



THE 'EASTERN AND MIDLANDS EMERGING ROADMAP FOR A GREEN ECONOMY' (EMERGE)

PUBLIC LAUNCH WEBINAR

14 December 2022

#EMERGEMidlands



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Agenda



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INTRODUCING YOUR SPEAKERS



**Pippa
Hackett**

Minster of State



**Breda
Maher**

EM CARO



**Dr Lewis
Evans**

Urban Foresight



**Hugh
O'Reilly**

The Wheel



**Suzie
Cahn**

The Wheel



**Mairead
O'Connor**

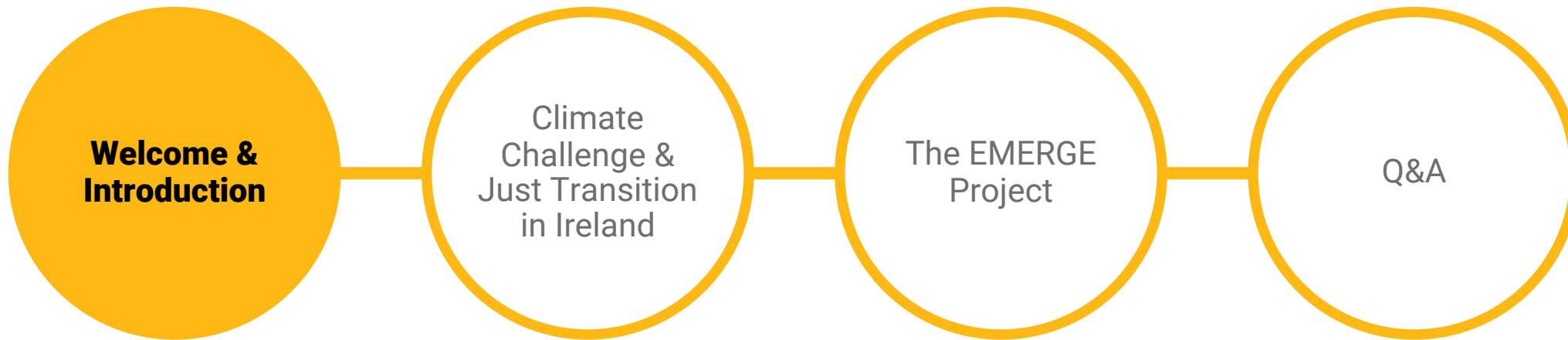
The Wheel



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PIPPA HACKETT

Ireland's Just Transition



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BREDA MAHER

EM CARO and the EMERGE programme



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Background and Context

JTF MRTT 148: Climate Action Training and Mentoring Programme to focus on Building Capacity and Empowering Impacted Communities of the wider Midlands Region

- Programme Partners
- Programme Context
- Programme Objectives & Scope



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Programme Partners

Eastern & Midlands



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Programme Partners

Climate Action Regional Offices (CARO)

Mandated to:

- **Build on Climate Action** Experience & Expertise
- **Coordinate and Facilitate** Climate Action & Build Capacity within LA Sector
- **Coordinate** Engagement across Various Agencies and Government Departments
- **Translate** Sectoral Efforts to local level
- **Delivery of LG sectoral strategy** on Climate Action to LA level



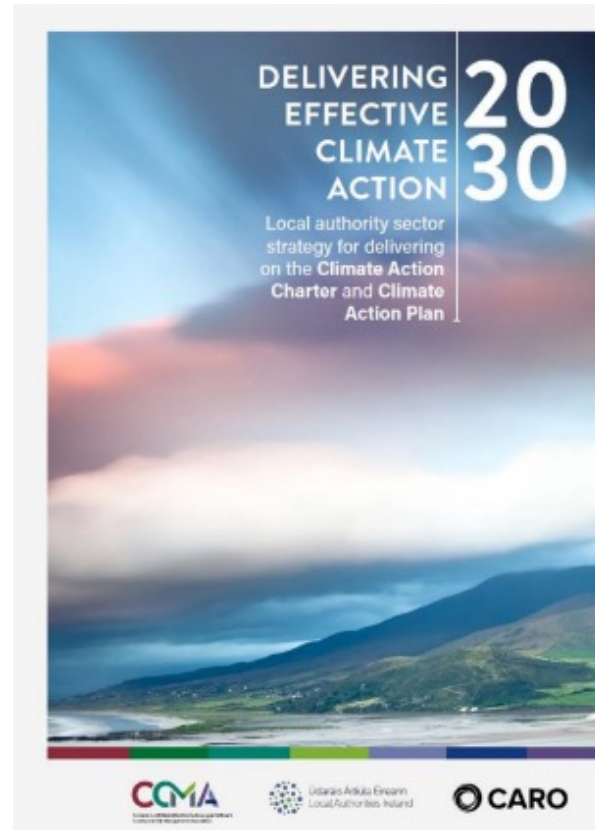
Programme Partners

CAROs & Local Authorities on Climate Action



Our Strategy

Our Strategy – **Delivering Effective Climate Action 2030** – provides a sectoral Vision and Mission to build on the existing expertise and skills and coordinate future work to maximise the leadership role of local authorities and impact on climate change, locally, regionally and nationally.



- 1. Foster governance, leadership, and partnerships for climate action
- 2. Achieve our carbon emission and energy efficiency targets for 2030 and 2050
- 3. Deliver on climate adaptation and climate resilience
- 4. Mobilise climate action in local communities
- 5. Mobilise climate action in enterprise and support the transition to an inclusive, net zero and circular economy
- 6. Achieve a 'just transition' particularly for communities that may be economically disadvantaged by decarbonising projects.

Available at: delivering-effective-climate-action-2030.pdf (lgma.ie)





Programme Context

- October 2019: Closure of two peat fired power stations (Offaly & Longford)
- Decarbonisation strategy accelerated further to 2023
- Midlands Regional Transition Team (MRTT) established working across four areas:
 - Securing special status
 - Addressing the needs of employees
 - Emerging opportunities from property land portfolios
 - Marketing the Region



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Programme Context

Two Stage process:

Stage 1 - Midlands Engagement Process

To inform National Just Transition Fund Criteria

Stage 2: Just Transition Fund

- Just Transition Fund 2020 – dedicated fund of €11m, financed by Government through an allocation of €6m from an increase in the carbon tax and an additional €5 million committed by ESB (56 projects – €22.1m)
- Priority 1: Employment and Enterprise Supports
- Priority 2: Training Supports
- Priority 3: Community Transitioning Supports



gov.ie - National Just Transition Fund (www.gov.ie)

Programme Context

Climate Action Training/ Transition Programme – Building Capacity and Empowering Impacted Communities

- Awarded funding under Priority 3 JTF: Community Transitioning Supports: To support proactive communications with affected communities and other stakeholders in the region, establish best practice sharing networks, and assist in developing local transition plans
- c. 2 year timeframe
- Targeted at Impacted Communities in Midlands
- Increase knowledge, link to supports, progress toward sustainable energy mechanisms
- Transition Planning
- Working through existing economic and community development structures



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Programme Objectives

Climate Action Training/Transition Programme – Building Capacity and Empowering Impacted Communities

1. Awarded Create a targeted programme of education, training and mentoring...
2. Assist in building the capacity and empowering impacted communities...
3. Support impacted communities to honour, build upon and enhance their historical, cultural and community identity...
4. Work through existing economic and community development structures of Local Authorities...
5. Foster a participative approach within impacted communities to build a shared climate action vision...
6. Highlighting the importance of 'learning by doing'...



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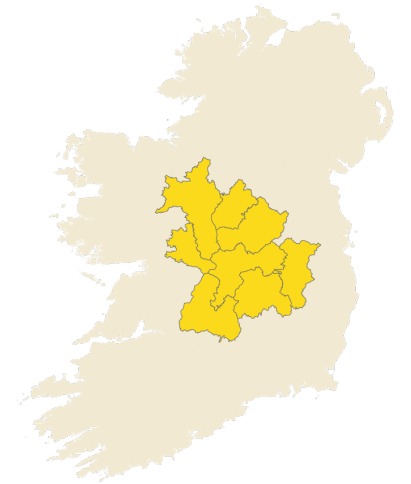


Programme Scope

- **Tiered targeted approach – Strategic and Specific**
 - Webinars
 - Community Transition Dialogues
 - Community Activation Toolkits
 - Community Activation Plans
- **Wider Midlands Geographical area**
 - Five Midlands Counties, East Galway, North Tipp, West Kildare
 - 21 specific locations

<u>County/Location</u>	<u>Community</u>
Laois	Abbeyleix, Portlaoise and Portarlington*
Offaly	Shannonbridge, Ferbane and Portarlington*
Westmeath	Tyrellspass and Moate
Longford	Lanesborough*, Longford and Granard
Roscommon	Clootuskart, Ballyleague*, Ballyforan
East Galway	Glenamaddy, Ballinasloe and Portumna
North Tipperary	Littleton and Lisheen
West Kildare	Coill Dubh and Rathangan

Programme completion by end of 2023



Programme Scope

- Accountability and Reporting directly to DECC
- Update to MRTT
- Opportunities for shared learnings
- Complimentary to EU Just Transition Fund Operational Programme

Single Specific Objective of JTF as set out in Regulation (EU) (2021/1056):

To mitigate the adverse effects of the climate transition by supporting the most affected territories and workers concerned and to promote a balanced socio-economic transition.

Wider Midlands Geographical area

- Support enterprises to enhance the economic diversification of the wider Midlands
- Train, up-skill and reskill workers affected by the exit from peat
- Invest in research and innovation and the deployment of technology
- Develop systems and infrastructure for clean energy
- €84.5 million from the EU Just Transition Fund over the period to 2027 - Government match funding using Exchequer resources, availability of **up to €169 million**

[Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly EU Just Transition Fund - Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly \(emra.ie\)](https://www.emra.ie)
[gov.ie - Public Consultation on the EU Just Transition Fund \(www.gov.ie\)](https://www.gov.ie)

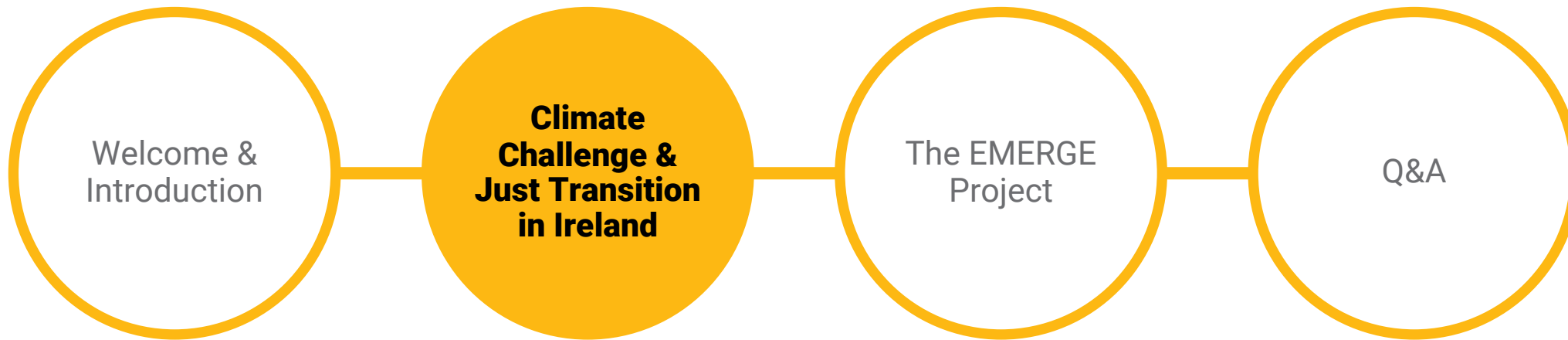


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CLIMATE CHALLENGE AND JUST TRANSITION IN IRELAND

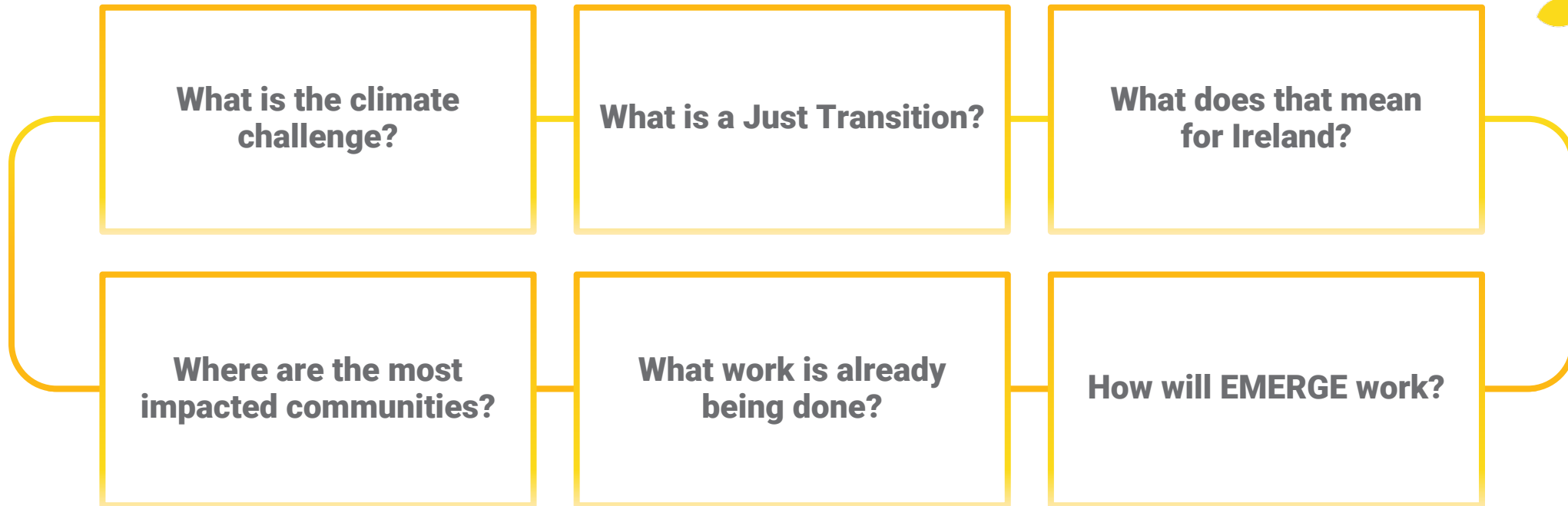
Urban Foresight



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Moving Ireland to a climate neutral economy



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The climate challenge

Global carbon emissions mean that the world is heading to more than 2°C of warming. This would have severe consequences, not only for the environment, but also for our societies and economies.

To respond to this there is a pressing need for countries to decarbonise their economies. In doing so, energy generation is key.

In Ireland, the government has taken a decisive step to cease the industrial harvesting and burning of peat and to invest significantly in renewables.

This both removes the carbon emissions from peat burning but also allows the remediation of bogs, which are a major carbon sink.



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How has this challenge been captured in policy?

The European Green Deal and the European Just Transition Mechanism recognise that regions and communities across the EU require support to transition to climate neutrality by 2050.

The EU Just Transition Mechanism will receive €55 billion in funding between 2021 and 2027. Of this, Ireland will receive €84.5 million, which will be further supplemented by match funding from the Irish Government.

To move towards climate neutrality by 2050, the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 commits the Irish Government to reduce Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions by 51% (from 2018 levels) by 2030.

The consequences of moving to a climate neutral economy for Ireland

- The cessation of industrial peat cutting
- Closure of ESB and BnM facilities in the wider Midlands region
- Loss of employment opportunities in the area
- Social and economic impacts
- Environmental and biodiversity opportunities
- Funding opportunities via the EU and Irish governments to address social, economic and environmental opportunities across the most impacted areas



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The Just Transition opportunity for Ireland

The cessation of peat cutting has had a significant impact on communities across the wider Midlands region.

To make the transition to a climate neutral economy fair for everyone, we must support those counties and communities most impacted.

The Just Transition is about ensuring the low carbon future does not leave these communities behind. It is about enabling communities to decide what their future looks like and to maximise employment opportunities.



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Impacted Counties & Communities



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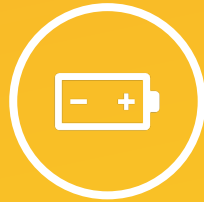


Driving the benefits of a Just Transition for Impacted Communities

How will these 21 communities be able to use the Just Transition as an opportunity for a better future?



**Upskilling/reskilling
in green sectors**



**Community owned
energy**



**Tourism
opportunities**



Sectoral development



Low carbon travel



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Our approach to helping these communities

We recognise that great work is already being done across Ireland. So how will our approach add to this?

- Working with partners
- Co-creating priority projects with communities
- Focusing on additionality and problem solving
- Creating peer learning networks
- Using real world case studies from other communities
- Creating toolkits which provide practical help to realise projects



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What work has already been done to help impacted communities across Ireland?



Community Owned Energy



New modes of tourism – active, environmental and heritage



Sectoral innovation and SME incubation – agriculture, food, manufacturing



Green skills – retrofit, energy, modern methods of construction



Multi-use community hubs



Education, training and upskilling



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Community Owned Energy

Mullingar Sustainable Energy Community

Mullingar Sustainable Energy Community was formed in 2018 and has recently engaged in two ambitious projects. The first is an energy audit of the town, whereby free evaluations are offered to local home and business owners. The aim of this is to identify areas of weakness, where local people can improve their energy efficiency. The second project is the development of a 5MW solar farm on a former landfill site. The feasibility of this is currently being explored, but this would be a major achievement for the community.

Lessons Learned

- The energy audit of the town is a useful way to understand current energy usage and could be applied to other towns and villages to raise awareness and identify potential solutions for the community.
- The 5MW solar farm is an example of an ambitious project which would have the capacity to power the town and potentially capitalise on the sale of excess energy.

Mullingar Sustainable Energy Community was supported by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) and Mullingar Chamber of Commerce.



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New modes of tourism – active, environmental and heritage

Peatland Biodiversity Boardwalk at Lullymore Heritage & Discovery Park

The Lullymore Heritage and Discovery Park is a key visitor attraction within the region which welcomes over 50,000 visitors each year. It has recently received additional funding through the Just Transition Fund to extend its peatland biodiversity boardwalk by 300 metres. Additional information signage will educate visitors on the Bog of Allen and its capacity to store carbon.

Lesson Learned

- Exemplifies the potential of the peatlands as a site for tourism and leisure.
- Upgrading existing attractions to increase their offer and develop their potential as tourism destinations.
- This will support additional seasonal and full-time employment.
- This will support surrounding communities, who can capitalise on the benefits of tourism growth and the rewilding of the peatlands.

Lullymore Heritage and Discovery Park CLG supported by the Irish Just Transition Fund



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Sectoral innovation and SME incubation – agriculture, food, manufacturing

Ferbane Food Campus and Innovation Centre

Ferbane Business & Technology Park was established in 2003 to create a business cluster which could boost employment. After ESB vacated the top floor of the office building, feasibility studies explored opportunities within the food sector.

The original industrial unit was sold, and new industrial units were bought and divided into 3 Food Incubation Units. All offices are now at full capacity, and 70 people are currently employed here. The park has enabled 40 people to set up their own businesses and has provided training to over 300 people.

Lessons Learned

- The project created employment opportunities for local people after 1200 local jobs were lost due to the cessation of peat production.
- The creation of area specialism and innovation has helped to attract new businesses and support start ups. The proposed expansion of the site will enable further sectoral innovation and job creation.
- Local people have been inspired to set up in the industry or upskill by engaging in training.

Ferbane Business and Technology Park CLG supported by the Irish Just Transition Fund



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Green skills – retrofit, energy, modern methods of construction

Home Upgrades in North Tipperary

Funding has been secured to promote capacity building, auditing and retrofitting of the local housing stock in communities around Littleton, which was affected by the closure of Littleton's peat factory.

The first phase involves raising community awareness and engaging local people in the process, building a partnership between local people and their local community development associations. The second phase will involve the retrofitting of over 40 homes locally over 2.5 years. During this time, the project will support 25 jobs through energy upgrade works.

Lessons Learned

- Engaging the local community in the energy transition upskills residents and prompts community-led energy retrofitting.
- Efficiency of homes are increased, reducing costs for owners and tenants.
- Increases knowledge of sustainability and methods of self-help amongst communities.

For this project, Energy Communities Tipperary Cooperative CLG (which represents 14 community energy teams) was the recipient of National Just Transition funding.





Multi-use community hubs

Saint Joseph's Community Centre: Remote Working Hub and Cycle Tourism Centre

Kilcormac Development Association received funding for the development of a tourism recreation hub and community remote working hub within Saint Joseph's Community Centre. The tourism recreation hub would not only create new jobs, through facilities such as bicycle hire, a coffee shop and a tourist office, but would also begin to unlock Kilcormac's potential as a gateway to Boora. In addition, the Remote Working Hub will offer co-working facilities for commuters and businesses, such as office hubs and meeting rooms.

Lessons Learned

- The project will enable the community centre to generate income which can be reinvested in community projects.
- The creation of additional tourist facilities has the potential to strengthen the tourism sector locally and stimulate Kilcormac's economy, using its proximity to Boora.
- Remote working job opportunities are created for local people.

Kilcormac Development Association was the recipient of National Just Transition funding for this project.



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Education, training and upskilling

Ballycommon Training Workshop

Ballycommon Telework & Training Centre is a community owned Rural Social Enterprise which delivers IT and safety training. Just Transition funding was used to construct a workshop and to design and deliver new training.

The aim of this project is to upskill and retrain local people who have been laid off as a result of the phasing out of peat extraction, so that they may be competitive within the job market. The area faces skills shortages in retrofit for homes, renewable energy assets, solar energy and robotics, which has shaped the themes of the training.

Lessons Learned

- The local skills gap was identified and addressed through the targeting of specific courses offered.
- The provision of this facility has enabled the upskilling and reskilling of residents affected by the phasing out of peat extraction.
- There is a clear focus on skills relating to retrofitting and solar energy, which will become increasingly relevant and make the community resilient in the future.

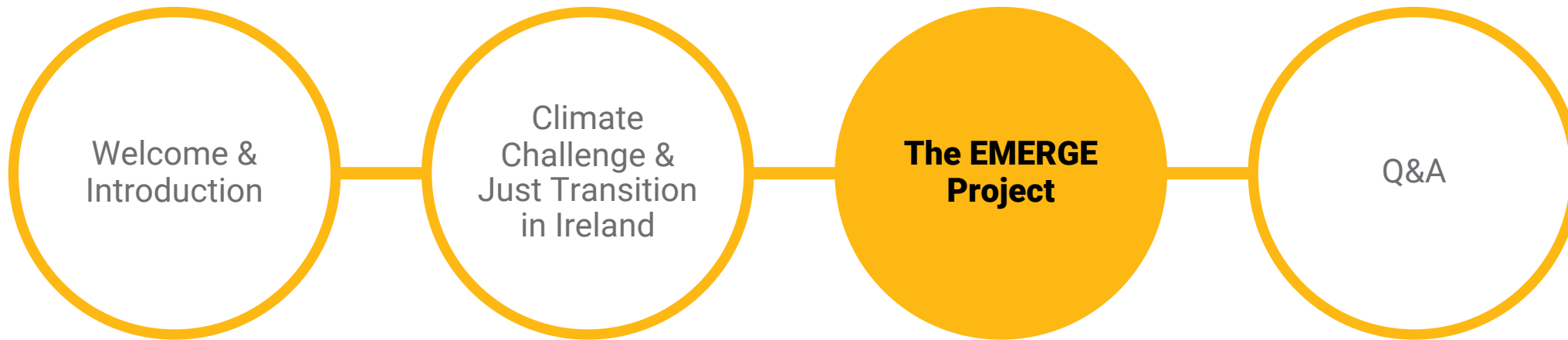
National Just Transition funding accounted for 85% of the total cost of this project. The grantee was Ballycommon Telework and Training Centre CLG, a community owned business.



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WHAT IS THE EMERGE PROJECT?

The Wheel



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EMERGE is...

a **Training & Mentoring programme** designed to empower communities in the wider Midlands region to meet the challenges and opportunities of Ireland's transition to a climate-proofed and resilient economy and society.



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In practice...

Drawing on the region's **unique heritage and resources**, the programme will support the **impacted communities** to:



take ownership of the new opportunities created by climate action



create action plans & access funding



own the economic, social and environmental future of the wider Midlands region

Who can take part?



Individuals

**Community
and voluntary
organisations**

Local authorities

Employers

Statutory bodies

... and anyone who wants to contribute to building a brighter future for the impacted communities of the wider Midlands (Just Transition) region

A recap of the areas covered



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EMERGE Programme Timeline



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Training Webinars

January – February 2023

Purpose:

Give the background to the Just Transition, the funding and support available, and examples of what some areas within the impacted region are already doing.

Format:

- 4 online events
- Each event targeted at a specific pair of counties within the region
- Presentations from existing projects to demonstrate what is possible
- A panel of key local people involved with these projects (with Q&A)
- Information on how to network with other communities and get involved in the next stage



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Community Transition Dialogues

April – May 2023

Purpose:

To support a group of 21 impacted communities across the wider Midlands region to identify a local opportunity and idea for development.

Format:

- Face-to-Face events in 21 communities
- Facilitated discussion on the key opportunities that each community sees for meeting the challenges in their area
- Case study examples of what is working elsewhere
- Prioritisation of needs, opportunities and ideas



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Community Activation Toolkit

May – October 2023

Purpose:

Help participating communities to turn their ideas, insights and actions into practical projects and realities.

Format:

- Communities will have ongoing support from Urban Foresight & The Wheel throughout this period for advice, guidance and signposting
- Communities will also be put in contact with other communities around the region who have previously carried out similar projects
- Each community will be supported to produce a project Toolkit [incl. Resource Maps; Project lifecycle; Funding plan; troubleshooting etc.]



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Community Activation Plans

October 2023

Purpose:

Showcase and celebrate the plans and projects developed by the communities involved.

Format:

- Online event
- Communities will showcase the planning toolkits they have established by presenting to each other
- Specific projects will be discussed in detail
- This session will offer final evaluations and feedback



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How to get involved

Everyone:

Visit the website for updates:

www.caro.ie/projects-research/collaborations/emerge

Follow our story on social media at
#EMERGEMidlands

Help spread the word about **EMERGE**

Impacted communities of the wider Midlands (Just Transition) region

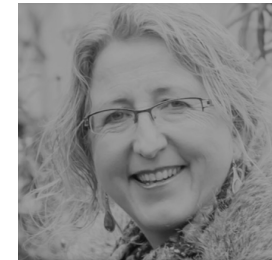
Get in touch to participate in the next phase:



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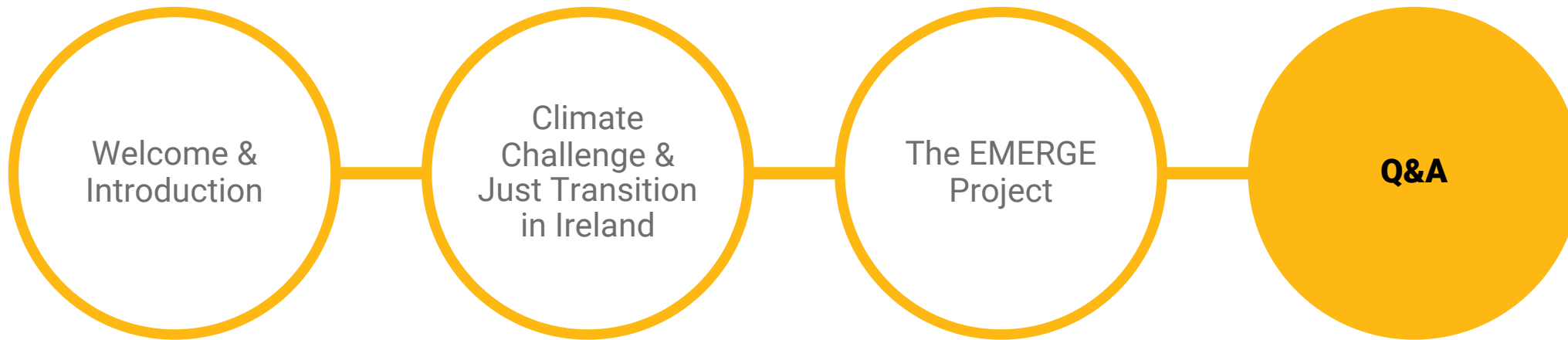
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Q&A



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THANK YOU!

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