



# CLASP

Climate Change  
Local Area  
Support  
Programme

## Community Engagement Toolkit

# Checklist

Showcasing local examples of how other communities have delivered their own renewable energy projects.

[www.clasp-nw.info](http://www.clasp-nw.info)

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## Checklist

The checklist sets out the steps needed for a community group to progress their renewable energy project. It provides key information for your community from getting organised and setting priorities through to choosing the right technology and advice on commissioning the project. This includes: what to do, who to talk to, identifying a potential project, conducting a feasibility study, securing partners, planning the project, grid connection, ownership, planning permission, etc....

Links to further advice are provided at each step and your community will be able to identify what stage you are in and what's required to move forward.

For more information on how to undertake the steps necessary to deliver a community renewable energy project please see the accompanying documents produced as part of the CLASP Community Engagement Toolkit.

- **'How to Use' Guide**

- **Factsheets**

- **Case Studies**

- Checklist

- **Powerpoint Presentation** (available on the CLASP website)

- **Literature Library** (available on the CLASP website)

Starting a renewable energy project can be a daunting prospect for many communities, especially for those with no experience. The checklist below will provide you with guidance throughout the project and provide tips and links to further information and tools.

### 1. Identify your community and where you want to take action

Do you have the basics in place? For example:

- An organised community group that will champion the project?
- Community group members who will lead the project?
- A community building to hold regular meetings?
- A building or land to site the project?
- Links to the wider community who will benefit from the project?

It is essential to have a group of committed individuals who have a shared vision for their community and want to take action.

### 2. Understand your community priorities

Assess your community priorities: what are your motivators for a renewable energy project?

- Saving money on energy bills.
- Becoming energy independent.
- Reducing carbon emissions.
- Earning money from renewable energy generation.

Understanding your priorities will help you decide on the best renewable technology for your community.

### 3. Take the first step to save energy

The first step before considering installing renewable energy technologies is to reduce overall energy use and improve energy efficiency of buildings. Do this by installing energy saving measures (such as loft and wall insulation), low energy lighting or changing your behaviour (such as switching off lights when you leave a room). These actions will save you money on your energy bills.

Yes No How to do it

3.1 Have you calculated your community carbon footprint?

Yes  No

The Energy Saving Trust's Green Communities Carbon Footprint Tool can be used to estimate your community's direct emissions from energy used in the home and transport over a period of one year in tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>).

<http://www.greencommunitiescc.org.uk/Default.aspx>

3.2 Have you investigated an overall plan to reduce your community carbon footprint?

Yes  No

The Energy Saving Trust's Action Planning Tool will help your community choose the most effective energy saving options and estimate how much carbon your community could save by different actions such as insulating the building or installing renewable energy technologies.

<http://www.greencommunitiescc.org.uk/Default.aspx>

#### 4. Take the next step and identify options to generate your own renewable energy

Once you have undertaken the 'easier' energy saving actions, you are now ready to investigate how your community can benefit from generating its own energy.

	Yes	No	How to do it
<b>4.1</b> Have you identified the best renewable energy technology for your community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>To identify which renewable technology is the most suitable for your community read the technology factsheets available on the CLASP website.</p> <p>The technology specific factsheets contain local information, contacts, examples and an easy to follow checklist which will help you assess which technology is best suited to your community. There is a set of eight factsheets for different technologies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community Solar PV.</li><li>• Community Solar Water Heating.</li><li>• Community Wind.</li><li>• Community Hydro.</li><li>• Community Heat Pumps.</li><li>• Community Biomass Heating.</li><li>• Community CHP.</li><li>• Community District Heating.</li></ul> <p>The PlanLoCal website also has a range of short videos, some of which provide information on each of the different renewable technologies available.</p> <p><a href="http://www.planlocal.org.uk/videos/submenus/submenu-which-tech.html">http://www.planlocal.org.uk/videos/submenus/submenu-which-tech.html</a></p>
<b>4.2</b> Have you looked at similar successful projects in the North West?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Other communities have done similar projects to the one you are considering. For some inspiring case studies from North West visit the CLASP website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cumbria: biomass heating for a community hall.</li><li>• Greater Manchester: district heating for a block of flats.</li><li>• Merseyside: wind turbine for a community.</li><li>• Cheshire: affordable energy efficiency and solar thermal.</li><li>• Lancashire: heat pumps and solar PV for a village hall.</li></ul>
<b>4.3</b> Have you looked at similar successful projects in other parts of the UK?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Communities up and down the UK are also taking action. For some examples of projects outside the North West visit the following websites:</p> <p>Energy Saving Trust Green Communities website: <a href="http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/cafe/Green-Communities/Get-inspired/Case-Studies">http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/cafe/Green-Communities/Get-inspired/Case-Studies</a></p> <p>PlanLocal website: <a href="http://www.planlocal.org.uk/videos/submenus/submenu-case-studies.html">http://www.planlocal.org.uk/videos/submenus/submenu-case-studies.html</a></p> <p>Scottish Government: <a href="http://www.communityenergyscotland.org.uk">http://www.communityenergyscotland.org.uk</a></p> <p>Department of Energy and Climate Change: <a href="http://ceo.decc.gov.uk/en/ceol/cms/case_studies/case_studies.aspx">http://ceo.decc.gov.uk/en/ceol/cms/case_studies/case_studies.aspx</a></p>

## 5. Managing your renewable energy project

You should now be in a position where you have a clear picture of what community priorities you would like to address through a renewable energy project. You have also undertaken energy saving measures and assessed different renewable energy technologies to see which are suitable for your community building/s and read some examples of how other communities have undertaken similar projects.

### Now it is time to get to grips with the project!

	Yes	No	How to do it
<b>5.1</b> Do you know how to get your community organised and involved?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The Energy Saving Trust Green Communities website has a guide on how to engage with your community and communicate about climate change:</p> <p><a href="http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/cafe/Green-Communities/Guidance-and-useful-tools/How-to-Guides/How-to-engage-your-community-and-communicate-about-climate-change">http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/cafe/Green-Communities/Guidance-and-useful-tools/How-to-Guides/How-to-engage-your-community-and-communicate-about-climate-change</a></p>
<b>5.2</b> Do you understand the different stages involved in a renewable energy project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The Energy Saving Trust Green Communities website has a video explaining the different stages involved in managing a community renewable energy project:</p> <p><a href="http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/cafe/Green-Communities/Project-Support/Community-projects-the-different-stages">http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/cafe/Green-Communities/Project-Support/Community-projects-the-different-stages</a></p> <p>Action with Communities in Rural England also has a more generic step-by-step guide to help community groups produce a community led plan to implement actions, such as renewable energy projects, that address local needs:</p> <p><a href="http://www.acre.org.uk/our-work/community-led-planning">http://www.acre.org.uk/our-work/community-led-planning</a></p>
<b>5.3</b> Have you engaged any support organisations or identified anyone who may be interested in investing in your project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Securing likeminded partners for your project will improve the chances of success. It is important to contact your local authority early in the process to understand what support is available.</p> <p>Have a look at the factsheets on the <b>CLASP website</b> for local contacts which can provide support to your community, including planning authority departments:</p> <p>Even more importantly, you need the support from your wider community. The PlanLoCal website has got useful information on how to engage with others in your community who might be impacted by your project:</p> <p><a href="http://www.planlocal.org.uk/pages/community-engagement/">http://www.planlocal.org.uk/pages/community-engagement/</a></p>
<b>5.4</b> Have you assessed the project in detail to determine costs, benefits, timescales...?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>In order to better understand the detail of your community renewable energy project, a feasibility study should be undertaken. It should include a business case appraisal covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Potential costs, savings and earnings.</li><li>• Potential environmental impacts.</li><li>• Timescales.</li><li>• Likelihood of obtaining planning permission and other legal requirements.</li></ul> <p>You will need to commission professionals to conduct your feasibility study which will incur a cost. A list of environmental consultancies can be found on the ENDS website:</p> <p><a href="http://www.endsdirectory.com/">http://www.endsdirectory.com/</a></p>

Business in the Community's ProHelp website has got a list of companies that can provide free advice and support:

[http://www.bitc.org.uk/community/employee\\_volunteering/prohelp/](http://www.bitc.org.uk/community/employee_volunteering/prohelp/)

Local Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) certified installers of renewable energy technologies can be found on the MCS website:

<http://www.microgenerationcertification.org/mcs-consumer/installer-search.php>

**5.5** Have you considered different ownership options for your renewable energy project?

Yes

No

Once the feasibility of the project has been assessed in more detail it is important to determine the best option of community ownership: does your community want to project manage and fully own the project (by setting up a social enterprise) or do you prefer to appoint a third party to run and own the project but share some of the benefits with your community group?

Several options are discussed on Factsheet 9: 'Community Ownership' on the **CLASP website**:

The Energy Saving Trust has a guide on how to set up a social enterprise, including the different structures that your community should consider:

<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/cafe/Green-Communities/Guidance-and-useful-tools/How-to-Guides/How-to-set-up-a-social-enterprise>

For more information on legal structures visit Co-operatives UK: [www.cooperatives-uk.coop/SimplyLegal](http://www.cooperatives-uk.coop/SimplyLegal)

The Development Trust Association website contains a publication with information on community shares:

[www.dta.org.uk/resources/publications/communityshares.htm](http://www.dta.org.uk/resources/publications/communityshares.htm)

It is **highly recommended** that legal advice is sought before entering into ownership agreements with third parties.

**5.6** Do you know where to find sources of funding and finance for your project?

Yes

No

Information regarding funding and finance options, including a 'How to get funding' guide and a funding database can be found on the Energy Saving Trust website:

<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/cafe/Green-Communities/Funding-Advice>

**5.7** Do you know if you can connect your renewable energy project to the National Grid? (only applicable to projects that generate electricity)

Yes

No

For electricity generating projects you need to determine if you can connect to the National Grid and whether there are any costs associated with this. Refer to Factsheets 1: Wind Turbines, 2: Solar Photovoltaics, 3: Hydro Power and 7: Combined Heat and Power on the **CLASP website** for further information regarding grid connection for different technologies.

For more detailed information visit your local distribution network operator website:

Electricity Northwest (generally Cumbria/Greater Manchester and Lancashire):

<http://www.enwl.co.uk/content/OurServices/ElectricityConnections/ApplicationforaGeneratorConnection.aspx>

Scottish Power (generally Merseyside and Cheshire):

[http://www.spenergynetworks.com/dgis/g59\\_generator\\_connections.asp](http://www.spenergynetworks.com/dgis/g59_generator_connections.asp)

**5.8** Do you know if your community renewable energy project is eligible for the Government's financial incentives?

Yes

No

Renewable energy projects can now benefit from Government incentives aimed at increasing the uptake of renewable energy technologies. These incentives mean that your community will be paid money for generating renewable heat or electricity, providing an attractive return on investment for your project.

More information about incentives for each particular technology can be found on the factsheets available on the **CLASP website**.

For more detail visit Department of Energy and Climate Change's website:

- Feed in Tariff (incentive for electricity generating technologies):  
[http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/what\\_we\\_do/uk\\_supply/energy\\_mix/renewable/feedin\\_tariff/feedin\\_tariff.aspx](http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/what_we_do/uk_supply/energy_mix/renewable/feedin_tariff/feedin_tariff.aspx)
- Renewable Heat Incentive (incentive for heat generating technologies):  
[http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/what\\_we\\_do/uk\\_supply/energy\\_mix/renewable/policy/incentive/incentive.aspx](http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/what_we_do/uk_supply/energy_mix/renewable/policy/incentive/incentive.aspx)

**5.9** Do you know whether your project will need planning permission?

Yes

No

On the factsheets available on the **CLASP website** there is guidance on planning for the different technologies and you can find contact details for the planning department of your local authority.

More information can be found on the Government's planning portal:  
<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/>

The Energy Saving Trust has produced some information on how to influence your local authority which will be useful in supporting your community renewable energy project through planning application:

<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/cafe/Green-Communities/Guidance-and-useful-tools/How-to-Guides/How-to-influence-and-work-with-your-local-authority>

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## **6. Start construction and go live**

Yes, it has been a long process but now that all the above is in place it is time to engage the appropriate suppliers, get your technology installed and start to reap the benefits! Well done!

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## **7. Further sources of information**

Additional sources of information covering all of these topics in more detail can be found in the literature library available on the **CLASP website**.