

Proposal ID: 19/DP/7274

Title: Activating the Energy Citizen on the Dingle Peninsula

Organisation: Mol Teic T/A Dingle Hub / Dingle Creativity and Innovation Hub

Project Lead: Ms. Deirdre de Bhailís

Report No.: 3

Report Type: Final Report

Report Due Date: 30/09/2021

Year of Report: Year 1

Amount of Award: €49,920.00

Report Details

Please outline in bullet points what you aimed to achieve with this project (300 words).

Activating the Energy Citizen on the Dingle Peninsula was a project designed to increase awareness, to educate, and to support local community involvement in the area's transition to a low carbon society. The project aimed to

- Enable informed dialogue and discussion at a local level on climate change and what is required to transition to a low carbon society
- Enable peer-to-peer learning in workshops and information sharing sessions, whereby local community members would share information and learn about the experiences of their neighbours and friends who have undergone energy retrofits, or made lifestyle changes.
- share knowledge on the financial investment required, the expected returns, and the renewable energy technologies available for their particular circumstances through the support of local, trained energy coaches (known and trusted),
- integrate students already engaged and participating in Climate Action activities with those involved in Coder Dojo and Animation Workshops and by resourcing those groups, strengthen the networks and build capacity both for the delivery of STEM Education and also for future public engagement in pressing societal challenges.

Please explain how you met your objectives (800 words).

Over the project period there were approximately 70 engagement events from the launch in Feb 2020, to a series of outreach events including community workshops, webinars and 'Climate Hacks' with secondary schools (virtual in 2020). This included 14 meetings with policy makers, 13 presentations, 16 meetings with community groups, participation in 12 workshops, 3 with ESBN and the organising of 1 public event and 5 webinars. In total to date approx 2,070 have been engaged at events. A target was set at 1,350 therefore engagement was over 50% more than planned. This level of knowledge sharing and facilitation of networks of active energy citizens has led to a number of measurable outcomes:

- Expressions of Interest in new technology trials went up by 600% from 2019 to 2021.
- The estimated average annual generation of solar PV equivalent is 9.3 kWh/capita on the peninsula compared to an Irish average of 2.8 kWh/capita. Local installers advise that the level of uptake for Solar PV on homes on the Dingle Peninsula is significantly higher than in other areas of the south west region.
- A West Kerry Dairy Farmer Sustainable Energy Community has been established with 90+ members planning to undertake energy efficiency measures on their farms.
- The Corca Dhuibhne Community Energy group (15 members) has been supported to form and are collaborating with energy management start-up company DC Six Technologies on an R&D project to develop a platform that will enable financing of Community Owned Energy. This is building skills and innovation capacity in the community while at the same time addressing energy efficiency.

- Dingle Peninsula 2030 has been recognised as a UN case study on Sustainability:

<https://unric.org/en/sustainable-development-and-the-dingle-peninsula/>

- The re-imagine workshops held in June 2020 strategically brought 33 representatives of all sectors and geographical locations on the Peninsula together to identify seven core concepts for a sustainable future. This will be a foundational building block for further community authoring work that is planned through Dingle Hub.

- 15 young people participated in Animation workshops to learn new skills and create short clips to communicate energy use and challenges on the Dingle Peninsula.

<https://dinglepeninsula2030.com/events/create-animate-communicate-online-animation-workshop/>

- 40+ young people participated in a series of Coder Dojo sessions (5 in-person and 10 online) to code sensors to investigate weather conditions, to provide information to support the reduction of energy use in the home and to protect the bees. The Coder Dojo Corca Dhuibhne Group participated in the Tech Féile 2021 awards to showcase their projects: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Go1nI9m-oxg> (19:30 - 23:00 and award finalists Joe, Jay and Luca at 30:40 - 31:52)

- Dingle Adapts Energy series was delivered and proved very popular. This was a series of virtual open days showcasing energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies at five energy ambassador homes culminating in an interactive energy Q&A webinar. Combined viewership of these on Facebook and YouTube is currently 950+ and continues to rise.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxvZmQLWJlbfm1D3QUnoeiw/videos>

- A pilot series of online Energy Clinics was delivered to give members of the community who were considering retrofits access to independent, impartial advice to support their decisions to progress with work on their premises. The participants energy related actions will be tracked over time to assess the impact of these clinics on their decisions.

- A series of videos was produced to record a snapshot in time of all initiatives relating to energy, agriculture and engaged research underway on the Peninsula and to support evaluation

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxvZmQLWJlbfm1D3QUnoeiw/videos>

- Learnings were shared nationally through a large number of webinars and online meetings with other communities with the same objectives. Notable amongst these was the SEAI Armchair chat held during Science Week 2020: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=STt5BY7eZYc&t=113s>

- MaREI's expertise and research is helping to inform national policy with regard to community engagement in climate action through combining technical analysis with societal engagement. See:

<https://www.marei.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/MaREI-Submission-on-Citizen-Engagement-and-Dialgue-to-Oireachtas-Committee-on-Climate-Action.pdf>

Project Partners (formal partners in the project - please also highlight any additional partners since your original application)

Dingle Creativity and Innovation Hub
MaREI - the SFI Centre from Climate, Energy and Marine
North East West Kerry Development
ESB Networks

What are the key highlights/successes of your project (500 words)

- The development and maintenance of the Corca Dhuibhne 2030 website as a key communication tool
- Dingle Peninsula 2030 showcased on UN Regional Information Centre website <https://unric.org/en/sustainable-development-and-the-dingle-peninsula/>
- The establishment of two community groups actively involved in energy related projects: The West Kerry Dairy Farmer's Sustainable Energy Community and the Corca Dhuibhne Community Energy Group
- A pipeline of new projects developed to enable longterm continuity and active community participation
- Engaged schools and students seeking participation in local projects
- Groups of homeowners and business owners preparing to take energy efficiency measures for their premises.
- Significant engagement with state agencies and policy makers to influence the changes required to enable community participation in transition
- National profile raised sufficiently to showcase local initiatives and enable national scaling.
- We are beginning to see the generation of 'green' jobs in the region with the establishment of 2 new energy service companies.

What are the top tips you would have for someone doing a similar project (500 words)

- When organising events online with a large no of participants – several facilitators are needed.
- All stakeholders need to understand the time and resources it takes for community engagement – it is slow and time intensive.
- Collaboration (which was highly valued by all stakeholders) requires flexibility in project design. Collaboration brings significant benefits in terms of co-design, co-creation and a shared understanding on how to make progress but it requires learning time at the outset.
- Engaged students will become informed participants in energy transition projects and encourage more young people to get involved.
- Partnership between research organisations and communities through engaged research is key to understanding what is required for community engagement in climate action and to help influence national policy in this regard.

Please outline challenges encountered, the causes and if and how you were able to overcome them (500 words).

The main challenge encountered was the global pandemic. Most of the engagement planned for this project was to be at in person events, many through the local festivals which all had to be cancelled. Very quickly in April and May 2020, we acquired the tools and started to develop the skills necessary to engage effectively online. This began with the series of 6 animation workshops in June 2020. We found that, while it was possible to deliver in this manner and the activity was appreciated at a time when there were few alternative outlets for participants, both facilitators and participants felt the workshops would have benefited more from being in-person.

The second initiative was to work with the community to re-imagine a sustainable future for the Peninsula, and through working with experts in the area of online engagement, we delivered an engaging and participative weekend where seven core concepts were developed and these will help form a foundational block of further community authoring work planned into the future.

Over time, as skills and tools developed and people became more used of engaging online all of this became less of a challenge. The popularity of the Dingle Adapts Energy series in May/ June 2021 showed us that people were happy to engage in this manner and it facilitated the initial connections with those who progressed to participate in Energy Clinics. These are the people who will ultimately take action and deliver on energy efficiency projects.

Online engagement also facilitated the West Kerry Dairy Farmers SEC and Corca Dhuibhne Community Energy groups to establish and hold regular meetings.

A move to a more hybrid engagement where we can hold in-person meetings where necessary will be very welcome but the initial challenge of the pandemic leading to rapid skills and tools development has enabled enhanced pathways to engagement.

How do you plan to make your project sustainable or detail your exit plan for your project (500 words)

Because of the continued support of SFI through the Dingle Peninsula 2030 - A Model Enabling Community-led Climate Action project, work is resourced to the end of 2023 to build on the significant engagement and community participation delivered through Activating the Energy Citizen.

Specifically, established community groups such as the WK Dairy Farmer's SEC, the Corca Dhuibhne Community Energy group among others will be supported to complete energy efficiency and Climate Action projects and new groups will be encouraged to form. The new project pipeline includes a recent award from the Creative Ireland Climate Action Fund, an application submitted to the SEAI R&D for Community Owned Energy and the development of a Sustainable Mobility rural pilot project. The necessary communication structures will be established to ensure there is effective communication and collaboration between groups with similar objectives. A clear roadmap will be developed for home and business owners to undertake energy efficiency measures on their premises and the examples of work completed by members of the local community will be showcased and communicated through a variety of channels with those who are starting the journey to provide peer-to-peer learning and support.

The role of the Dingle Hub is to provide the necessary institutional memory and capacity to enable effective continuity between projects and enhance the long-term impacts of all of the individual projects. It will seek to continuously resource projects to achieve low carbon transition on the Peninsula in a way that creates a liveable, sustainable and inclusive community. This approach aims to leverage the work on all projects and initiatives to maximise the impacts for both the community and the project investors.

Audience Reach

Please choose which of the following formats best describes your project

Other - please specify

Other (please specify)

Variety of community events, videos and online engagements

Please indicate which of the following population groups were the main target audience of this project (choose all that apply)

Primary Students, Post Primary - Junior Cycle, Transition Year Students, Post Primary - Senior Cycle, General Public

Did the project reach the intended target audience?

Yes

How did you reach these audiences?

Over the project period there were approximately 70 engagement events from the launch in Feb 2020, to a series of outreach events including community workshops, webinars and 'Climate Hacks' with secondary schools (virtual). This included 14 meetings with policy makers, 13 presentations, 16 meetings with community groups, participation in 12 workshops, 3 with ESNB and the organising of 1 public event and 5 webinars. Young people from age 7 – 16 were specifically engaged in coding and animation workshops. The Dingle Peninsula 2030 website was developed and maintained and a brochure launched in early 2020. There was extensive local and national media coverage throughout the course of the project.

Did your project specifically target any of the following audience groups?

Not applicable

Please indicate the numbers of individuals directly engaged by the project - numeric value only: 2070

Is this project targeted at a specific gender?

No

Please choose which topic best describes the focus of your project

Other - please specify

Other (please specify)

Climate Action

Please indicate the geographical target area of the project (choose all that apply)

Kerry

Was your project linked with any of the following SFI Programmes?

Science Week

Was your project linked to any of the SFI Funded Research Centres or CSETs?

MaREI

Explain how the audience reach figure has been derived

Attendance at in-person launch event: 200+ general public
8 community meetings across the Peninsula: 120 people
Re-imagine Workshop participation: 27 general public
Coder Dojo Sessions (15 in total): 40+ students
Animation Workshops (6 in total): 15 students
Energy Clinics visitors: 17 adults
SEAI Armchair Chat attendees: 340 general public
Dingle Adapts - Energy Series: Combined viewership of 850+
West Kerry Dairy Farmers SEC: 90+ members
Corca Dhuibhne Community Energy Group: 12 members
Meetings with policy makers: 14 adults
Additional sign-ups to Dingle Hub Newsletters: 345

Broader Reach:

Dingle Hub social media following FB, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram: 5150 (average increase of 106% from Jan 2020 to June 2021)
ESB Networks Podcasts on Radio Kerry: listenership 29,000 quarter hour
National Conference Presentations: 1000+

Evaluation

How did you evaluate your project? (250 words)

Evaluation was carried out throughout the time line for Discover 1 'Engaging the Energy Citizen 2020 to 2021'.

Evaluation methodologies included: energy data collection, engagement in events and media platforms, feedback from workshops both in person and from online surveys, feedback from focus groups in relation to community planning (facilitators notes and reports), learning briefs and testimonials from engaged citizens.

Evaluation of general public/community awareness of the project was captured using vox-pops carried out by an independent company supported by the Dingle Hub and where questions were independently framed for evaluation purposes. In addition, video interviews were held with the West Kerry dairy farmers, participants on the energy mentor course and across the seven communities that hosted 'Reimagining Dingle' community events.

Evaluation of engagement with young people (Coder Dojo with age 7-14) (4 workshops with three schools age 14 – 17) was carried out using Survey Monkey. In relation to the Animation workshops individual evaluation feedback was obtained.

Key Performance Indicators identified at the outset of the project were measured against their stated output. Data was gathered in relation to the number of retrofits installed, the increase in use of sustainable technologies on the Peninsula and the level of carbon emission savings.

In addition, a number of learning briefs, journal papers, case studies, reports and articles were generated to raise awareness of the project and capture the learnings, which were shared with external stakeholders. These learnings and a list of external engagements and presentations is also available on www.corcadhuibhne2030.com.

Outline the findings from your evaluation? (500 words)

Detailed evaluation findings, feedback and learnings are available on the Dingle Peninsula 2030 website/evaluation & learnings. Here is a summary:

- Over the project period there were approximately 70 engagement events from the launch in Feb 2020, to a series of outreach events including community workshops, webinars and 'Climate Hacks' with secondary schools (virtual in 2020): 580 engaged. This included 14 meetings with policy makers, 13 presentations, 16 meetings with community groups, participation in 12 workshops, 3 with ESN and the organising of 1 public event and 5 webinars.
- There was collaboration with the Department of Education to explore the potential of integrating the 'Climate Hack' event into the junior cycle math's curriculum.
- Young people from age 7 – 16 were specifically engaged in coding and animation where female participation was 40% and 85% respectively.
- The Dingle Peninsula 2030 website was developed and maintained and a brochure launched in early 2020.
- Dissemination: Access to Dingle Peninsula 2030 website & media coverage exceeded all targets (local & national).
- Approximately 2,000 people directly engaged during the reporting period (target 1,350).
- Re-Imagine Dingle Peninsula' community workshops were held online (June & October 2020) [<https://bit.ly/2SposQa>]: 80 engaged. A final report on the outcomes of these meetings is available. As a result NEWKD (Local Development Co) developed a proposal and was chosen as Ireland's representative for the European Smart Village Network.
- Knowledge sharing: 'Armchair Chat' Webinar in collaboration with SEAI (340 attendees), MaREI presentations at three ESN Networks knowledge sharing webinars, and Dingle Peninsula representatives gave over 13 presentations.
- Completion of anaerobic digestion feasibility study.
- Completion of training for 10 community energy mentors in partnership with Kerry ETB.
- On-going solar PV, home energy and EV trials. Expressions of Interest in new technologies went up by 600% from 2019 to 2021.
- Estimated average annual generation of solar PV equivalent is 9.3 kWh/capita on the peninsula compared to an Irish average of 2.8 kWh/capita.
- Establishment of the West Kerry Dairy Farmer Sustainable Energy Community with 90+ members.
- Formation of the Corca Dhuibhne Community Energy group with on-going support.
- Recognition of Dingle Peninsula 2030 as a UN case study and Dingle Hub as an EU Living Laboratory.
- 8 academic papers submitted for peer review and conference presentations.
- Supported the structural development and governance of Dingle Peninsula 2030.
- Virtual Tours at 5 Ambassador homes, 10 Energy Clinics and Energy Q&A Webinar – June 2021.
- Qualitative evaluation of ESN appointed ambassadors: interviews held at 5 intervals over the lifetime of the project, which highlighted the lived experience of integrating low-carbon technologies into homes and businesses, which was predominantly a positive experience.
- Engagement with local authority, public bodies and policy makers, which may lead to changes in policy and practice.
- Internal capacity building in transdisciplinary engaged research and stakeholder engagement. MaREI's engaged researchers in the Dingle Peninsula 2030 team won the MaREI Engagement Exemplar Award 2020.

Describe what you have learned from the findings (500 words)

Activating the Energy Citizen requires independent, reliable and understandable information, peer to peer support and local leadership. Having local energy leaders assists the broader community in understanding the importance of transitioning to low carbon, the technologies available and the behavioural changes required to maximise the efficiency of these technologies. They can also provide information on government grants and incentives to assist with the investment required, making the CAP relevant to people and their daily lives.

Learnings summarised as follows:

- All stakeholders confirmed that collaborating with others provides invaluable access to the community and various networks in the area, enabling deeper and more meaningful engagement. Collaboration brings many benefits but it requires significant learning time and flexibility at the outset. Stakeholders and communities work under different constraints and these perspectives need to be understood.
- Community engagement needs to be resourced and communication with communities needs to be clear and empowering.
- Learnings from Climate Hack initiative are feeding into development of a national template. Learnings include the requirement for clearer instructions for pupils, and for teachers to engage further.
- Key learnings from community meetings (8) were; working with a local partner was crucial to getting buy in, especially one that was bilingual in this case. People were most impressed by the presentation of national energy goals and local data.
- When organising events online with many participants – several facilitators are needed.
- MaREI's expertise and research is helping to inform national policy with regard to community engagement in climate action through combining technical analysis with societal engagement. See: <https://www.marei.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/MaREI-Submission-on-Citizen-Engagement-and-Dialgue-to-Oireachtas-Committee-on-Climate-Action.pdf>

Impact Categories:

- Public interest has been stimulated through many engagement events and media coverage. Young people and female participants were specifically targeted and empowered.
- Learning was shared with other communities, e.g. Loop Head, GEAI Leitrim, Cobh Zero Carbon, SEAI SEC groups, Green Skibbereen, Ludgate Hub, Cycle Sense, and on-line through the website and e-mail lists.
- Publicly funded bodies such as NEWKD, Kerry ETB, schools were actively involved in this Initiative and are now including climate action and sustainability in their Action Plans.
- The retrofitting of local homes will provide health benefits, e.g. warmer homes, reduced exposure to cold air, mould, damp, and air pollutants.
- Improved air quality from cleaner fuels, e.g. sustainable transport will decrease nitrous oxides.
- Skills and capacity around community engagement on climate action have been developed amongst key stakeholders involved in the Initiative.
- Skills and capacity for engaged research and/or participatory engagement methods, including the role of grey literature, have been enhanced within academia, SFI and relevant agencies.
- Action groups and volunteers have been and continue to be supported and empowered to work effectively and achieve results.
- The community has begun to develop a greater understanding of renewable technologies, and their benefits.
- Achievements have resulted in funding being leveraged to continue the future work of Dingle Peninsula 2030, and will generate 'green' jobs in the region – approximately 20+ sustainability jobs being created to date.

Outline how these findings could be addressed in any future similar projects (500 words)

- A greater appreciation and allocation of time is required at the outset of the project in order to facilitate collaboration between various stakeholders. Collaboration enhances the impact of the project, however time and resources need to be allocated to co-design and developing shared understandings at the outset.
- Internal learnings have led to a better estimation of the resource allocation required for future funding proposals and industry collaborations.
- At the outset the need to balance the requirement for academic outputs and the needs of stakeholders and the community must be clearly defined and agreed.
- As stated above, the elements of activating the energy citizen needs to be well understood – these elements must be taken into account in any new energy project.
- Community workshops and public events held to date appear to work very well and are very engaging. Plan to offer more of these in future projects and appointing a local stakeholder is essential for success.
- In relation to carrying out workshops with students; there is a requirement for clearer instructions for pupils, and for teachers to engage further so this needs to be considered when planning.
- Work to date is informing MaREI, ESB Networks and Dingle Hub's approach to community engagement and the potential challenges to be faced. These learnings are being disseminated widely and should continue to be communicated to other communities as well as policy makers.
- Flexibility is required all the time but especially on a new project. This is required for unanticipated responses, changes in organisational roles or structure, new local groups/structures emerging.
- When working online, significant preparation time is required, clear rules of engaging should be stated and depending on the number of participants, more than one facilitator may be required.
- Understanding how to do community engagement is important and needs a specific strategy to be effective in any new project.
- Clear information, translation of technical language and data is required for the community to engage.
- Engaging the public in large-scale change requires a multi-focus approach and methods i.e. use of social and traditional media, targeting sectors, various age cohorts, gender and multi-cultural groupings.
- In 2020, three formal learning briefs were produced. These cover an LED Bulb Swap event, Climate Hack in local schools, and the development of an Energy Master Plan for the Peninsula. Each brief contains contextual background, aims and objectives, what happened, lessons learnt, outcomes and, in the case of the Energy Master Plan, recommendations. The process of writing a learning brief involves intensive, collaborative reflection and deliberation, and the insights contribute to future thinking and planning.
- Ensuring on-going reflective learning, evaluation and the creation of learning briefs all contribute to a project being adaptive and responsive to changing circumstances.
- Community supports, e.g. mentors, engagement officers, facilitators, etc., are an essential component of engaging the community in any project.

Explain how you have shared, or intend to share, these learnings (250 words)

A summary of presentations and events is given in the Resources Learning Brief and can be accessed at the Dingle Peninsula website.

Below are some examples of presentations:

21 October 2020: Engineers Ireland Conference: Engineering for Communities

20 October 2020: EU LEC0 Fuinneamh Pobail sa Ghaeltacht webinar

09 October 2020: Energy Ireland Conference: Community Engagement on the Dingle Peninsula

9 December 2020: Local Climate Dialogues Workshop: An Exchange with Imagining 2050, Dingle Peninsula 2030, GEAI Leitrim and Energy Policies

Publications: 9 December 2020: Launch of 'Ireland and the Climate Crisis' book, with Minister Eamon Ryan: Chapter on Community Engagement and Community Energy, which includes Dingle Peninsula as a case study.

20 March 2021: UCC Environmental Society Climate Conference: Presentation on Dingle Peninsula 2030 and community engagement.

June 2021: RIA Annual conference: Academic conference discussing Dingle and transdisciplinary research. The Dingle Peninsula Initiative has been recognised by a number of national and international bodies for; demonstrating how a multi-stakeholder initiative, involving grassroots community organisations, regional authorities, research bodies and public agencies, can develop and deliver a range of sustainability projects. The engaged research dimension is central to this success, capturing learnings through an ongoing monitoring and reflection process.

The initiative also supports key aspects of Innovation 2020, in particular identifying and informing transition pathways to a carbon-neutral and climate resilient Ireland; understanding how individual and collective behaviour can influence this transition; and empowering citizens to take an active role in improving their communities.

Was your project externally evaluated?

If yes, a copy of the evaluation report in PDF format should be sent to your Project Coordinator by email. Please note that this report may be published on the SFI website.

No

Please provide a list of the media coverage including broadcast, press and social media.

See Links in supplementary document "210917 SFI Discover Activating the Energy Citizen supplementary report material"

3 x ESB Networks Podcasts

7+ Radio Kerry and Raidio na Gaeltachta updates

7+ National and local print media articles

36 fortnightly West Kerry Live blogs and adverts (local magazine)

Regular Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram posts from Dingle Hub accounts

YouTube Account - Dingle Hub

Finances

Total Project Costs: €49904.36

SFI Discover Spend: €49904.36

Category	Details	Total Project Costs - Year 1	SFI Discover Spend - Year 1
Project Management	Community Engagement Officer with responsibility for oversight and management of the project, including the operational organisation of the workshops and events	€17,804.00	€17,804.00
Marketing & Promotion (include website)	Website, commercial advertising, photography, video production, pull-ups	€10,231.48	€10,231.48
Direct activity and production costs (incl. venue, AV etc.)	Venues, Catering, expert speaker costs, laptops and software for animation / coding	€16,983.88	€16,983.88
Evaluation	10% of budget	€4,885.00	€4,885.00
		€49,904.36	€49,904.36

Category	Details	Amount
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Finance Officer Name: John B Sheehy

Final Comments

If there is anything further you would like to share about the project or any feedback on the Discover Programme Call process, please add it here (500 words)

I confirm that the information provided in this report is an accurate account of the project funded by Science Foundation Ireland under the Discover Programme Call

Yes