

Communities Energy Grant 2020

Application Guidelines

IMPORTANT NOTICES

- It is the responsibility of each applicant to ensure that they have read and fully understood, the Application Guidelines, the Application Form and complete the accompanying Technical Workbook before submitting the signed Application Form. Failure to fully adhere to the provisions of this Application Guidelines and the Application Form will result in application being rejected, grant offer revocation or grant claim refusal, depending on the particular status and stage of the application.
- SEAI accepts no liability or responsibility, whether for breach of contract, negligence or otherwise, in respect of any claim or cause of action arising out of, or in relation to, any equipment, product, work, system or installation in respect of which grant approval was given by SEAI.
- The Communities Energy Grant 2020 is subject to any State aid clearances required from the Commission of the European Union and any consents, clearances or licenses which might be required from any other competent body. SEAI reserves the right to alter or amend any aspect of this programme as a consequence of any directions, conditions or requirements of any such consents, clearances or licenses.
- SEAI reserve the right to update this document. For the avoidance of doubt, the applicable version is the one which is published on the SEAI website on the closing date for receipt of applications.

Table of Contents

PREFACE.....	3
1. OVERVIEW.....	4
1.1 About SEAI.....	4
1.2 The Communities Energy Grant Overview.....	4
1.3 Eligible Projects.....	5
1.4 Grant Amount Available.....	5
1.5 Assisted Community Projects	6
1.6 Evaluation Process	7
1.7 Funding Levels.....	13
1.8 Eligible Energy Upgrades.....	14
1.9 Eligible Costs	15
1.10 Ineligible Costs	17
2.0 PLANNING YOUR PROJECT	18
2.1. Project Structure.....	18
2.2 Community Approach	18
2.3 Traditional Buildings and Protected Structures	18
2.4 Key Roles	19
3 FINANCING and PROJECT DELIVERY SOLUTIONS.....	22
3.1 Minimum Financing Requirements.....	22
3.2 Specific Financing Options	22
3.3 Financing Balance	22
4 PROJECT COMPONENTS.....	23
4.1 Residential Projects.....	23
4.2 Non-residential Projects	26
5 APPLICATION PROCESS	28
5.1 Before Applying.....	28
5.2 How to Apply.....	29
5.3 Application and Project Timeline.....	29
5.4 Checklist	29
6 GRANT PAYMENTS	31
6.1 Validating the Offer.....	31
6.2 During the Project.....	31
6.3 Payment Procedure	33
6.4 Important Notes.....	35

6.5	Assessment and Reporting.....	37
7	THE COMMUNITIES ENERGY GRANT TEAM.....	39
8	TERMS AND CONDITIONS	40

PREFACE

The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) is delighted to announce the launch of the Communities Energy Grant for 2020.

The following guidelines aim at helping interested parties to create the best applications for their projects by outlining the necessary criteria and documentary requirements, as well as offering helpful advice, contacts and resources for those preparing to apply.

Contact details for the organisers are available on page 40 of these Guidelines. Please do not hesitate to get in touch about prospective ventures. We would be delighted to discuss the feasibility and financing possibilities of all proposals and look forward to working with you to make good ideas become great projects.

1. OVERVIEW

1.1 About SEAI

SEAI has a mission to play a leading role in transforming Ireland into a society based on sustainable energy structures, technologies and practices. To fulfil this mission SEAI aims to provide well-timed and informed advice to Government, and deliver a range of programmes efficiently and effectively, while engaging and motivating a wide range of stakeholders and showing continuing flexibility and innovation in all activities. SEAI's actions will help advance Ireland to the vanguard of the global green technology movement, so that Ireland is recognised as a pioneer in the move to decarbonised energy systems.

SEAI programmes are funded by the Government of Ireland through the Department of Communication Climate Action and Environment.

1.2 The Communities Energy Grant Overview

The Communities Energy Grant is Ireland's national retrofit initiative aimed at **upgrading building stock and facilities** to high standards of **energy efficiency** and **renewable energy usage**, thereby reducing fossil fuel usage, energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions.

By supporting project structures that can be easily replicated, Communities Energy Grant hopes to showcase retrofit project models that can be implemented without SEAI support in the future.

As part of this initiative, the Communities Energy Grant supports new approaches to achieving high quality improvements in energy efficiency within Irish communities. By bringing together groups of buildings under the same retrofit programme, communities projects facilitate community-wide energy improvements more efficiently and cost effectively than might otherwise be possible. The Communities Energy Grant is designed to engage all members of SEAI's Sustainable Energy Community (SEC) network who wish to participate in delivery of energy efficiency works, as well as those Project Coordinators who have previously participated in SEAI Community Energy Grant projects.

The ambitions of this Communities Energy Grant are to:

- a. Build on the success of the previous Communities Energy Grant schemes to support delivery of large-scale projects through the support of the project coordinators to deliver larger and more technically challenging schemes.
- b. Develop community skills to manage capital projects and empower communities to lead small to medium scale projects in their own communities. Project partnerships which include at least one member of SEAI's SEC network are preferred and will score higher in accordance with the evaluation process set out at section 1.7 below. While this is not a mandatory requirement it is strongly encouraged.
- c. Support the SEC network members in advance on their Learn-Plan – Do process. Build and maintain energy awareness and knowledge locally. This will be achieved by assessing projects by their ability to showcase and disseminate the benefits of energy projects to the wider community. More information available here: <https://www.seai.ie/sustainable-solutions/community-projects/>

Projects are required to demonstrate a building fabric first approach in line with the SEAI definition in the following order of priority to:

- Be as energy efficient as possible (fabric first approach)
- Consider renewables where feasible
- Adopt smart technologies as appropriate

1.3 Eligible Projects

This year, the Communities Energy Grant aims to fund a comprehensive suite of projects that deliver energy savings to communities, including public buildings, homes and businesses. All projects applying for funding should be **community oriented**, include a **cross-sectoral approach** and demonstrate an ability to **sustainably finance** the proposed project.

A **partnership approach** is essential for successful application. Interested parties should seek partnership from organisations that fall into the **Eligible categories**. Innovative and pioneering **partnerships for delivery between sectors**, such as collaborations between public and private sectors, residential and non-residential sectors, commercial and not-for-profit organisations, financing entities and energy suppliers, are of particular interest. Projects that are part of a larger energy efficiency project or engage with other SEAI programmes are welcome.

Demonstration Projects are welcomed as part of the Communities Energy Grant call where the project represents an opportunity to showcase the Sustainable Energy Community leadership ability and influence the wider community and encourage future involvement. For example, the project selected could be a single building which is used/accessed by the local community and should represent a moderate to deep retrofit. Single measure upgrades to demonstration buildings will not be funded e.g. lighting upgrade or boiler only upgrade. It should be noted that fossil fuel boilers are not eligible for grant funding.

1.4 Grant Amount Available

The maximum grant available in the Communities Energy **Grant** is €1,500,000. There is no maximum **project** value. We recommend applicants consider grant applications of at least €50,000 due to the level of administration involved in this programme.

The overall maximum % funding available for the scheme per project is 50% which includes the Project Management fees. It is up to the applicant to ensure that the overall blended rate for the project is 50% or less i.e. if an application is a blend of different projects with varying funding rates between 30% and 80% overall for that application the maximum funding rate available for the project is 50%.

(Example: Project costs of €1,000,000 can attract a maximum grant of €500,000: 50%. Where an application is received above this maximum % the application will be rejected)

Eligible categories

All applications should try to include more than one of the following categories.

- **Residential housing upgrades** to stock built prior to 1 January 2006, . Where heat pump technology or other related is proposed the construction date must align to the Better Energy Homes programme or other SEAI programme requirements which indicates the 1st January 2011 with consideration given to the current HLI requirements.
- **Private sector** non-residential building works
- **Commercial organisations**
- **Voluntary organisations**
- **Community-based organisations**
- **Public sector** non-residential works

Note: Further details and explanations on these terms is available later in these Guidelines.

Individual organisations and Project Coordinators are permitted to submit more than one application for support, but **projects should be bundled where appropriate**. Where multiple applications are submitted it is essential that **sufficient resources** are clearly demonstrated to deliver on **all the projects outlined** and identified in the Application Form. All works proposed for an individual facility/address must be contained within one application.

1.5 Assisted Community Projects

While all applicants can seek advice and support from the Communities Energy Grant Team on their project applications, some applicants may be considered for **additional augmented support** if they are applying for a grant of less than €200,000, are a registered SEC and it is their first or second time applying for a grant.

Additional supports can be provided to Assisted Community Projects at any stage pre, during and post application stage and may include:

- Advice on project proposals and their eligibility for the Communities Energy Grant programme
- Support during the application process to review draft applications and advise/provide feedback on any areas for improvement prior to submission of final application
- Assist with training workshops on the project workbooks and documentation requirements alongside the project applications
- Undertake frequent progress check-ups with project co-ordinators during the development of the project to ensure smooth delivery of the project
- Assistance with the payment process for grant payments as per the set project milestones – ensuring the project's payment documentation is in line prior to presenting to SEAI for payment and monitoring/tracking of all files through the system up to the point of payment.

1.6 Evaluation Process

Applications will be assessed on a first-come first-served basis but must meet the minimum criteria as set out below. Funding will be awarded to completed applications until the available budget is allocated or until it becomes unfeasible for the project to be delivered and inspected by 12.00 14th of October 2020.

SEAI, in undertaking the evaluation process, accepts no responsibility for the Applicants design and any errors or omissions that might be contained therein.

Subsequent to the SEAI evaluation and granting of a letter of offer, if the Applicants design is found to contain material errors or omissions, SEAI reserves the right to cancel the Application or re-calculate the grant amount.

The evaluation process can only commence once a valid application is received. SEAI deem a valid application to be received when we have Form A Form B and a workbook to support the Form A. Once these 3 documents are received an evaluation is possible. Without other supporting documentation and energy audits a successful evaluation is unlikely. Once SEAI send a project for evaluation no additional documentation may be submitted until the evaluation is complete.

Where the evaluation is unsuccessful or does not meet the minimum score the communities team will send the project coordinator the evaluator comments and allow the project coordinator resubmit additional documentation and allow changes to the form A and Workbook. The resubmission must be received within 5 working days of the notification and must be submitted on the PEP system.

Where a second submission is received, the community's team will ask the same evaluator to re-evaluate the new submission. If the new submission meets the criteria it will move along to the next phase in the evaluation process. If it does not meet the criteria the application will be closed, marked unsuccessful and no further evaluation will be allowed on this application. Any further submissions from the project coordinator will be treated as a new submission and will rank accordingly in date order.

Where the budget is fully subscribed SEAI will operate a reserve list. Projects will only be evaluated once funding becomes available, evaluations will be evaluated in date sequence only.

Applications for projects with a grant value in excess of €220,000 must be received by 13.00 on 31 January 2020. Any application received after this time and date which exceeds the lower limit set will not be evaluated and will be deemed unsuccessful.

Projects must score at least **65 Marks** to qualify for funding. Projects that do not reach this minimum score will be rejected with comments though we encourage you to self-score from the guidance below in advance of submitting. Project Coordinators who have outstanding reworks on 2019 projects or earlier, and who make an application will not have their 2020 application evaluated until all the contracted works and reworks under the previous project(s) are complete to SEAI's satisfaction. Project Coordinators who did not deliver their projects by the 2019 contracted end date will be allocated reduced scores in Section C, as specified in section C.

The evaluation criteria are:

- Value for Money **(40 Marks, - minimum score requirement is 20 Marks)**
- Community and Partnership Approach **(35 Marks)**
- Quality & Delivery **(25 Marks -minimum score requirement 12 Marks)**

Breakdown of the Evaluation Criteria

A. Value for Money (40 Marks, Minimum score requirement: 20 Marks)

Value for money is broken down into 3 sections:

1. Total Eligible Cost per kilowatt-hour (kWh) of energy saved; **(20 marks)**
2. % energy savings over existing usage
3. Carbon savings. Total Cost per Kg CO2 saved (€)

Applications not scoring 20 marks and above will not be evaluated any further and the application will be rejected at that point.

A.1 Total Eligible Cost per kWh (Max = 15 Marks)

This figure extracted from the first page of the application form is auto calculated by the information you provide in the application form and is contained on the workbook application form Section A eligible costs.

Cost per kWh will be evaluated as follows

≥ €1.76	0 Marks
€1.46-€1.75	1 Marks
€1.31-€1.45	3 Marks
€1.21-€1.30	5 Marks
€1.11-€1.20	6 Marks
€1.01-€1.10	7 Marks
€0.91-€1.00	8 Marks
€0.81-€0.90	9 Marks
€0.71-€0.80	10 Marks
€0.61-€0.70	12 Marks
€0.00-€0.60	15 Marks

A.2 Energy Savings % (Max = 15Marks)

≤4%	0 Marks
5-10%	3 Marks
11-15%	6 Marks
16-20%	9 Marks
21-25%	11 Marks
26 – 30%	13 Marks
>31%	15 Marks

This figure extracted from the Workbook application form Section A

A.3 Carbon Savings: Total Cost per Kg CO2 saved (€) (Max = 10 Marks)

>€8.51	0 Marks
€7.01 – €8.50	3 Marks
€5.51 – €7.00	5 Marks
€4.01 – €5.50	7 Marks
€2.51 – €4.00	9 Marks
€0.00 – €2.50	10 Marks

This figure is found in the workbook application form section Cell H8.

B. Partnership and community Approach including SEC participation (35 Marks)

This grant is targeted at the support of communities including SECs in the delivery of community energy grants. To ensure that the projects involved in this grant are aligned with this ambition this section will give additional supports to SEC involvement in the project.

B.1 Partnership and community Approach including SEC participation	Marks (20)
Other recognised community grouping*	5
Registered SEC only	10
Registered SEC with approved EMP grant in progress**	15
Registered SEC with completed EMP	20

Note:

*A recognised community grouping needs to provide evidence of the existence of this grouping. Acceptable other groupings would be Tidy Town groups or other which are organised and have a specific community purpose.

** EMP (Energy Master Plan) is a plan submitted to SEAI as part of the SEC community engagement plan. A completed plan is one which has been submitted and accepted under the terms and conditions of the SEC scheme. Other energy plans may be acceptable for example, Covenant of Mayors or other European Projects in which the community is actively engaged with may be acceptable as evidence of an EMP. Where Covenant of Mayors is indicated full marks will only be allocated where SEC engagement is clearly demonstrated, such as public events, meetings and provision of supports and advice to these groups.

B.2 Beneficiary's and partners: (10 Marks)

Projects that include a wide range of beneficiaries have a bigger impact in their community and we have scored this section to include for this.

Variety of Beneficiary types included in the project and PES

The only eligible Beneficiary types are as follows:

1. Domestic, 2. Not for profit/community, 3. Private sector, 4. Public sector, 5. Housing association

1 Beneficiary types	2 Marks
2 Beneficiary types	3 Marks
3 Beneficiary types	5 Marks
4 Beneficiary types	6 Marks
5 Beneficiary types	8 Marks
Participating Energy Supplier	*2 extra Marks

B3 Project Development (5 Marks)

Plans showing how this project will support future project development on energy efficiency within this community and how the SEC will benefit from engagement in this project **(5 Marks)**

C. Quality of resources and project team (25 Marks minimum Score requirement 12)

This section is divided into 5 parts including:

1. Project Coordinator and previous experience **(5 Marks)**
2. Quality of the resources proposed to be deployed on delivery of the project **(5 Marks)**
3. Risks and Mitigation plans **(5 Marks)**
4. Demonstrated ability to deliver on time **(5 Marks)**
5. Quality of previous experience **(5 marks)**

1. Lead Applicant/ Project Coordinator (5 Marks)

SEAI will evaluate the expertise of the Lead Applicant/ Project Coordinator in project delivery. Where an SEAI Communities Energy project has not been delivered previously the applicant will need to demonstrate that the project lead understands the requirements and responsibilities of the scheme. A CV should be provided in relation to the nominated Lead Applicant/ Project Coordinator.

2. Quality of the resources (5 Marks)

SEAI will evaluate, the quality of the proposed team members in terms of delivery of the projects. Technical ability and the quality assurance of the project team must be detailed. Previous experience in similar energy or engineering projects is a distinct advantage. Meeting deadlines and project handover are important considerations. CVs/ short biographies of experience for key team members are required and will be evaluated.

3. Risks and Mitigation plans (5 Marks)

Project Coordinators must complete a risk evaluation of the proposed project prior to submission to SEAI. In this section the applicant should detail what the significant risks to delivery are and how these risks are to be mitigated against. Any risks to the project related to Brexit must be fully assessed and appropriate mitigation measures must be identified. For public sector organisations tendering is a significant factor and projects which have not completed tendering prior to an application may be rejected.

4. Demonstrated ability to deliver on time (5 Marks)

Project Coordinators should provide their experience in high quality project delivery on a timely basis for evaluation. Where the Project Coordinator has not delivered energy projects previously SEAI will give appropriate consideration to other time restricted project delivery. Tidy Towns and other community led projects will be scored favourably.

A project timeline must be included identifying how the milestone targets will be achieved on the project. Project Coordinators who previously failed to meet 2019 BEC project deadlines will be deducted 4 marks under this section. For **Assisted Community Projects** who have not previously delivered a project, consideration will be given to the plan proposed to ensure that the project is delivered on time.

5. **Quality of previous delivery (5 marks)**

Project co-ordinators will be scored on the basis of their most recent previous delivery inspection results (averaged across domestic and non-domestic) under the Communities Energy grant programme (2019 BEC/ SEC or earlier programmes). Where more than one grant was delivered by the project co-ordinator in a grant year, the average pass rate across all approved grants will be used.

80% +	5 Marks
75% - 79%	4 Marks
70% - 74%	3 Marks
65%-69%	2 Marks
60% - 65%	1 Marks

For **Assisted Community Projects** who have not previously delivered a project under this programme a project plan should be submitted detailing how they will manage quality on the project, and this will be scored and evaluated for the purposes of this section. For other Project Coordinators who have previously delivered under this programme SEAI will consider inspection results achieved on other similar projects they have delivered such as other SEAI programmes, Energy supplier retrofit projects (e.g. Electric Ireland or Airtricity energy efficiency programmes), European projects or community led projects (e.g. Tidy towns)

1.7 Funding Levels

Listed below are the maximum available funding levels for each component of a community project. For more information on structuring projects that include both residential and non-residential elements, see Section 2.

Residential	Home type	
	Private energy poor	Up to 80%
	Private non-energy poor	Up to 35%
	Local Authority homes	Up to 35%
	Housing Association homes	Up to 50%

Non-Residential	Not-for-profit/community	Up to 50%
	Private and public sector	Up to 30%
	Public sector (exemplar)	Up to 30% ≤ 50%
	EV Charging points	30%

SEAI will limit the grant of funding for any one project up to €1,500,000. The recommended minimum grant application value will be €50,000.

The grant support percentage is based on the legal ownership of the facility that is being upgraded. If for example, a private sector entity undertakes works on a not-for-profit/community owned property Beneficiary (with the host's agreement), then grant support can be up-to 50%.

Exemplar projects are ones which use multiple technologies to minimise energy use in any single facility or community. These facilities should be moving to be carbon neutral ideally.

Please note that **all homes** require a pre- and post-works [Building Energy Rating \(BER\)](#) to be completed and published. Local Authority Homes are exempt from publishing a **pre-BER**. A BER rating of B2 is SEAI's preferred minimum however where works comply with the new Part L of the Building Regulations and deliver a C1 these works may be allowed. It is the responsibility of the project coordinator to make the appropriate justification to SEAI (if BERs are B3 or C1) and all such justifications must be agreed in advance of works commencing. The minimum post works BER is C1, subject to the Part L requirements. Homes which do not achieve a minimum C1 and do not have a valid reason for not achieving B2 will be refused grant funding. Guidance on Part L is available on the SEAI web site. Costs for Single measures for homes can only be installed where the install demonstrates innovative new technology otherwise single domestic measures do not qualify as eligible costs. (Example installing heat pumps only is not an acceptable proposition). SEAI reserve the right to conduct 100% pre inspection of all domestic and non-domestic sites in advance of any contract award.

Public bodies must comply with public procurement. All other Beneficiaries receiving funding will need to adhere to procurement rules with regard to a competitive tendering process. Where a competitive tendering process is not completed at application stage this must be notified to SEAI. This poses an additional risk to delivery and SEAI and the project will be scored accordingly. If there is no mitigation offered, then the project is unlikely to be supported as such this will be scored in sections C3 accordingly.

SEAI requires applicants to ensure that an open and transparent tender process has been engaged by the Project Coordinator. SEAI reserves the right to seek evidence from project elements that a competitive tendering process has been applied. This will include seeking evidence of three quotes, or evidence that a tender process has been complied with. A contract will not be issued until SEAI are satisfied that the appropriate market rates have been achieved. We therefore recommend that all projects are fully tendered at the time of application. While every effort will be made to issue contracts on a timely basis SEAI takes no responsibility for any delays which may arise due to delays in finalising specifications or costs with the grantee. Key programme delivery dates will not be extended in such circumstances.

1.8 Eligible Energy Upgrades

The following energy efficiency upgrades are eligible for funding as part of a Communities Energy project.

Eligible works

- **Technological improvements:** Technological improvements, such as boiler replacement or controls upgrades, that boost energy efficiency significantly, are eligible.
- **Fabric upgrades:** This includes wall insulation as well as energy-smart walls and doors. In the case of insulation work on homes, an optimal whole-element solution must be implemented. Partial solutions will not be eligible for grant support without prior agreement.
- **Renewable energy solutions:** Renewable energy solutions like wind turbines, biomass plants, and photovoltaic systems are eligible where included as part of a broader retrofit.
- **Energy efficient lighting:** Lighting projects for buildings are only eligible as part of a broader retrofit. Public lighting projects, street lighting is capped at 50 lights per entire application, are eligible where 'Energy-smart' lighting is proposed. These can be simple approaches or more complex systems.
- Heat recovery solutions
- Micro generation
- Smart metering
- Energy upgrades to homes constructed **prior to 1 January 2006,**
Or for Heat pumps prior to 2011 in line with Better Energy Homes guidelines including HLI requirements
- Schools
- EV home chargers
- PV

Note:

1. Deep Retrofit (min A3) is not supported at the higher levels previously available. It is a requirement that all homes should meet BER requirements subject to Part L of the Building Regulations.
2. Where premises are leased or rented works must have the consent from the legal owners as part.

Schools

Where schools wish to install PV systems, SEAI will support primary schools up to 2kWh systems and secondary schools up to 4kWh systems. Installs outside of this range are not supported under the Communities programme.

Energy Efficiency measures undertaken on schools are unique, primarily due to the low annual occupancy hours and nature of occupants. Typically, 60-70% of energy consumption in a school is expended on heating demand, with 30-40% on electrical demand (lighting and services). SEAI welcome schools as part of Communities Energy grant applications, and all measures will be considered during the application process. However, SEAI and our partners in the Department of Education and Skills note that the following are considered the optimum energy efficiency measures for schools.

- Building insulation - including cavity wall insulation, dry lining, external insulation, attic insulation, roof insulation.
- Other building fabric measures - including doors and windows, where a case exists for upgrading
- Mechanical system upgrades - including boiler replacement, zoning of heating system, classroom level heating control, pipe insulation, boiler controls, water conservation
- Building Management System (BMS)
- Electrical upgrades - primarily lighting system upgrades (classrooms to T5 or LED, common areas to LED)

Applicants should note that all works undertaken in schools must be compliant with the relevant Department of Education Technical Guidance Documents (TGDs) which are available at the below link:

<https://www.education.ie/en/School-Design/Technical-Guidance-Documents/>

This is not an exhaustive list. If you are unsure which aspects of your project are eligible for inclusion, please contact us.

1.9 Eligible Costs

Payment of the grant is retrospective. All beneficiaries (i.e. recipients of works as listed in the technical workbook project summary tab) will at application stage be required to provide a written confirmation stating that: -

1. They have the financial resources in place to complete their project.
2. They understand that the proposed cost for the grant is €X and expected grant funding is €Y (i.e. figures as set out in the technical workbook)

Expenses eligible for grant payment

- **Project coordination:** For project management costs to be considered eligible for support, they must not exceed 7% of the total eligible grant costs and are funded at the grant percentage. Only **external** Project Management fees for the coordination, management and delivery of the project, are eligible.
- **Labour:** Costs of employing **external** labour in order to implement the building upgrade.
- **Material:** Materials, equipment, hardware or control systems necessary to implement the project are an eligible expense. Second-hand equipment will not be eligible for funding.
- **Design fees:** Building design fees for non-domestic works incurred **after the letter of offer has been issued** are an eligible cost. **The maximum eligible value for support is 2% of the project costs.** These should be included in the Technical Workbook at application stage. Again, these fees must be included as part of the maximum % grant allowed.
- **VAT:** VAT is considered eligible for grant payment **in cases where it cannot be reclaimed.** VAT is the responsibility of the project coordinator to administer correctly.
- **BER domestic projects:** All successful applicants will be required to complete and publish pre-works BER prior to requesting the first interim payment for proposed upgrade works. Post-BERs are required to be published for all upgraded homes. BER's must be supplied to the homeowner as part of the documentation, certification and handover pack provided to all homeowners.

The maximum eligible cost for a pre and post BER is €250. To be eligible for support, the work must be completed on the home. SEAI will not support pre-works BER costs if the work is not carried out. Local Authority homes are not eligible for this support but a post-works BER must be published for these properties nonetheless. BER costs will only be funded at the end of the project when both pre- and post-BERs have been published. The same BER assessor should complete both the pre- and post-works BERs, and a separate site visit to the home must take place prior to each BER being published. The minimum BER for homes completed under the Communities Energy Grant Scheme is B2 (or C1 with prior agreement) subject to Part L requirements. Where heat pumps are installed in domestic installs SEAI will make a €100 contribution towards the HLI assessment costs of these homes. Excluded are local authority and apartment or other domestic multi units installs. Note single measures under section 1.8 are specifically excluded.

- **Energy monitoring equipment:** Metering equipment for verifying and measuring energy savings for the purpose of preparing the reports is an eligible cost. To qualify for payment, the equipment must be referenced in the Measurement and Verification (M&V) plan submitted at application stage. The cost of the equipment should be noted in the Technical Workbook, on the specific project tab.
- **Professional fees for M&V report:** Professional fees for issuing an M&V report on relevant non-domestic elements of the project are eligible for support. The maximum eligible value for support is 1% of the non-domestic works, up to a maximum of €2,000 value. This cost will be incorporated into maximum allowable grant amount. These costs should be included in the Technical Workbook at application stage. If this element is not included at application stage, it is **not possible** to include at a later point.

- **PV Installs:** All PV installs must be completed in line with SEAI's new PV programme requirements. Detail are available on SEAI web site below. www.seai.ie/grants/home-grants/solar-pv

1.10 Ineligible Costs

- **Unrelated costs:** Any costs not directly related to improving the energy performance of stock through the proposed project will be considered ineligible for payment.
- **Application costs:** The cost of preparing and submitting an application is not eligible for payment.
- **Internal staff costs:** Internal staff costs are not eligible for payment.
- **Ongoing monitoring costs:** Ongoing monitoring costs, except those required for the M&V report, are not eligible for payment.
- **Pre-project costs:** Any costs that predate formal letter of offer will not be paid.
- **Crossover:** The cost of measures completed in homes or non-domestic facilities which have formerly received an SEAI grant for the same measure are not eligible.
- **Baseline costs:** The cost of bringing the facilities up to the standards required by legislation for such a facility are not eligible for payment.
- **Corrections:** The cost of remedying defective works and installations undertaken previously by others (e.g. geothermal remedial works, solar remedial works) are not eligible for payment.
- **Unexpected:** Un-commissioned equipment, and any other **costs that have not been clearly outlined** in the Application Form, will be considered ineligible for payment.
- **Unfinished works:** Work that has not been completed, or 'fit for use' by the programme deadline will not be eligible for any or part grant support.
- **Energy upgrades to new buildings:** The Communities Energy Grant programme aims at supporting retrofits for old building stock and facilities. Homes constructed after 1 January 2006 are not eligible for standard measures or after 1 January 2011 for heat pump installs. Communities does not support works carried out during construction, or new fit-out, of non-domestic facilities.

This is not an exhaustive list. If you are unsure which aspects of your project are eligible for payment, please contact the Communities team.

2.0 PLANNING YOUR PROJECT

2.1. Project Structure

The Communities Energy Grant is designed to encourage group retrofits and access to existing funding streams through innovative mechanisms. There are a number of key elements to structuring a suitable project, and these are outlined in this section.

2.2 Community Approach

There is more than one way to develop a standalone project into a community initiative.

Once you have identified desired energy upgrades for a building, consider whether there are any other **buildings or amenities in the area** that could benefit from the same kind of measures.

The community approach does not necessitate physical proximity. Consider whether the building could be identified as **part of a network**. A charity building, for example, could be linked with similar buildings in different parts of the country.

Where the project proposed is for a single building only, there must be a demonstration component to this project. It is important to consider how the building can be accessed by the wider community, if site visits are possible, how the impacts of the upgrade will be captured and communicated to the wider community and if the proposed upgrades will be visible at the end of the project. For example, upgrading the insulation in the floor, walls and roof of a building can be hard to showcase after the project but using thermographic imaging before and after can help show the difference, so could temperature monitoring of the occupied space, as well as surveys of the occupants before and after. It may also be possible to take photographs during the project or a video of the major changes.

Single building projects will only be eligible for this programme where they can demonstrate significant energy improvements to the wider community and encourage wider participation in the SEAI community programmes.

2.3 Traditional Buildings and Protected Structures

Applicants should be aware that energy upgrades may result in material alteration of the building or buildings involved. Where a project incorporates protected buildings or structures, advice should be sought from a conservation architect prior to application, to confirm whether the proposed works require approval from the Local Authority before proceeding. SEAI will accept no responsibility for verification of works or seeking permission that works may be applied to any protected structure. Applications received without the specified permissions will be declined and removed from the application at evaluation stage. We do not recommend Heritage buildings be proposed in the Communities programme due to the measures required, the technical difficulties and the permissions required. In circumstances where all the above issues are resolved and certification can be provided this type of building may be included as part of the application.

2.4 Key Roles

Lead Applicant

It is the responsibility of the Lead Applicant to **distribute funds, organise access** for SEAI inspections, and ensure that **M&V requirements** are met. The Lead Applicant signs the **letter of offer** and agrees to all the terms and conditions of the scheme on behalf of the Project Partners. The lead applicant is responsible for receiving and distributing the grant funding from SEAI to all the beneficiaries. They may defer administration and day-to-day project management of the grant to a Project Coordinator who works on their behalf.

When filling out the Application Form, **the Lead Applicant can choose to make the Project Coordinator the main contact**. Provided the Project Coordinator agrees, and indicates so on the form, the Lead Applicant will be considered a secondary contact, and will not be copied on all correspondence.

Contractors delivering upgrade works cannot be the Lead Applicant. We advise that contractors wishing to apply for the scheme should collaborate with another organisation, such as a Local Authority, community-based voluntary organisation or local business that owns or manages the buildings. **The Partner organisation can act as the Lead Applicant.**

Project Coordinator

The Project Coordinator is responsible for managing all aspects of the project. Project Coordination is an eligible expense (i.e. project management) under the programme, to support applicants in employing **experienced** and **qualified** managers who will be **dedicated to the project** and deliver it in a **professional** manner. A Lead Applicant may also be a Project Coordinator.

It is important that your application demonstrate that the chosen Project Coordinator can bring the following to the project:

- The relevant experience and knowledge of the management requirements and risk mitigation involved in carrying out the proposed works;
- A plan to manage quality throughout the project;
- The competence to ensure that quality deliverables (photos, Competent Person reports, etc.) are released throughout the project as part of the payment applications and that these quality deliverables are aligned with milestones.

It is the responsibility of the Project Coordinator to select the **BER assessor(s)** and ensure that they fulfil all duties and obligations under the BER [Regulations and the Code of Practice for BER assessors](#). No BER assessor should complete more than 100 BER's (Pre and post together) under any Communities application. See link below for BER code of practice.

<https://www.seai.ie/publications/BER-Assessors-Code-of-Practice-New.pdf>

The Project Coordinator must select a BER assessor who is not an employee of **any** of the contractors or organisations involved in the delivery of the project upgrades.

There is no requirement for a project to appoint a Project Coordinator and Beneficiaries may act as their own Project Coordinator where they can demonstrate they have the appropriate technical skill set. No internal project management costs may be claimed in this instance.

Beneficiary

A grant Beneficiary is a project participant who ultimately benefits from the works being carried out and is listed on the Application Form and/or the technical workbook, who will incur and pay for the costs involved in carrying out the project. The Lead Applicant will transfer any grant payment from SEAI in respect of eligible costs incurred by a Beneficiary to the Beneficiary as soon as the payment is received from SEAI and subject to the agreement in place between the Beneficiaries and the Lead Applicant.

Individual homeowners cannot be listed as Beneficiaries on the Communities Energy Grant Application Form. They should be grouped under a particular Beneficiary acting on their behalf. The application should include not more than **ten** Beneficiaries to ensure successful delivery of the project. Additional Beneficiaries will not be permitted. Projects are encouraged to refine the delivery model to reduce the numbers of Beneficiaries while not impacting on the ambition of the project.

Participating Energy Supplier (PES)

Under the Energy Efficiency Obligation Scheme, energy suppliers must support energy efficiency projects in businesses and homes across Ireland. For more information on this scheme and contact details for energy suppliers please see our website at this link: [Energy Efficiency Obligation Scheme](#).

Partnership with a PES is recommended under the scheme. Projects who do not have access to a PES should contact the Communities Energy Grant team to have a PES appointed or introductions made.

There are a number of ways for a PES to be involved in a project, such as providing project management, financial contribution, provision of materials, installation of works, monitoring, energy audits or advice. Advice and other services are not sufficient, on their own, in 2020 this may form part of an overall package of supports. Predicted energy credits from the project can be used as leverage in negotiations with the energy suppliers to secure the best package of supports.

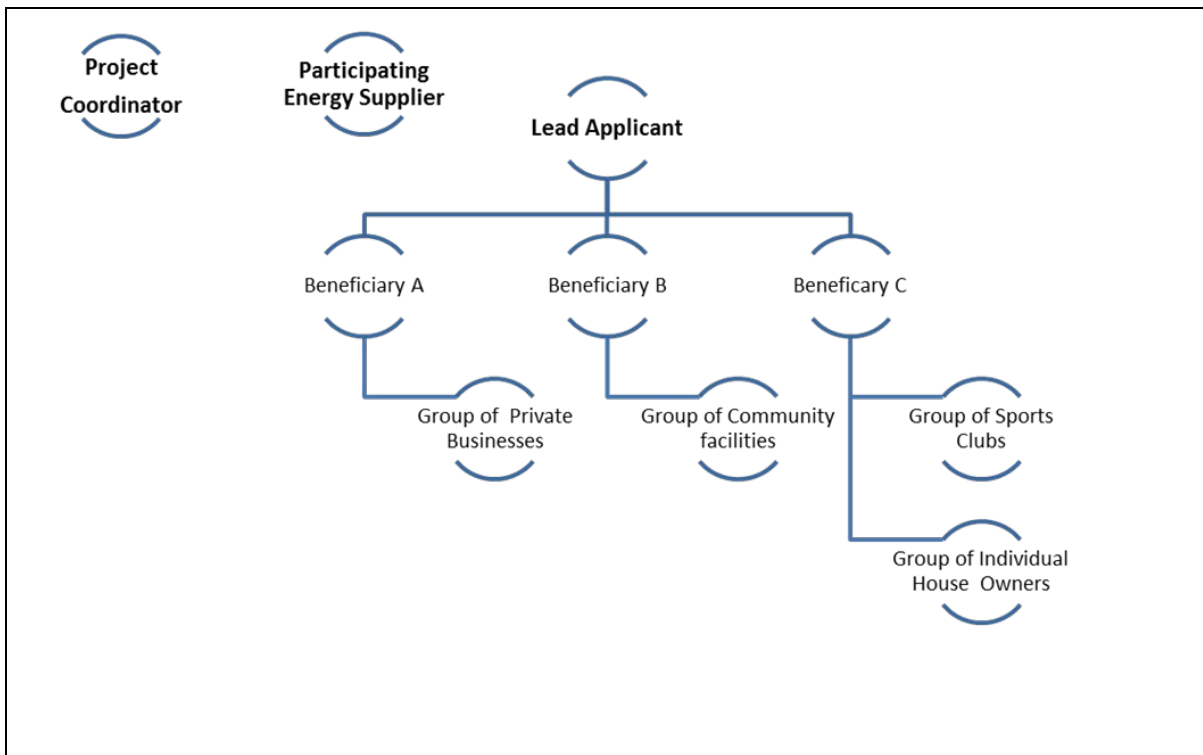
The Energy Savings achieved by a project are measured in Kilowatt hours (kWh). Each kWh is equivalent to 1-energy credit, which can be traded with an Energy Supplier for either monetary or project management support. Energy Credits are categorised as Residential, Energy Poor Residential and Non-residential. Energy Suppliers may offer different levels of support depending on the category.

Projects are encouraged to contact a number of different Energy Suppliers to negotiate the best deal for their energy credits. A project is not limited to partnering with their current energy provider or indeed just one Energy Supplier.

Where energy credits are being 'sold' to a PES, the application should state **clearly if and how** these funds are being used to support the community.

The PES is also responsible for uploading Domestic Energy Credits to SEAI's ECMS (Energy Credit Management System) once homes have been completed, which is a condition of grant payment.

The illustration below shows an example structure of a Communities Energy project where a PES is acting as a Partner, they can act also as Project Coordinator or Lead Applicant



SEC Network Member

A Sustainable Energy Community (SEC) is a community in which everyone works together to develop a sustainable energy system for the benefit of the community. This is achieved by:

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

SEC's must be registered on the Register of SEC Network Communities at the date of application to be considered a registered SEC.

3 FINANCING and PROJECT DELIVERY SOLUTIONS

3.1 Minimum Financing Requirements

A Beneficiary will be required to indicate that they have sufficient funds available to complete the project. The Beneficiary will also be required to submit in writing confirmation of their project costs along with their grant awarded. This should be agreed with the Project Coordinator and must match the Beneficiary's schedule in the application workbook. See section 1 for more information.

3.2 Specific Financing Options

Finance is available to approved Housing Bodies from organisations such as the [Housing Finance Agency \(HFA\)](#)

Under the Better Energy Finance pilot programme SEAI has worked with individual **Credit Unions** in developing models for loans for 'Energy Efficient Upgrade' works.

SEAI has also supported some innovative companies in developing **Salary Incentive schemes** for their employees similar to the 'Bike to Work' scheme. If you wish to find out more about this, please contact us at bec@seai.ie.

Many banks offer specific **Energy Efficiency loans** for domestic and commercial retrofit

Loan finance known as '**Social Finance**' is available from organisations like [Clann Credo](#) or [Community Finance](#) to fund projects considered to be of value to society. Projects that improve energy efficiency and sustainability are considered to be socially beneficial.

3.3 Financing Balance

In principle, where private commercial projects are combined with not-for-profit or residential projects the application should aim at balancing the funding being sought in favour of the not-for-profit Partners.

Where a public or private sector organisation is part of an application, they must demonstrate how they are adding value to the project by providing cash flow, management services or technical advice to the not-for-profit elements of the projects.

4 PROJECT COMPONENTS

4.1 Residential Projects

The Communities Energy Grant scheme will only fund residential housing upgrades to stock built **prior to 1 January 2006**. While the Communities Energy Grant scheme does support energy poor homes at up to 80% the overall level of support will be subject to the maximum grant support of 50% as indicated in section 1.5 above.

Projects may not contain more than 250 domestic units for delivery under any single application. Projects of up to this size must demonstrate their ability to deliver on this scale before SEAI will consider an evaluation of any application.

Local Authority houses will be considered as part of an inclusive community of mixed-ownership houses. Housing Associations and Local Authorities should contact SEAI directly to discuss options for participation in the Communities Energy Grant scheme in 2020 in relation to domestic works.

Rental Properties

Works can be carried out on rental properties, but the tenant must have the written **consent of the landlord**.

Local Authority Homes

Unoccupied Local Authority homes known as 'voids' may be granted aid, but SEAI must be made aware that the projects contain voids at application stage. Such homes will be treated as non-energy poor homes for Energy Credits.

Energy Poverty

Private homes will be considered to be energy poor if the resident (who must be the legal homeowner) is in receipt of one of the following:

- **Fuel Allowance** as part of the National Fuel Scheme
- Jobseeker's Allowance for six months or more where the resident is the primary carer of at least one child under seven years. Jobseeker's Benefit is not eligible.
- Family Income Supplement (FIS)
- In receipt of the "One Parent Family Payment"
- Domiciliary Care allowance payment

Proof of one of the above must be provided for each energy poor household at project completion stage in order to receive higher financial support. This takes the form of a signed letter from the Department of Social Protection dated within six months of the start date of the Grant Agreement, a payment receipt made out to the homeowner, or a Social Welfare swipe receipt (except in the case of Jobseekers Allowance where 6 months must be proven). The name and address on the relevant

correspondence must match that of the homeowner on the application. These requirements are in line with The Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme (WHS) and any changes to qualifying criteria on WHS will be reflected in Communities Energy Grant 2020.

Project Coordinators are required to state the energy poor status of the home after the delivery of the energy efficiency upgrades. A [personal data form](#) is available from SEAI. Project Coordinators are required to seek the consent of homeowners to collect their personal data, maintain the necessary evidence on file for five years, and make it available to SEAI for audit inspection at the end of the project.

In the case of Local Authorities or Housing Associations who have access to the Department of Social Protection Database, SEAI will accept a signed letter from the Data Officer (or equivalent) confirming the numbers of energy poor homes being claimed for and detailing each of them by name and address. Energy credits for Local Authority and Housing Association projects will be awarded as energy poor based on the proof received.

Special Requirements for Residential Projects

All proposed works for domestic stock should be in line with standard and specification guidelines issued by SEAI such as the [Better Energy Homes Scheme Contractor Code of Practice](#) (incorporating [SR54 for retrofit works](#)) and with current building regulations.

All Contractors working on Communities Energy Grant scheme domestic upgrades must be a registered Better Energy Home (BEH) Contractor where the works completed are similar to BEH measures. Where PV installs are being included the installers must comply with the same standards as apply under the SEAI's Solar Electricity Grant. Other measures which are to be deployed must comply with any SEAI requirement pertaining to that measure at the time of install.

Domestic Contractors will apply and fully comply with the Better Energy Homes Scheme Contractors Code of Practice, QADP, Standards and Specification Guidelines for all measures covered under that scheme, including Heat pumps. Installers of PV must comply with the SEAI Solar Electricity Grant requirements. For the avoidance of doubt, the applicable version of the above is the one which is in force and as published on the SEAI website at the time the work or service is carried out when undertaking any works or services in respect of which funding is claimed pursuant to this Agreement.

A Technical Helpdesk for domestic contractors is available at 01 277 6977. The following technical requirements should be noted

- a) A pre- and post-works BER is required to be carried out for all properties with the exception of Local Authority homes where only a post works BER is required. Evidence that the pre-works BERs have been completed should be submitted to SEAI before any interim payments can be made. Please see page 15 for details of financial support provided by SEAI for BERs.
- b) Final post work BERs should be at least a B2 rating (Subject to Part L requirements). BERs of B3 and C1 may be acceptable with **prior approval** from SEAI. Homes with a post BER result lower than a C1 will **not be funded** as part of the community's energy grant scheme.

Where a BER Audit determines that a minimum BER Rating specified in the grant agreement has not been achieved and that the BER Assessment is to be revoked, SEAI may require that:

- the BER Assessment is re-published and
- remedial works are undertaken to achieve the specified BER rating

Grants relating to the domestic elements may be withheld if not already paid until the action identified above has been undertaken to the satisfaction of SEAI.

- c) Where significant retrofits are proposed for energy poor, Housing Association or Local Authority homes, a funding model should be submitted outlining how the tenant will contribute to the cost if applicable.
- d) In the case of insulation work, an optimal whole-element solution must be implemented. Partial solutions will not be eligible for grant support without prior agreement. For example windows, SEAI assume every window will be replaced; failure to replace all existing windows will result in this measure being withdrawn from the grant. Where in rare circumstances a partial replacement is not required a deviation or scope change must be agreed in writing and in advance with the BEC programme manager. Any install which is not a full install and has no written approval will be deemed incomplete and no part of the expenditure will be permitted as eligible.
- e) Changes to domestic homes do not need prior approval once the measures installed are consistent with the measures contained within the original workbook, and the overall eligible costs are within the Domestic envelope of funding agreed per contract.

Where doors are specified the application must indicate front or back door as a single unit of measure. An explanation can be found on the [buyer's guide page](#) of the SEAI website. A fabric first solution is **mandatory**.

- f) Energy credits for individual domestic works are based on a published table available on the SEAI web site. The values assigned to the project on completion shall be those listed on the published table on the date of your application to this scheme.
- g) SEAI will (as noted under the funding levels section) look for evidence that a competitive procurement process has been followed – either a full tender process has been carried out or at a minimum three quotes have been sought for the works. In addition, SEAI will at evaluation stage review all prices against its pricing database (incorporating pricing data from across SEAI's domestic programmes) for reasonableness. Where prices are found to be unreasonable *SEAI will be entitled to require the Applicant to re-submit the pricing for the works in line with market value*. This may form part of the evaluation process however post evaluation changes may be affected by SEAI prior to the award of a contract and without notice. Refer to evaluation process in 1.7.

Deep Retrofit Upgrade Packages

The Communities Energy Grant scheme will not provide increased funding for Deep Retrofit homes in 2020.

4.2 Non-residential Projects

The appropriate **grouping** of large, small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) and retrofit measures into bundles and forming part of an overall community structure is an opportunity for a community application structure. Larger organisations are encouraged to facilitate or act as coordinators for SMEs in their supply chain or relevant sector. We strongly encourage private and public sector businesses to use the technical [Project Assistance supports](#) cited online, and to develop projects to at least initial feasibility before applying for Communities Energy Grant support.

Public sector non-residential projects

Local Authorities and public-sector organisations must demonstrate how they are adding value to the project by providing cash flow, project management or technical advice to the not-for-profit elements of the projects.

Commercial organisations

Commercial organisations should provide financial or technical support to the not-for-profit elements of the projects, e.g. the value of energy credits may be passed on in full or part to non-profit organisations. Otherwise these organisations must demonstrate how they are adding value to the project.

Voluntary and community-based organisations

Charities or Not-for-profit run facilities are eligible for 50% funding. Section 38 organisations are treated as public sector bodies and are eligible for up to 30% funding.

Schools with charitable status are eligible for up to 50% funding. Third level colleges are considered as part of the public sector and are eligible for up to 30% funding.

Where organisations or facilities are publicly funded and have 'charity status' SEAI reserve the right to determine the level of grant support offered.

Special requirements for non-residential projects

- a) Energy Audits, an Initial Appraisal or feasibility assessments should be carried out on all non-residential stock before application.
- b) Large businesses are required to submit their [energy audits as per the Energy Audit Scheme](#) as required per [SI 426:2014](#).
- c) **All non-domestic** projects are required to carry out Measurement & Verification (M&V) as part of the energy upgrade works. The M&V requirements for the Communities Scheme are as per [Energy Efficiency Obligation Scheme \(EEOS\)](#) requirements. Where appropriate, SEAI encourages projects to employ [ISO 50015](#) to measure and verify energy savings for the non-residential elements of the project. The [International Performance Measurement and Verification Protocol](#) (IPMVP) is also acceptable.

The Technical Workbook and preliminary M&V plans should identify measures/sites where M&V is proposed and describe how it will be done. For more information please see Sections

3 and 6 of the online resource, [Guidance on Authenticating and Claiming Energy Credits](#). Where M&V equipment (e.g. meters) is included as an integral part of the project, it qualifies as an eligible cost.

In 2019 when a PES is involved in the project, and is benefiting from the energy savings, it is a requirement that they will be responsible for authenticating the M&V of the project and for submitting the M&V report to SEAI.

- d) SEAI will withhold 10% of funding on Projects receiving €150,000 or more for the combined non-domestic energy efficiency works. This retention sum will be released on receipt of an acceptable M&V report by the deadline as indicated on the letter of offer.
- e) In instances where the M&V retention is being held SEAI may, at the request of the Project Coordinator at application stage only, extend the delivery time on these contracts to 15 March 2021. The maximum amount that the Communities programme may extend to this date is 20% of the overall allocated budget. This will be on a first come first served basis only and subject to the following conditions.
 - Contracts must have a grant value in excess of €750,000 and the final grant paid on the contract may not fall below this amount. Where the total grant payment falls below the stated value the delivery extension will be revoked and the delivery date will revert to the 15th October 2020.
 - Where previous Project Coordinators did not meet the delivery of the 2019 contract date, they will not be considered for an extension on the 2020 contract.
 - The request must be part of the original application
 - The extension is for a maximum value of 20% of the overall project costs which will include the M&V fees and relate to non domestic elements only.
 - Where the maximum allocated commitment into 2021 has been reached for this delayed delivery no further commitments may be entered into and applications received with this request will be rejected prior to evaluation.
- f) Works proposed should be retrofits to existing facilities or replacements of existing equipment and fittings. SEAI may request evidence of the baseline or 'existing' energy used, fittings or equipment as part of the evaluation process.
- g) Items such as Electric vehicles do not qualify for funding under the Communities scheme. New build or elements such as extensions to existing premises are excluded from funding.
- h) For lighting projects the SEAI Lighting Upgrade Credits Calculation Tool is available on our website (on the Resources page). We have also published an accompanying Guidance for Use, with an Appendix setting out details of the sites and operational hours embedded in the tool. The Communities Energy Grant project tab can be used for this project.
- i) Where a building is not owned by the proposer SEAI must be provided with the consent of the landlord in order for works to be approved.

5 APPLICATION PROCESS

5.1 Before Applying

It is essential that the project is clearly mapped out before application. Please ensure that the choice of **Lead Applicant, Project Coordinator**, SEC Network Member, **PES** and **all participating organisations** have been finalised before application. SEAI will hold workshops to provide guidance on applications however these workshops are subject to demand.

Financial, administrative and site delivery resources should be identified at application stage. Remember to clearly and thoroughly outline the in-house team as it is a critical part of the project. The Application form should highlight any approvals required before the project or sub-projects can proceed e.g. Planning Permission, EPA Licence, Waste Permit, and CRU Licence, Financial Approval (Board, Management or Lending Institution).

The Application form should inform SEAI with regard to the proposed tender process, and completion dates of same. Tenders, which are not complete or substantially under way at the time of application will be viewed less favourably and the scores awarded will reflect the increased risks associated with this status. SEAI reserve the right to refuse applications where we believe the tender is not of an appropriate standard or does not comply with good governance rules. SEAI will not allow cost revisions in excess of the values applied for at application so it is important that tendered prices should be available at that point. SEAI reserve the right to revoke any contract on the basis of delays in tenders, for any reason including delays affecting the project, the contractor or any other party involved in the delivery of the project, incurred as a direct or indirect result of Brexit.

Before application, carefully read the **requirement guidelines** regarding requirements for residential projects and requirements for non-residential projects then carefully read the checklist and ensure that you have all of the **necessary documentation ready**. **Design specifications** must be agreed before application, and **design calculations** finalised.

Only those applicants who have completed all parts of the Application Form A and B and submitted a completed Technical Workbook will be evaluated. Applicants should ensure every project has sufficient technical data to support energy savings.

All works must be complete by the 15th of October, and the required paperwork submitted, so it is important that applicants consider carefully the ability to deliver by this deadline as extensions are **not** available. Projects not delivered by this date will not be eligible for the Communities grant. **Note scope changes are not permitted under any circumstances with the exception of Domestic elements as indicated in 4.1 (e)**

Projects may request advice technical or other advice/assistance from the Communities team prior to submitting an application. While every effort will be made to provide assistance prior to an application face to face meetings will only take place if an appropriate agenda is agreed in advance. Additional support can be provided by the Communities Team to Assisted Community Projects (See Page 10.)

5.2 How to Apply

Applications must be submitted via SEAI's online [Project Evaluation Platform](#). Applications submitted by email or as a hard copy will not be accepted. Applications requesting SEAI grant funding of greater than €220,000 must be received by the 31st January 2020 at 13.00. Applications above this amount received after the appointed time and date for any reason will not be evaluated and will not progress. Applications below this value may be submitted subject to budget being available. Where SEAI has exceeded the commitment level no further applications will be sent for evaluation, but these applications may be held in reserve. Please refer to 1.7 for evaluation process.

5.3 Application and Project Timeline

Projects that are submitted earlier will be considered more deliverable as there is a longer period for them to be delivered. Please endeavour to submit as soon as possible. Evaluation time will depend on the volume of applicants received at that time. The evaluation period for larger projects is expected to be between 8 and 10 weeks. SEAI expect to complete 80% of evaluations within this period. Smaller projects will take a shorter time to evaluate.

Only completed applications will be evaluated those with Form A, Form B and an appropriate workbook to support these figures in Form A. Where an incomplete application is submitted it will not be sent for evaluation. Once the application deadline passes or the budget figure is exceeded these applications will be deemed unsuccessful and closed on the PEP system. SEAI takes no responsibility for incomplete applications submitted under the PEP portal.

Please note the clock stops ticking when SEAI seek additional information therefore evaluations which are incomplete will take longer to evaluate. SEAI reserve the right to reject an application where we have insufficient information to complete the evaluation.

The deadline for project completion including submission of all project documentation is the 15th October 2020. No extensions are permitted under the Communities Energy grant with the exception of the provisions 4.2 (E). Projects which cannot deliver to the appointed time frames should not be submitted as part of the application. Elements of individual projects not delivered by the contract end date will not be supported for grant funding.

5.4 Checklist

Submit the following with the online Application Form A and B for evaluation:

Technical documents

- a) **Completed Technical Workbook** This is a critical component of your application. Failure to thoroughly, adequately and accurately complete the Technical Workbook would seriously jeopardize the success of the application. Ensure all fields in the Technical Workbook are fully completed, clearly indicating energy savings, project cost, and grant sum requested, existing specifications and proposed specifications. The energy upgrades proposed should be detailed and the methodology to measure and verify energy savings and cost per kWh saved should be included. Please see the [Technical Workbook Guide](#) for more information. SEAI will provide supports to assist Project Coordinators to complete the workbook however SEAI will not complete workbooks on a Project Coordinator's behalf.

The technical workbook is deemed to be part of the grant agreement (Section 2 of the attached Terms and Conditions). For the avoidance of doubt the grant agreement will be capped at the value per measure applied for in the technical workbook.

- b) **Technical and quantitative** relevant documents supporting the technical details and proposed energy savings of the project **as set out in the Technical Workbook**.
- c) **Contractor details should be provided**. Where possible at application stage Project Coordinators should provide details of the BEH (Better Energy Homes) registration.
- d) **Sample plan** A sample of a proposed management plan by the Project Coordinator.
- e) **Relevant audits**
- f) **PES Declaration** A completed Form B is required where a PES is involved.
- g) **Evidence** Include any relevant evidence that shows the project M&V
- h) **Quality and Assurance plan for all projects**.
- i) Any other relevant information to support your project proposal – e.g. feasibility studies or options appraisals relating to your project or how your project fits into wider local development plans etc

Financial documents

- a) **Tax Clearance:** eTax clearance must be verified for the Lead Applicant and Beneficiaries who are required to provide the relevant tax reference number and access number to SEAI.
- b) **VAT status verification:** If the Beneficiary is seeking a **VAT inclusive grant** from SEAI, a **2020-dated** letter, or letters, from the **Revenue Commission** confirming the VAT status of the Beneficiary must be included.

The letter must state that the Beneficiary is not registered for VAT and/or does not have VAT recovery status on the specific costs (energy upgrades) being claimed under Communities Energy Grant 2020 and cannot reclaim any VAT incurred on the project costs.

The exception to this is where the Lead Applicant is required to account for VAT on the value of goods/services provided to private homeowners in which case VAT is an eligible cost on the basis that although the applicant is entitled to VAT recovery, the homeowners are not.

- c) **Declaration of financial resources:** A declaration, signed by all Project Beneficiaries must be provided that they have the financial resources to complete the project. This should also indicate the value of the grant they are requesting on their element of the project.

6 GRANT PAYMENTS

6.1 Validating the Offer

If the application passes the evaluation and is approved, a letter of offer will be issued to the Lead Applicant. The grant offer **will only become valid** upon SEAI receipt of a **signed Grant Agreement within 14 days of date of issue**.

Should SEAI propose to support projects at a lower percentage than that requested in the application, the project contact will be notified in advance of a letter of offer. SEAI will not entertain any appeals on changes made to applications during the evaluation process, due to the lack of technical details being provided at application stage.

6.2 During the Project

Workshops

SEAI may host workshops or clinics for successful projects to assist Project Coordinators in the delivery of their project. It is advised that Project Coordinators attend these workshops.

Project Milestones

Project milestones will be set by the applicant and approved by SEAI. Where the milestones are not in line with SEAI's delivery requirement or deemed unrealistic for the scale of the project, the application will be rejected. Payments may be requested by the Project Coordinators once all projects listed under the milestone are delivered.

Inspections

SEAI may carry out inspections, in advance or following completion of works, for compliance with the Grant Agreement. Grantees will be notified by SEAI prior to such inspections.

Interim Inspection

Interim Inspections may be carried out on Non-Domestic Projects, typically when an Applicant confirms a key milestone has been met.

Interim inspections also occur where upgrade works may be difficult to access or inspect on completion of works. It is the Applicants' responsibility to highlight this to SEAI well in advance of completion while access equipment is still available on site. In such exceptional cases, the Applicant may propose alternative means to demonstrate that works have been installed in accordance with the agreed specification. Acceptance of any such alternate proposals will be at the sole discretion of the Inspections Unit and must be obtained in writing in advance of completion of works.

Advisory Inspection (Domestic Project)

Advisory inspections are intended as a training aid to ensure Project Coordinators understand relevant quality standards and technical requirements, early in the installation process.

Evidence shows that Advisory Inspections lead to improved final inspections and the timely release of payment. For this reason, Advisory inspections are not mandatory but a minimum of 2 are recommended to be carried out. The upgrade measures chosen for advisory inspections should be representative of the measures to be repeated across the scheme and include any homes or measures that are technically challenging. The results of advisory inspections do not count towards the overall pass rate for the project.

First Inspection (Non-domestic projects)

The first Non-Domestic Project Site completed will be inspected to help the Project Co-ordinator to understand the process for Non-Domestic Inspections.

Inspection Process

On completion of a project and updating of all relevant documentation an Inspection log is required to be submitted for domestic and non-domestic projects. Projects will be selected for inspection from these using a risk-based approach.

The Project Coordinator is responsible for quality assurance on the project and will be notified of the properties selected for inspection. The Project Coordinator must provide access for SEAI's inspectors within 5 days of being contacted to arrange an inspection. The Project Coordinator is not required to be present at the inspection but must assign a representative who is familiar with the layout of the site, the upgrade works completed and has access to all required certification documentation and manuals. Where the Project Coordinator cannot be present SEAI reserve the right to proceed with the inspection without the presence of the project coordinator or any of their representatives being present.

Inspections will be undertaken during normal working hours. The Project Coordinator will be required to provide the inspector with a safe working environment and suitable access to the project area. Any representative of the Project Coordinator should have all the necessary documentation and technical knowledge of the project. They may also be asked to retrieve equipment (e.g. light fittings) in areas which are difficult to access, to verify compliance with quality and safety standards.

Poor inspection results may result in additional inspections being conducted and re-inspection of remedial works for non-compliance.

Reworks

Following inspection, the inspector will send a written report to the Project Co-ordinator detailing any non-compliant works recorded and requesting that reworks be carried out. Where evidence is found that works were completed after the project completion deadline (other than snagging) these works will be deemed ineligible for grant funding. A declaration of reworks is required to be submitted within 14 days of the date of the inspection report and evidence of completion should be submitted with these (e.g. photos, reports and certificates). Any re-works identified in the inspection report should be addressed on all other properties completed on the project.

The Project Coordinator may be asked to meet SEAI to confirm the remedial actions being taken to bring the project in line with quality requirements.

If satisfactory evidence of quality and safety standards is not available, SEAI may, at its discretion, reduce the grant amount proportionally. Excessive additional inspections arising from persistent poor quality may be chargeable at the cost to SEAI.

Payments between 50% and 80% must be supported by satisfactory inspection data. Payments in excess of 80% will only be made when inspection data has been finalised, energy credits uploaded, and all outstanding documentation received. All reworks must be completed before final payment will be released.

Appeals

Inspection results may be appealed using the Reworks Appeal Form which can be emailed to becinspections@seai.ie.

Appeals must be received in writing within 14 days of the date of your Inspection Results Notification. Appeals must outline any evidence to dispute the inspection findings and advise on any mitigating factors that may have affected the outcome of the inspection. It is essential that your appeal be supported by appropriate supporting documentation such as photos, certification and other relevant information

Post payment Inspections

SEAI may at its own discretion carry out post payment inspections to verify the quality of works performed under the Communities Grant Scheme. Where requested to do so the Project Coordinator will be required to provide contact details for the homeowners and non-domestic properties to enable SEAI to contact the homeowner or Beneficiary directly. Schedule F forms must be completed for each and every Domestic and non-domestic location completed. Post payment inspections will normally be undertaken independently of the Project Coordinator. Where fails are identified re-works will be required as noted above. SEAI reserves the right to clawback any grant funds where reworks are not completed, or no works are identified.

6.3 Payment Procedure

Grant payments will be made to the Lead Applicant in accordance with the Grant Agreement. Changes to the contract in relation to payment are not possible once the contract is signed.

The level of grant payment will be strictly proportional to documented eligible payments made to suppliers and contractors connected to the project. Invoices must be dated after the date of letter of offer and must be addressed to the Grantee or the Beneficiaries named on the Grant Agreement. Invoices which predate the letter of offer or which are not addressed to the Grantee or Beneficiary are not eligible for payment.

Once the reports and financial documents are deemed satisfactory, SEAI will transfer grant funds electronically to the Grantee's bank account and issue an accompanying letter notifying the main contact of the payment.

Final payments are conditional upon satisfactory receipt by SEAI of the below by the **15 October 2020** at the latest

- a) Project completion confirmation including verification that the technical specifications have been completed
- b) A completed Payment Request Form
- c) A completed Grant Claim Workbook
- d) **Invoices** for all approved itemised **eligible costs**. Invoices should list energy upgrade measures included and identify the locations where these works were carried out.
- e) Proof of payment of invoices in the form of
 - a statement from the contractor/supplier confirming that the invoice has been paid and
 - a copy of the Grantee's bank statement which shows the payment(s)

(Where multiple invoices are being paid using a single Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) or cheque i.e. batch payments, a breakdown of all amounts in that payment is required.)
- f) Valid tax Clearance for all Beneficiaries
- g) All relevant [Financial documents](#)
- h) For self-accounted VAT, supporting documentation as evidence that VAT has been paid to Revenue, e.g. VAT return extract and bank statement, or a letter indicating that VAT will be paid (this in the case of Local Authorities and other Government Bodies only SEAI will accept a letter from an authorised official outlining that VAT has been paid or will be paid to Revenue for each invoice. This also applies to RCT and PSWT).
- i) Domestic Energy Credits uploaded to ECMS (Energy Credit Management System) by PES

Confirmation of

- j) Energy Poverty status for relevant homes
- k) [Declaration of Independence](#) signed by BER assessor(s)
- l) Signed [Client Organisation Declaration for Energy Credits](#)
- m) A report on the status of the project in relation to financing aspects including a description of the mechanism used, the repayment situation and feedback on the success of the mechanism where applicable
- n) BER costs should be separately identified and invoiced, and this invoice must separately identify the properties assessed.

[Project management costs](#)

Applicants can only claim for PM support in-line with project expenditure. Invoices accounting for the relevant values must be submitted at each stage.

Non-domestic Design Fees

For Non-domestic design fee costs to be eligible for support evidence of a design process being completed must be submitted (Design considerations, inputs, outputs, system design, design checks)

Every design project is different and has differing needs. It is the responsibility of the design engineer to consider fully all design requirements. It is the duty of the design to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation and regulations and codes of practice. CIBSE / BSRIA Design Checks for HVAC and Electrical Services provide design guidance for design engineers. These costs should be included in the Technical Workbook.

6.4 Important Notes

Interim payments

SEAI will not make any interim payments on projects unless works are fully complete on the buildings being claimed for. Works must be completed for any invoices submitted i.e. deposits or payments on account are not acceptable. Payments for partially complete measures are not permitted. Payments for partially complete homes are similarly not permitted.

Final payments will be withheld on all projects until all documentation has been submitted, and all inspections and any necessary re-works have been completed and approved by SEAI.

Where the number of energy credits delivered is less than those committed to in the Grant Agreement, the maximum project management amount will be adjusted on a pro rata basis for any reduction in energy credits in excess of 5% of the amount committed to in the Grant Agreement. This may result in the grant payment being reduced.

Where grant support of €150,000 or more is offered for the combined Non-domestic upgrade projects, 10% of funding for the non-domestic projects will be withheld until satisfactory M&V information is received. This must be submitted before **22nd September 2021**. Projects should identify at application stage; sites where proposed M&V will be carried out. SEAI will confirm in the Grant Agreement if additional M&V is required at other locations or on other measures. The PES is responsible for authenticating and submitting the M&V. Any amount retained for M&V will not be paid if a satisfactory M&V report is not received by 22 September 2021.

Payment revocation

SEAI will revoke payments in the following circumstances:

- Ineligible invoices submitted
- Insufficient proof of payments submitted
- Invoices are deemed invalid
- Back-up documents have not been submitted to SEAI by the assigned project deadline
- Requests for payment have not been submitted to SEAI by the assigned project deadline
- Works have not been completed to standard
- Works have not been tested and commissioned

- Works have not been ‘switched on’
- Work was commenced or completed prior to letter of offer being issued
- No access has been provided to inspect the upgrade works
- Upgrade works completed do not match proposal and specification submitted and approved by SEAI in accordance with the programme guidelines
- Energy credits completed are less than that proposed in the Grant Agreement
- Invalid or insufficient Energy Credits uploaded
- Energy credits for upgrade works have already been claimed for

Inspection of Projects

The cost of additional inspections will, at the discretion of SEAI be deducted from the grant payment due where the quality of work is repeatedly poor and additional inspections are required as a direct result. Both inspection costs and re-inspection costs are deductible at the cost of such inspections to SEAI.

Triple E register

The Triple E Products Register is a benchmark register of best in class energy efficient products. Products on this register all meet a minimum set of stringent efficiency criteria and typically will be of a best in class efficiency standard. As such, procuring against this register will provide you with the assurance that you are purchasing a product of very high efficiency.

Projects are encouraged to commit to the purchase of plant, machinery or equipment from the relevant product/technology categories listed on the [Triple E register](#) or equivalent where appropriate. The Project Coordinator should identify such products in the Technical Workbook. This is a mandatory requirement for public sector organisations only.

‘Green’ Public Procurement Regulations

Public sector organisations should meet their obligations to procure products in accordance with [SI 151: 2011](#) European Union (Energy Efficient Public Procurement) Regulations 2011

Accelerated Capital Allowance

The ACA is a tax incentive for companies paying corporation tax and aims to encourage investment in energy efficient equipment. The ACA offers an attractive incentive whereby it allows companies to write off 100% of the purchase value of qualifying energy efficient equipment against their profit in the year of purchase. Qualifying products from the defined ACA equipment categories are listed on the ACA Specified List which is updated on a regular basis.

For Grantees eligible to claim the Accelerated Capital Allowance (ACA) linked to the Triple E register, it should be noted that any ensuing claim to the Revenue Commissioners for the ACA should be made on the basis of costs net of the Communities grant.

Publicity and Case Studies

As with all grant schemes, successes and lessons learned are a key ingredient in maximising replication. This is particularly true with Community Energy projects, where successfully funded projects are the flagbearers driving wider and deeper community engagement. It is essential therefore that all applicants do their utmost to publicise the successful outcomes of their endeavours. This means:

- Actively seeking opportunities to promote the successful grant application, project progress and project completion in local and regional media (print and broadcast). This should also extend to local representatives and elected officials.
- All such activities should explicitly acknowledge the funding received from the SEAI Communities scheme. Where signage or displays are being created in relation to particular buildings or events then you should request the SEAI logo from SEAI for inclusion accordingly. SEAI should be provided with copies of any press releases or promotional materials prior to finalisation for approval.
- If deemed appropriate to host an event at project completion, then SEAI must be advised of same and afforded an opportunity to attend / participate as appropriate.
- At project conclusion, the Project Coordinator must provide a short case study to SEAI which sets out the main elements of the project (key partners, numbers of properties, and types of works, project costs (totals), project duration, critical success factors / learnings accompanied with high-res photos of key buildings). These may be used for further promotion by SEAI or inclusion in reports from SEAI.
- SEAI may request that an SEAI provided plaque is displayed in a **prominent and visible** location in buildings where Communities grant funded work has taken place. The estimated size of this plaque is no greater than A4. The installation of this plaque is considered part of the participation in this grant programme. The project Coordinator must provide SEAI with a photograph of the installed plaque where a plaque is provided for installation.

6.5 Assessment and Reporting

Calculating savings

Energy Conversion Figures

Fuel	Unit of Supply	kWh/unit	kg CO ₂ /kWh
Electricity (2016)	kWh	1.00	0.468
Kerosene/Light Fuel Oil/Heating Oil	Litre	11.21	0.257
Gas Oil/Diesel	Litre	10.55	0.264
Residual Fuel Oil/Heavy Fuel Oil	Litre	11.45	0.274
Coal	Tonne	7,759.20	0.341

Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG)	Litre	7.09	0.229
Natural gas	kWh	1.00	0.205
Wood pellets	Tonne	4,800	0.005
Wood biomass		3,500	0.005

Sustainable energy

In the case of sustainable energy generation such as that facilitated by biomass plants built as part of the project, efficiency savings can be logged as energy savings or credits and taken up by a supplier.

Energy credits

If an energy supplier is a project partner, the Lead Applicant on the project may give them permission to count the energy savings achieved against their energy target. This permission may only be given before the project commences. The energy supplier should be identified on the Application Form and credits cannot be assigned retrospectively. It is the responsibility of the PES to upload all completed domestic credits to ECMS (Energy Credit Management System) for completed work and payment to the Grantee is conditional on the credits being uploaded. SEAI will upload the credits associated with Non-domestic projects.

All of the savings and reductions are potentially eligible to be considered as energy credits. They only get converted to credits once the relevant work is completed and verified.

Your Communities grant offer states the agreed number of energy credits to be delivered by your project(s). A successful project **commits** to achieving the Energy Credits as set out in the evaluated Technical Workbook and included in the Grant Agreement. At the conclusion of your grant the energy credits will be uploaded on to the ECMS system. Where the number of energy credits is less than those committed to in the grant agreement a reduction to your project management payment will be made on a pro rata basis.

Domestic

Please note that to claim domestic energy saving credits, the applicant must collect the meter point reference numbers (MPRNs) and BERs of the relevant dwellings.

Non-domestic

Where appropriate, applicants should use the [online calculation engines](#) provided by SEAI to calculate savings. In other cases, clearly outline the calculation methodology used to arrive at the savings figures. The expected impact on the BER and/or Display Energy Certificate can be used in the calculations. Where similar projects have been completed a detailed M&V report, carried out in accordance with Internal IPMVP could be submitted to verify similar savings.

7 THE COMMUNITIES ENERGY GRANT TEAM

SEAI's Communities Energy Grant Team are happy to provide advice and support to potential applicants on any questions not covered in these guidelines and to support them in developing their applications for grant support.

If you are interested in making an application, please email BEC@seai.ie with 'expression of interest' in the subject line so that we can track applicants interested in the programme. Please contact us at BEC@seai.ie or 01 808 2162.

8 TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. The Communities Energy Grant Application Guide, Application Form, Technical Workbook and Terms and Conditions are those published on the SEAI website on the date of submitting the application. However, SEAI may, if required by law or otherwise and without incurring any liability, vary, revise or supplement the Terms and Conditions of the programme after the application submission date. These revised or supplemented Terms and Conditions (as published on the SEAI website) will apply to all applications unless the Applicant chooses to withdraw the application or withdraw from the Grant Agreement. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to monitor the SEAI website in order to learn of any such changes.
2. The Applicant's Grant Agreement with SEAI in the event of a grant offer being accepted will comprise the Letter of Offer from SEAI including the Terms and Conditions and the Schedules contained therein, the Application Guidelines including these Terms and Conditions as amended in accordance with clause 1, and the Application Form including the Technical Workbook completed and submitted by the Applicant. The Applicant having communicated acceptance of the grant offer to SEAI, shall comply with and agree to be bound by the provisions of these documents. In the event of any conflict arising between these documents the order of precedence shall be:
 - 2.1. the Letter of Offer and the Terms and Conditions including Schedules contained therein;
 - 2.2. the Application Guidelines including these Terms and Conditions; and
 - 2.3. The Application Form.
3. Applicant must ensure that the application is submitted online via the [PEP portal \(https://www.pep.seai.ie\)](https://www.pep.seai.ie). Applications submitted by e-mail or in hard copy will not be accepted.
4. The project in respect of which the application is made, must be located in the **Republic of Ireland**.
5. Only **new products** shall be installed for the purposes of the project.
6. The Applicant and SEAI are of the view that there is no supply of goods or services between them and therefore there is no VAT chargeable to SEAI by the Applicant in relation to the payment of the grant. In the event that the Revenue Commissioners determine that, in their view, VAT is chargeable then the grant payment shall be regarded as inclusive of any VAT charge.
7. VAT is not an eligible project cost unless the Applicant can provide a letter from Revenue dated 2020 confirming that VAT cannot be reclaimed on the particular project. The only exception to this is where the ultimate beneficiaries of the works are private homeowners in which case the presumption will be that they do not have VAT recovery.
8. Any costs, e.g. orders, purchases or works, which predate **formal Letter of Offer** are not eligible.
9. Applications by public bodies must ensure that energy suppliers were selected through an appropriate process.
10. The applicant must obtain all necessary consents and statutory approvals and have authority to implement the project.
11. The grant offer only becomes valid upon receipt by SEAI from the applicant of the signed Letter of Offer.
12. A grant, once approved, is only payable in respect of the project(s) identified in the **Application Form** and set out in the **Letter of Offer**.

13. SEAI's prior written consent is required to approve any changes to the itemised eligible costs. For the avoidance of doubt, SEAI reserves the right to refuse such consent at its absolute discretion.
14. Once approved, the total grant amount will not be permitted to escalate under any circumstances.
15. The Applicant acknowledges that the timing of payment to approved grantees is subject to the funding allocated by Government to the programme in a particular calendar year, in accordance with public financial procedures. Where all other conditions are met, payment will be made on a 'first come, first served' basis. **Where funding is exhausted in a particular calendar year, payment to remaining applicants will be deferred until such time as further funds may become available.** Deferred payments will receive priority, if and when those funds become available.
16. The Applicant and project beneficiaries must ensure that compliance is achieved with the relevant principles of **Irish and EC law** regarding the spending of this funding and, where applicable, the laws and guidelines concerning **public procurement and state aid**. The Applicant acknowledges and agrees that, if it or a Beneficiary of the project is a public body, it is a condition of the grant that all products being procured by or on behalf of the grantee or the Beneficiary concerned, as the case may be, shall comply with the European Communities (Energy Efficient Public Procurement) Regulations (S.I. 151 of 2011) which oblige public bodies when purchasing or leasing products to only procure products that are explicitly listed on the SEAI Triple E Register, or satisfy the energy efficiency criteria published by SEAI for the relevant product categories.
17. The Applicant understands that for non-domestic works if a grantee fails to comply with the conditions regarding an efficient and effective mechanism for **energy use data collection**, measuring, or verification of savings, SEAI, shall amongst its remedies against the grantee, be entitled to demand the complete **repayment of the grant**.
18. The Applicant must ensure that all participating homes/facilities are prepared to be contacted and asked to participate in **follow-up site visit(s)** to verify impacts and achievements and to participate in follow-up research (telephone or questionnaire) as may be commissioned by SEAI to establish the programme's impacts and achievements. This will also include the **acquisition of information and data** for the development of case studies for wider dissemination (protecting as appropriate all confidential or commercially and personal sensitive information/data). The Applicant acknowledges and must ensure that it is a contact for participating building/facility owners and that SEAI will have to provide certain contact details to third party contractors in relation to these matters and the applicant hereby consents to SEAI making these disclosures.
19. The Applicant must ensure that access can be provided to SEAI and its agents to inspect a project location the Project within five business days of request for access except in exceptional circumstances demonstrated to the satisfaction of SEAI. Failure to satisfy this full access requirement will be considered a breach of these Terms and Conditions (see clause 20 below).
20. In the event of any breach by the Applicant of these Terms and Conditions of the programme or the other documents referred to in clause 2 of the Terms and Conditions and where the Applicant has received payment pursuant to the programme, SEAI shall, amongst its remedies against the Applicant, be **entitled to demand the complete repayment of and fully claw back the grant. The Applicant agrees to comply with any such demand immediately on receipt of a written demand from SEAI.**
21. **SEAI accepts no liability or responsibility**, whether for breach of contract, negligence, breach of statutory duty or otherwise, in respect of any direct or indirect loss, expense, dispute, claim, proceedings or cause of action arising out of, or in relation to, any product (or its suitability), any materials (or their suitability), equipment (or its suitability), work, system, service, specification, standard, installation in respect of which a Grant Offer has issued, or payment granted by SEAI. **No undertaking, guarantee, assurance or other warranty, express or implied, is given by SEAI, or any of**

its agents or servants, in respect of the cost, quality, efficiency and/or benefit of any work, equipment, materials, product, service or installation provided under the Community Energy Grant programme.

22. Any **false, fictitious or fraudulent statements or claims knowingly made** on grant applications, or supporting documentation, submitted in respect of previous grant applications/requests for payment or otherwise made to SEAI, its authorised officers, or a SEAI inspector, or **any breach of these Terms and Conditions** may result in current and future applications being deemed ineligible by SEAI. In respect of applications where the applicant has already received payment pursuant to the programme, clause 20 of these Terms and Conditions shall also apply.
23. Inspection results may be appealed in accordance with provisions in 6.2.
24. The applicant shall follow the SEAI complaints procedure in relation to any disputes between the applicant and SEAI concerning any matter in connection with the Grant Scheme
25. In relation to any complaints or appeals under the Communities Energy Grant programme, the applicant shall follow the SEAI Complaints and Appeals Policy contained within the SEAI Customer Charter, published on the SEAI website and amended from time to time.
26. The Applicant acknowledges that SEAI is subject to the requirements of the **Freedom of Information Act 2014**, as amended (“FOIA”). SEAI undertakes to use its best endeavours to hold confidential any information provided by the Applicant subject to its obligations under law, including the FOIA. Should the Applicant wish that any of the information supplied by him/her should not be disclosed because of its sensitivity, he/she should, when providing the information, identify the same and specify the reasons for its sensitivity. SEAI will consult with the Applicant about such information before making a decision on any Freedom of Information request received.
27. Any personal information which an Applicant provides to SEAI will be treated with the highest standards of security and confidentiality, strictly in accordance with the Data Protection Acts, 1988, 2003 and 2018 as re-enacted, amended or replaced from time to time, and pursuant to the General Data Protection Regulation (meaning Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC) and any related legislation. SEAI, as data controller, and its agents, will store such information on its database and fully respect the confidentiality of the data provided. The information provided by applicants will be used for evaluation purposes and to facilitate the administration of the grant process. This may require that data be supplied to and discussed, in confidence, with any person or organisation appointed by SEAI to assist in assessing or monitoring this application. These persons will be subject to the same requirements for protection of confidentiality. **The Applicant’s signature on the Application Form is treated as confirmation that SEAI and its agents may use the information thus supplied for the aforementioned purposes.**
28. An Applicant is under **no direct or indirect obligation to undertake and/or complete the project outlined in their application**. Rather, it is up an Applicant whether or not they wish to undertake and complete the project.
29. An Applicant must notify SEAI immediately of a decision not to undertake and/or complete their project. If a successful Applicant decides not to undertake and/or complete the project, SEAI will not pay the grant and instead may (but is not obliged to) allocate some or all of the funds provisionally allocated to that Applicant to a different applicant.