

Enterprising and Sustainable Energy Communities in Louth and Kerry

How to Create and Develop a Sustainable Energy Community

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SUSTAINABLE ENERGY COMMUNITIES



What is a Sustainable Energy Community?

A Sustainable Energy Community (SEC) is a **group of people in which everyone works together** to develop a **sustainable energy system for the benefit of the community.**

- Aiming, as far as possible, to be **energy efficient**
- Using **renewable energy** where feasible
- Adopting **smart energy** solutions

- **Use less**
- **Use clean**
- **Innovate**



What does an Energy Community do?

- Energy communities Group comes together to look at improving how energy is used, championing a sustainable, holistic way for the benefit of their community.
- They often look at projects in homes, transport, local business and farms.
- They also look at community buildings such as schools, community centres, and sports facilities.



Why Work as a Group?

- Changing and improving our **knowledge of energy use** creates one of the biggest **impacts** for sustainability and the environment. **Group action** increases this.
- We can **reduce energy bills** in the community by doing local energy projects, **free up** more money to **spend** in the **community** in the longer term.
- Community energy projects mean warmer, healthier and **more efficient** homes, buildings and farms.
- These projects can bring the **community together** and contribute to **bigger goals**.



Common Goals of a Sustainable Energy Community?

Use less energy

- **Energy efficiency** is the **cheapest** and most straightforward way for a community to become **more sustainable**. Most communities have buildings with old or **outdated** insulation, lighting or heating **systems**.

Use clean energy

- **Switching** from fossil fuels to **renewables** is the next step where possible. This can be by way of renewable **heating systems**, changing **energy suppliers**, or **generating** energy.

Use smart energy

- Technology gives us more **control** over how we heat homes, drive cars, or light buildings. Where suitable, communities can use these **technologies** to **compliment** their other actions.

Get the ball rolling?

- **Build your group**
- To start you need to **get a group together**. The more hands, heads and skills the **better**, but the main ingredients are **enthusiasm** and **drive**. Find out who you need to set up a [steering committee](#).
- **Register with SEAI**
- **Join the Sustainable Energy Community network**. This way you can **access the supports** available through SEAI. Learn more about joining the [Sustainable Energy Network](#).
- **Talk to your county mentor**
- A [mentor](#) will get in **contact** with you to help you get the **ball rolling**. They might invite you to events or workshops so you can **meet** with **other communities** and **learn** more about what you can do.

The Sustainable Energy Communities Network

SEC Network Map

<https://www.seai.ie/sustainable-solutions/community-projects/sustainable-energy-communities/>

- Look for SECs with similar aims and objectives
- Networking is encouraged
- Ask your Mentor for an introduction





A diverse network of skills and interests

To date, there are 450+ communities in the network. Who are they?

- Small rural towns
- Large urban centres
- Neighbourhoods
- Third level institutions
- Residents' Associations
- Tidy Towns Committees
- Suburban community organisations
- Local environmental groups
- County councils
- Business groups
- Housing Associations
- **Farm groups**



What are the benefits of joining the network?

- Mentoring
- Learning supports
- Network with other communities who have common interests
- Learn from communities with local energy projects
- Think about energy use in "your" community in an informed way
- Learn from energy experts
- Attend regional and national events and network

What does a community energy project require?

A community energy project requires;

- Time,
- Commitment,
- Informed approach.

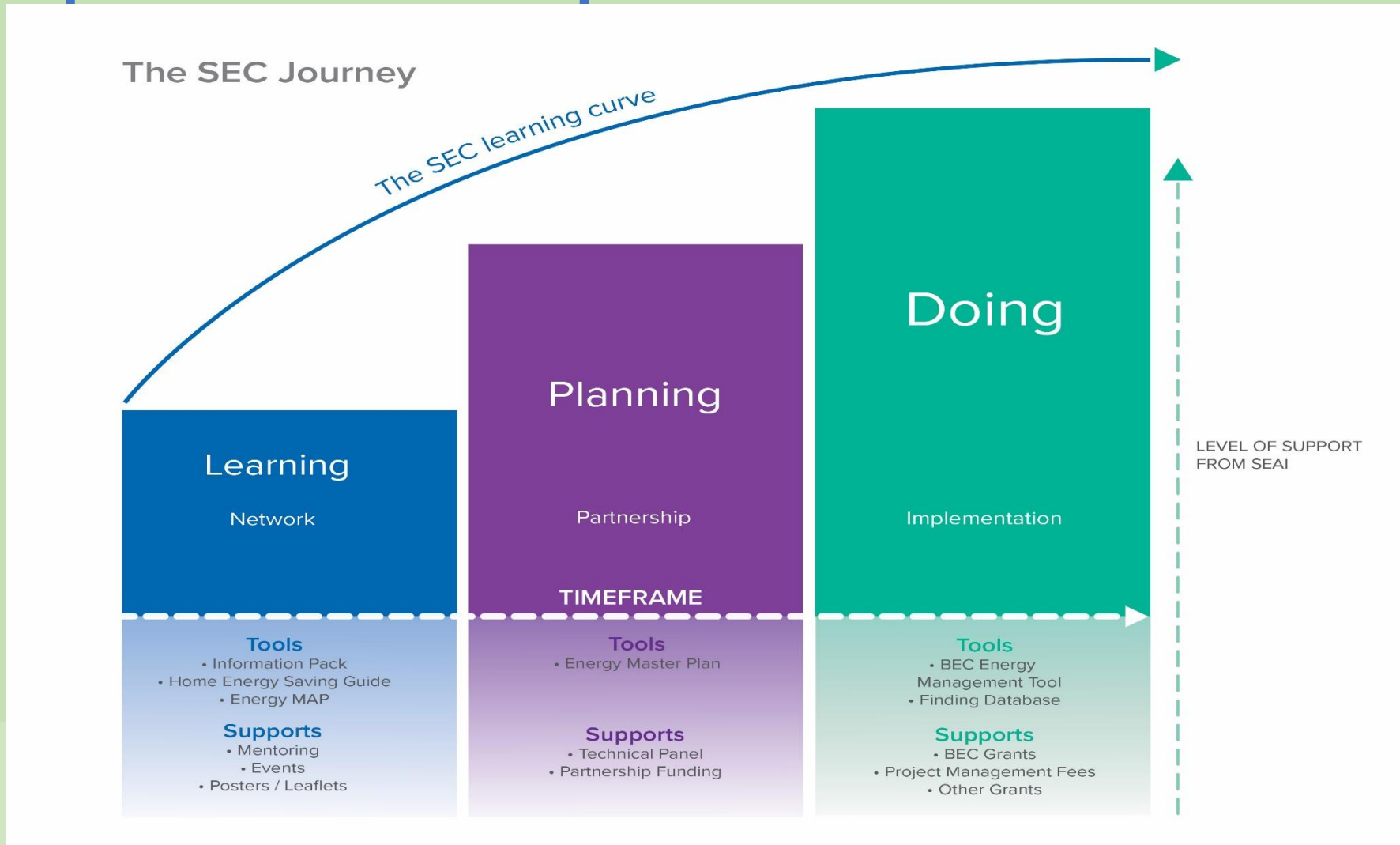
Working **together** as a community means;

- **Shared** workload,
- **Better value** for money,
- **Bigger impact**.

- **Use less**
- **Use clean**
- **Innovate**



Big graph for another presentation?



What next? (Very briefly)

- Your group is now on the pathway (walk it with your mentor).
- Ask lots of questions in this “learn” stage.
- Moving towards “plan” stage which will be getting an Energy Master Plan (EMP) done for your community. Again with support.
- You will get funding to get specialists to do this EMP.
- Looks at baseline energy use in electricity, heat and transport and should give the community an idea of its energy use (kWh) and tonnes of CO₂. May give a cost of energy also (€).
- Produces a Register of Opportunities; real life project prospects in your community that will meet eligibility criteria and move your community to the “do” stage of the process.
- These can be ideal projects to make funding applications for.

What next? (Extract from EMP)

From the information and statistics available from local and national sources and estimations based on local research and interviews the results are indicated below.

The regional energy usage for the Mid Louth/Dunleer SEC area was found to be just under 480,473,000 kWh annually as shown below with a corresponding CO₂ of 139,483 tonnes.

Sector	kWh	CO₂ (tonnes)
Residential	390,496,896	110,405
Private Sector/Industry	43,484,640	15,704
School/Public Sector	22,374,903	6,229
Sports and Leisure	816,800	306
Community Buildings	1,305,100	442
Agriculture	21,994,488	6,398
Total	480,472,826	139,483

Final Thoughts?

- It seems obvious that this programme has possibilities for the farming community.
- On paper it seems to make sense so let's work together to get it off paper and into the farms.
- Case studies and best practice examples needed to make theory more believable.
- <https://www.seai.ie/community-energy/sustainable-energy-communities/>

Final Quote?

“When all is said and
done let us get more
done than said”