

### Revisit your skills assessment and opportunity mapping to reflect where you are now.

- Can you leverage your strengths to build further impact?
- Are there any further skills you need to build on?
- Have other opportunities emerged that you can tap into or access?

### Refine your community charter to align with your post EMP ambitions.

- Does your charter still share the vision, aims and actions you want to take?
- Are the actions achievable and realistic?
- Does it need anything changed to reflect where you are now?

## Continue to Engage and Involve your Community

Maintaining wider community engagement and interest has proven to be a key indicator of successfully maintaining momentum when moving

into the Do Stage. You will have launched your EMP already to your community but, at this point you may want to:

- **Promote your EMP further to the wider community to promote buy-in and positive progression.** Some communities have developed video content or flyers to promote further.
- **Present a detailed briefing of the EMP** to allow input from key community members or partnerships.
- **Host an in-person session on shortlisted proposed projects** to gather insight from the wider community on what would be the preferred next step.

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## 2 Prepare for Project Implementation

### Working with your Mentor

Once you have your next step identified, your mentor will work with you to support you in preparing you to deliver this in your community. This will of course depend on the ambitions of your community and may consist of the following:

- Further developing the pathways from your EMP into action.
- Connecting you with relevant community demonstration projects.
- Guiding you to suitable pathways of SEAI and national grant funding supports and preparing applications.
- Directing you to receive appropriate technical advice through project management supports or project feasibility.

## Creative Climate Action

### Getting you From Plan to Do

From Plan to Do was a project funded by Creative Ireland as part of their Creative Climate Action Fund and run independently by Context Studio in collaboration with a number of SEC's, Dublin City Council and Zero Carbon. Their work complements the work of the SEAI, to support communities in moving from planning into action.

Browse the resources on the website to support you in getting you from plan to do. The Project Workbook template is a useful resource to quickly and efficiently map out your next project or initiative, assess what you need to get started, and break down the steps you need to get there.

From Plan to Do is designed with SECs so if you want to share your story or are interested in sharing your own experience using these resources, their contact details are available on the website.

Visit From Plan to Do Website



Download Project Workbook Template



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## 3 Pathways to action

SECs follow different pathways depending on the community's energy needs, what resources are available to them and their motivations at the time, but all of them are inspiring in what they are achieving.

Read about some of the work that has already been done in communities across Ireland. Your peer network is a source of expertise and knowledge to engage or collaborate with on projects.

Utilise your mentor, in person events and various SEAI platforms to reach out to your peers for inspiration and guidance.

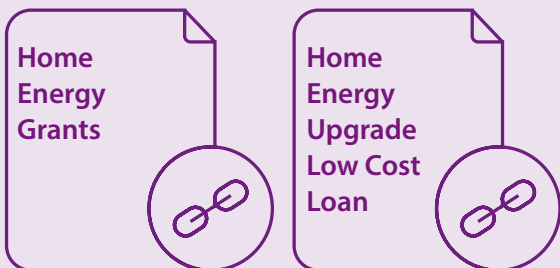


SECs support homeowners in their upgrade options and signpost to relevant SEAI grants.



## Home Energy Upgrades

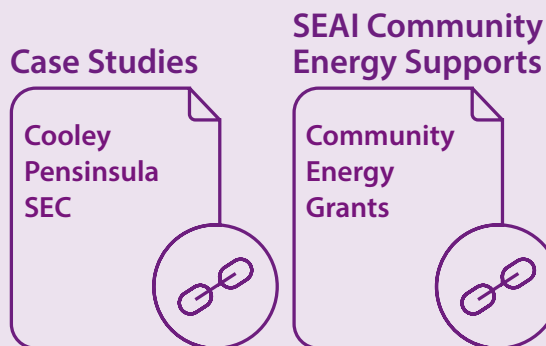
A lot of SECs support homeowners in their community through hosting local events on home energy upgrades and supporting homeowners to apply for grants. This engagement increases energy efficiency in homes through retrofitting, insulation upgrades, and installing efficient heating systems. These upgrades reduce energy consumption, lower costs, and improve comfort for residents.



Cooley Peninsula SEC

## Community Energy Upgrades

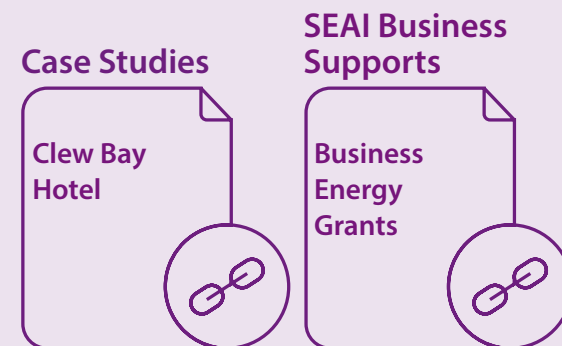
Some communities focus on improving energy efficiency in community buildings or sports facilities through retrofitting, insulation upgrades, and installing efficient heating systems.



Clew Bay Hotel in Westport Co. Mayo,

## Business Energy Upgrades

All places of work can save energy. The first step is to manage energy in the workplace using a structured approach. SEAI has developed several tools and supports to help save energy in the workplace, whether energy management is being introduced for the first time or as part of business plans to upgrade existing efforts.



Community Benefit Funds can support not for-profit community enterprises.



A Solar Meitheal informs and groups homeowners in a local area who want to install Solar Photovoltaic (PV) panels on their homes.



Youghal SEC is a proactive community led network which hosts a drop in Energy Hub for communities.



## Community Renewables

Some communities work towards developing local renewable energy projects, such as small-scale solar parks or wind farms. This is an emerging space aiming to generate clean energy that is owned, operated and managed by the community. SEAI offer various supports through the Community Enabling Framework and access to SEAI Trusted Advisors.

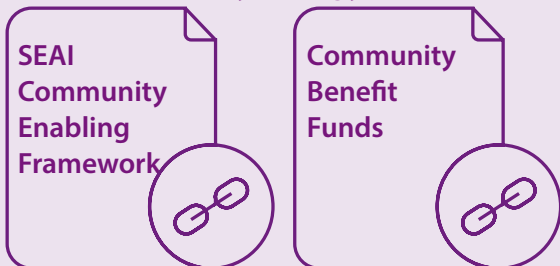
## Collective Buying

Communities can participate in collective energy purchasing schemes, where a group of consumers negotiate better deals with energy suppliers. This approach can lead to more affordable energy prices and potentially greener energy options for participating households e.g. for solar PV or insulation upgrades. Your mentor can support in developing this approach for your community.

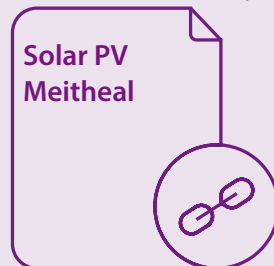
## Engagement and Education

Education is the priority for some communities to empower their people to understand their energy use and make informed choices. This is achieved through shared learning about energy solutions through training events, workshops, and information sessions to educate members about sustainable energy practices, grant funding and opportunities.

### SEAI Community Energy Supports



### SEAI Community Energy Supports



### Case Studies



Triple SEC, SEAI's Energy Awards Winner 2024.



Mulranny SEC, supported by LEADER, implemented a Community Electric Bike Scheme.



Dunleer SEC, operating as the Energy Team, are sharing their expertise to support other SECs.



## EU Projects

A number of SECs nationally are involved in EU initiatives to realise impact in their communities. For example, the EU Citizen-led Renovation (CLR) which is an EU funded support service to empower communities. Triple SEC, a trio of urban neighbouring SECs Connecting Cabra, Phibsboro Village and Cosybatter SEC are one of those groups.

## Sustainable Transport

Some SECs actively promote and implement sustainable transport and active travel solutions to reduce carbon emissions and improve local mobility. Mulranny, supported by LEADER, implemented a Community Electric Bike Scheme and three Sligo SECs, (Strandhill, Rosses Point and Sligo Town), are advocating for a protected cycle route from Strandhill to Rosses Point.

## SEC Progression

Some SECs have evolved into more formal structures, taking on a broader role in energy management and sustainability for their regions. This progression allows them to access additional funding, implement larger-scale projects, and provide more comprehensive services to communities and support to other SECs.

### Case Studies

Triple SEC



### Case Studies

Mulranny SEC



### Case Studies

Dunleer SEC – Energy Team



## Links

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**P6. SEAI Sustainable Energy Communities Map**

**P9. Establishing your SEC Guide**

**P10. Skills and Opportunities**

**P11. Community Charter**

**P13. GAA Green Clubs Programme**

**P13. Link in with your Local Authority**

**P13. Access your local Public Participation Network**

**P13. SEAI Education and Youth Programme**

**P13. Collaborate with your Local Tidy Towns**

**P13. Link in with your Local Development Company**

**P13. SEC National Funding Guide**

**P13. Explore REScoop**

**P13. EU Initiatives for Energy Communities**

**P13. Energy Community Platform**

**P17. EMP Funding Application & Claim Process Guidance**

**P17. EMP Funding Application Form**

**P18. Link to Energy Master Planning Dashboard**

**P19. EMP Report, Request for Quote & Tender Evaluation Templates**

**P20. Register of Opportunities Template**

**P21. Request for Grant Payment form**

**P24. From Plan to Do website**

**P24. Project Workbook Template**

**P25. SEAI Home Energy Upgrade Supports**

**P24. Home Energy Upgrade Low Cost Loan**

<https://www.seai.ie/plan-your-energy-journey/for-your-community/sustainable-energy-communities/sec-map/>

<https://trello.com/c/f5AMINRL/6-establishing-your-sustainable-energy-community>

<https://trello.com/c/qFgz6R8b/56-assess-your-skills-and-map-your-opportunities>

<https://trello.com/c/pRNNQJwp/7-setting-out-your-community-charter>

<https://learning.gaa.ie/GreenClub>

<https://www.localgov.ie/find-my-local-authority?county=All>

<https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation-information/a58b8-community-groups-public-participation-networks/>

<https://www.seai.ie/plan-your-energy-journey/schools>

<https://www.tidytowns.ie/get-involved/find-your-local-committee/>

<https://ildn.ie/directory/>

<https://trello.com/c/mcuzbYw0/43-sec-national-funding-resource-guide><https://trello.com/c/mcuzbYw0/43-sec-national-funding-resource-guide>

<https://www.rescoop.eu/>

[https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/markets-and-consumers/energy-consumers-and-prosumers/energy-communities\\_en#initiatives-for-energy-communities](https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/markets-and-consumers/energy-consumers-and-prosumers/energy-communities_en#initiatives-for-energy-communities)

<https://energycommunityplatform.eu/>

<https://trello.com/c/dAoXfmq4/23-apply-for-100-emp-funding>

<https://trello.com/c/dAoXfmq4/23-apply-for-100-emp-funding>

<https://trello.com/c/BZwok4Mq/52-emp-mapping-dashboard>

<https://trello.com/c/ikOsBW9J/55-appoint-an-energy-master-plan-consultant>

<https://trello.com/c/8CDBIRoC/22-complete-your-energy-master-plan>

<https://trello.com/c/8CDBIRoC/22-complete-your-energy-master-plan>

<https://www.fromplantodo.ie/>

<https://www.fromplantodo.ie/diy-community-initiative#:~:text=Download%20Example%20Template>

<https://www.seai.ie/grants/home-energy-grants>

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<b>P25. Case Study: Cooley Pensinsula SEC</b>	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vcl3yKVJNzM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vcl3yKVJNzM</a>
<b>P25. SEAI Community Energy Supports</b>	<a href="https://www.seai.ie/grants/community-grants">https://www.seai.ie/grants/community-grants</a>
<b>P25. Case Study: Clew Bay Hotel</b>	<a href="https://www.seai.ie/case-studies/ssea-clew-bay">https://www.seai.ie/case-studies/ssea-clew-bay</a>
<b>P25. SEAI Business Supports</b>	<a href="https://www.seai.ie/grants/business-grants">https://www.seai.ie/grants/business-grants</a>
<b>P26. SEAI Community Energy Supports</b>	<a href="https://www.seai.ie/grants/community-grants">https://www.seai.ie/grants/community-grants</a>
<b>P26. Community Benefit Funds</b>	<a href="https://cbfnationalregister.seai.ie/public-portal/case-studies/">https://cbfnationalregister.seai.ie/public-portal/case-studies/</a>
<b>P26. Solar PV Meitheal</b>	<a href="https://www.seai.ie/blog/solar-pv-meitheal">https://www.seai.ie/blog/solar-pv-meitheal</a>
<b>P26. Case Study: Youghal SEC</b>	<a href="https://www.seai.ie/case-studies/youghal-blue-green-community-network-sec">https://www.seai.ie/case-studies/youghal-blue-green-community-network-sec</a>
<b>P27. Case Study: Triple SEC</b>	<a href="https://citizen-led-renovation.ec.europa.eu/news/warmer-cheaper-homes-triple-sec-retrofitting-event-empowers-communities-2024-11-20_en">https://citizen-led-renovation.ec.europa.eu/news/warmer-cheaper-homes-triple-sec-retrofitting-event-empowers-communities-2024-11-20_en</a>
<b>P27. Case Study: Mulranny SEC</b>	<a href="https://youtu.be/UuoVQFPdQUc?si=Nn4ap8K3yucU55cM">https://youtu.be/UuoVQFPdQUc?si=Nn4ap8K3yucU55cM</a>
<b>P27. Case Study: Dunleer SEC</b>	<a href="https://youtu.be/hrUU_Zr8ONw?si=c8AlhB_h93lZpvB">https://youtu.be/hrUU_Zr8ONw?si=c8AlhB_h93lZpvB</a>





## Sustainable Energy Communities Programme

