



COMMUNITY ACTIVATION PLANNING SESSION



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Fund and the Carbon Tax Fund*



Today's workshop

1) Building consensus on what we want to achieve in our community (40 mins)

2) Brainstorming – how do we choose the right project(s)? (40 mins)

Break (15 mins)

3) Learning from other communities (40 mins)

4) Project checklist and next steps (45 mins)



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1) BUILDING CONSENSUS ON WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE



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The EMERGE project addresses 6 themes



Community owned energy



Tourism opportunities –
heritage, environmental etc.



Sectoral development –
agriculture, food, manufacturing etc.



Green skills –
housing retrofit and modern construction etc.



Low carbon and active travel



Community and business incubation hubs
(including remote working hubs)



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What do we mean by these themes?



Community owned energy

- Reducing our carbon footprint
- Owning our energy future
- Creating a future income stream that the community can reinvest in future projects
- Reducing our energy bills
- Generating renewable energy within the geography of the peatlands



Tourism – heritage, environmental and active

- Encouraging tourist stays
- Encouraging tourists to day trip to our town
- Showcasing the natural, built and heritage assets of our area
- Telling our story to tourists
- Investing in our environment



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What do we mean by these themes?



Sectoral expertise

- Building on existing strengths
- Creating higher skilled jobs
- Creating a sectoral identity for our town
- Promoting entrepreneurship



Green skills and retrofit

- Improving our housing stock
- Reducing our energy bills
- Creating new jobs for skilled or re-trained people
- Creating higher skilled jobs



What do we mean by these themes?



Low carbon travel

- Reducing our carbon footprint
- Aligning ourselves to government policy on the future of transport
- Improving our connectivity
- Improving our health through active travel



Community and business hubs

- Increasing business start-ups
- Helping businesses grow
- Developing a supportive business network
- Increasing community cohesion
- Promoting entrepreneurship / social entrepreneurship
- Creating training/interning opportunities



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How would you prioritise these themes for your community?

- You will be given a set of numbered score cards from 1–10
- Going through each of the six themes, one at a time:
 - You will be asked to rate the importance of the theme by raising the card
 - The lowest scorer and the highest scorer will be asked to explain their reasoning
 - You are all invited to comment and ask questions
 - You will then be asked to give their ratings a second time (now that you have heard the comments) using the score cards
 - Facilitators will calculate the average score for each theme based on the second round of scores
- The top one or two themes are then taken forward for the rest of the workshop



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What does success look like?

- Using the selected themes, you are invited to determine what a set of objectives would be for your community project.
- Breaking into small groups – first imagine a news story or a nationwide segment that features your successful project – what achievements would this include?
- In your small groups have a final discussion on who might you need to communicate these objectives to and what might you place emphasis on for different stakeholders?



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Concluding themes and objectives

To summarise:

- Which priority themes for EMERGE support have you identified?
- What are the main objectives for developing a new project or next stage elements of your existing projects?
- Do you think you could communicate project objectives to potential supporters and eventual funders?



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2) BRAINSTORMING – HOW DO WE CHOOSE THE RIGHT PROJECT(S)?



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Long-listing

- As a community, you are invited to brainstorm potential project ideas or new project dimensions within your chosen themes and objectives
- The facilitator will note down ideas as they are suggested
- At this stage of a brainstorm process, you are not asked to evaluate ideas – but rather free flow them



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The filter – group discussion

- For each idea, ask yourself the following questions:
 - Is there likely to be widespread support for this?
 - Is this feasible?
 - Does this have any dependencies on other projects?
 - Does this project deliver on any of the objectives agreed earlier?
- At the end, you will all be given three coloured dots – red, amber, green – and asked to place your dots on the sheet of ideas:
 - Red = stop for now
 - Amber = maybe explore more information before deciding
 - Green = definitely go on to next step



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The agreed project(s) and ideas

You have:

- Identified possible projects or project elements which could deliver your community objectives
- Developed further understanding of which projects would best help you to achieve your objectives



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BREAK (15 MINUTES)



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3) LEARNING FROM OTHER COMMUNITIES



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Case Study Library

- We know that communities are keen to learn from each other – what has worked, what hasn't worked.
- EMERGE has gathered case study content from over 25 completed community projects in Ireland and further afield.
- These case studies are a useful guide as to how other communities have approached common problems and challenges.
- Although the case studies are ordered by thematic areas, there are many useful lessons that are relevant to all projects.



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Community Owned Energy

Featured Case Studies

Mullingar Sustainable Energy Community (<https://mullingarsec.ie/2023/01/leader-grant-for-mullingar-solar-park-feasibility-study/>)

Inis Meáin Community-owned Wind Turbine (<https://www.aranislandsenergycoop.ie/>)

Humshaugh Net Zero (<https://www.humshaughnetzero.org/>)

Brighton Energy Cooperative (<https://www.brightonenergy.org.uk/>)

Developing Sustainable Energy Projects, SEAI (<https://www.seai.ie/community-energy/sustainable-energy-communities/start-an-energy-community/index.xml>)

Cloughjordan Ecovillage (<https://www.thevillage.ie/>)

Supplementary Case Studies

Energy Communities Tipperary Cooperative (<https://energycommunitiestipp.ie>)

Claremorris and Western District Energy Co-Operative Society (<https://claremorris-energy-coop.com/solar/>)

Batterstown SEC (<https://www.seai.ie/community-energy/sustainable-energy-communities/success-stories/index.xml>)

Exeter Community Energy (<https://www.ecoe.org.uk/our-solar-installations/>)



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Tourism

Featured Case Studies

Lough Ree Distillery (<https://www.lrd.ie/>)

The Cavan & Leitrim Railway (<https://www.cavanandleitrimrailway.com/>)

Extension to Peatland Biodiversity Boardwalk – Final Phase of Lullymore Heritage & Discovery Park (<https://www.lullymoreheritagepark.com/peatlands/peatland-biodiversity-trail/>)

North Highland Initiative (North Coast 500) and Northumberland 250 (<http://www.northhighlandinitiative.co.uk/area-tourism> & <https://northumberland250.com/>)

Supplementary Case Studies

Lough Ree Boat Trips (<https://www.loughreeboattrips.com>)

Bog of Allen Visitor Centre (<http://www.ipcc.ie/visitor-attraction/bog-of-allen-nature-centre>)

Aln Valley Railway (<https://www.alnvalleyrailway.co.uk/>)



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Sectoral Expertise

Featured Case Studies

Ferbane Food Campus and Innovation Centre (<https://www.ferbanefoodcampus.ie/food-producer/custom-content-item/>)

Developing Community Farming Projects – Cill Ulta (<https://cillulta.ie/pages/who-we-are>)

Ludgate Hub (<https://www.ludgate.ie/>)

Supplementary Case Studies

Dingle Hub (<https://dinglepeninsula2030.com/learningsandreports/learningbriefs/>)

Lough Ree Technology Cluster Study (<https://www.engineersireland.ie/Resources/Engineers-TV/the-sustainability-grand-tour-lough-ree-technology-cluster-study>)

Hartpury Digital Innovation Farm and Hartpury Agri-Tech Centre (<https://www.hartpury.ac.uk/commercial/digital-innovation-farm/>)



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Green Skills and Retrofit

Featured Case Studies

The National Construction Training Centre in Mount Lucas (<https://mountlucas.ie/>)

Abbeyleix Climate Action Walk (<https://www.abbeyleixtidytowns.net/climate-action-project/climate-action-walk>)

Wicklow Sustainable Energy Community: Energy Awareness Day
(<https://www.facebook.com/WicklowSustainableEnergy/>)

Hounslow Green Skills Boot Camp (<https://hounslow.greentalk.io/story/green-skills-bootcamp>)

Ovington Tree Planting Project (<https://coronation.gov.uk/event/tree-project-wildlife-survey-ovington/>)

Supplementary Case Studies

Green Kitchen and Garden Centre (<https://www.walk.ie/thegreenkitchen/>)

North Kerry Environmental Forum (<https://www.sparkchange.ie/project/north-kerry-environmental-forum/>)

Home Upgrades in North Tipperary (<https://energycommunitiestipp.ie/jtf/>)



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Low Carbon Travel

Featured Case Studies

Community led EV pilot project and Leitrim Community Car Scheme, Carrick-on-Shannon (<https://volunteerleitrim.ie/communityev/>)

Launch of Bolt e-bikes in Sligo town (<https://www.independent.ie/regionals/sligochampion/news/sligo-to-get-an-extra-30-e-bikes-from-bolt-to-bring-total-to-100-42363668.html>)

Fingal Community Car Service (<https://www.fingal.ie/fingal-community-car>)

AppleCoRRE: Community Rapid and Renewable Energy Hub (<https://www.applecrosscommunitycompany.org/company-projects/apple-juice-ev-charger/>)

Supplementary Case Studies

Callan Community Energy EV Charging (<https://fedarene.org/best-practice/irelands-first-community-owned-ev-charging-point/>)

Weardale EV Community Transport (<https://weardalecommunitytransport.org.uk/>)



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Community and Business Hubs

Featured Case Studies

Pulse Hub / Ballinasloe Enterprise Hub (<https://www.facebook.com/BallinasloeEnterpriseCentre/>)

Saint Joseph's Community Centre: New Remote Working Hub
and Cycle Tourism Centre (<https://www.facebook.com/kilcormacda/>)

Portlaoise Enterprise Centre (<https://enterprisecentre.ie/>)

The Cheviot Centre - Glendale Gateway Trust (<https://www.glendalegatewaytrust.org/cheviot-centre.html>)

Supplementary Case Studies

The Yard Hub (<https://www.facebook.com/theyardhubirl/>)

Digital Learning Hub, Longford (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i86uhziUrM8>)



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4) PROJECT CHECKLIST AND NEXT STEPS



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Turning ideas into projects

- Now that potential project ideas have been scoped, it is important you agree which will be taken forward.
- As a community, you may need time to do this and you are encouraged to seek wider community inputs to discuss ideas further.
- Once there is a local team ready to take forward a project, you should contact the EMERGE team for online support. We will help you to use the project checklist, which is presented in the next slides.



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The project checklist



Establishing our project



Securing funding



Delivering the project

The project checklist

- Each of these three sections contain a series of questions.
- Given the potential diversity of projects you may want to take forward, this toolkit does not attempt to provide “one size fits all” answers to these questions.
- Instead, it provides guidance for how you might go about making the right choice as a community and for your project.



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Step 1: Establishing our project



How do we agree a mechanism to take decisions collectively?



How do we establish or utilise a legal entity which can secure and manage funding?



How do we manage changes to our idea over time?



How do we manage the project once it is up and running?





How do we agree a mechanism to take decisions collectively?

- Firstly, are all key stakeholders in your community supportive of the broad aims and design of the project? If not, the project idea itself should be refined and further consultation undertaken.
- Once consensus has been achieved, a decision-making structure should be agreed for managing your project. The simplest approach would be to nominate project officers with defined roles. These could include:
 - Funding manager
 - Community liaison
 - Project management and delivery
- Significant decisions should always be taken with community consultation



How do we establish or utilise a legal entity which can secure and manage funding?

There are 5 key steps for establishing a legal entity:

1. Research and identify the need to form a legal entity
2. Talk to others in your community and form a project team
3. State your aims and objectives
4. Decide on your legal form and create a constitution
5. Create your organisational policies



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How do we manage changes to our idea over time?

- It is likely that your project will need to manage change – for instance to accommodate the requirements of funders.
- One way to do this is through a change log – this documents when changes to the project take place, explains their rationale and confirms who was involved in the decision-making process.



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How do we manage the project once it is up and running?

- It is necessary to consider the lifetime of the project – how long will it need to be managed?
- Will it create an asset that will need to be maintained, or disposed of at the end of its life?
- What role could there be for other organisations to support management of the project, such as the county council?



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Step 2: Securing funding

€ How much money do we need?

🏠 Where can we access funding (including match funding)?

↪ How do we align our project with funders' requirements, without losing our own identity?

🏢 How do we ensure that we have covered initial costs and ongoing, operational costs?

🪙 How do we manage any income from the project?

📅 Building a funding plan and exploring grant funding options



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€ How much money do we need?

- Whilst the total figure may change as the project is developed, it is helpful before approaching funders to have a clear ask – how much will this cost?
- It is important for you to consider both the initial outlay and any ongoing operations or maintenance costs.
- These costs can be established by seeking quotes from suppliers and experts, or by comparison with similar projects undertaken elsewhere.
- It is also advisable to include a contingency within the budget – given current rates of inflation this could be as high as 30%.



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Where can we access funding (including match funding)?

- The EU Just Transition Fund in Ireland will provide up to €168m to support projects in the Midlands which create employment, enhance skills, promote sustainability and enhance the region.
- Other funding streams will continue to be available, such as the LEADER 2023-2027 programme worth €180m across Ireland.
- Some are subject specific – for instance the grants periodically made available by Failte Ireland for tourism projects, or the community grants available for energy and electric vehicle projects by SEAI.
- These are examples – the EMERGE team can discuss specific funding opportunities appropriate for your project as part of the online support.



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How do we align our project with funders' requirements, without losing our own identity?

- As a project team, you should review the full range of potentially relevant funding sources, and compare objectives set out at the very start of the project's development (as discussed earlier today) with the funder's objectives.
- This will make it easier for you to draft a clear and compelling funding application.
- It may help you to set targets for the project in order to demonstrate how it will meet a funder's objectives – for instance the number of jobs it is expected to create or the number of businesses it will support. It is important that these are realistic.



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How do we ensure that we have covered initial costs and ongoing, operational costs?

- It is often easier for you as a community to secure funding for the initial outlay to establish a project than to secure funding for ongoing costs – such as salaries for staff or maintenance.
- It is however vitally important that these costs can be met, otherwise the project is liable to fail. Funders may also seek assurance that ongoing costs can be met.
- There are broadly three ways to tackle this problem:
 - Negotiate some ongoing funding alongside the initial funding
 - Secure commitments from local businesses or other interested parties to meet ongoing costs
 - Generate revenue within the project – for instance by selling goods or services



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How do we manage any income from the project?

- If the project is going to generate income, the project team should put in place a plan for how this will be managed. This will depend to an extent on the legal form established for the project.
- This income could be used to cover ongoing costs or reinvested in new community initiatives.
- It is important that this is transparent and consented to by you as a community.



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Building a funding plan

- Start with your strategic objectives – beware of your mission drift.
- What income categories make most sense to you? Diversification is important.
- Make a plan for each category you decide is relevant.
- What is the minimum you need to get by? What are the options for scale up? (Think bronze, silver and gold options).
- Prioritise, pace yourself, and think about this in terms of 2 years, 5 years and 10 years periods.



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Grant funding options



Oakfield Trust



Plus hundreds more...



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Posted on 31 Jul 2018 | Last updated on 5 Mar 2020



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800+

HUNDREDS OF FUNDING GRANTS

X 12

DOZENS OF FUNDING DEADLINES

1

EXCLUSIVE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



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+ About this photo



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Step 3: Procuring and delivering



Do we need to do any procurement?



How do we ensure effective delivery?



Do we need to do any procurement?

- Once funding is secured, the project team will need to spend it to deliver on the project's objectives.
- Funders are very likely to have rules which will need to be followed as to how this is done – which may involve running an open tender or at least securing 3 quotes for the goods or services being bought.
- We can advise you on how to prepare for this in the ongoing support provided after this session.



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€ How do we ensure effective delivery?

- Everyone involved in the project has an incentive to achieve good value for money – it will maximise the impact of your project.
- In order to ensure this, the project team can ensure that any procurement due to take place is competitive – actively seeking out companies to participate and submit quotes for the goods or services needed.
- As a project team, you should ensure that you understand the social and environmental implications of the project.



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Online support over the summer

- The EMERGE team will support your community to answer a range of questions and overcome obstacles in developing your project.
- The checklist provides a structure for this – enabling community teams to link your query to a specific question.
- Nevertheless we are happy to speak about any issues you may face.



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Conclusion

- You will be asked to provide contact details and we will provide our own.
- We will check in with your community every month to two months.
- We may ask some communities to present at a “show and tell” in the autumn.



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