

Local Energy Assessment Fund (LEAF)

“Seeding community energy action”

The Local Energy Assessment Fund is a new £10 million fund from DECC designed to support community energy. The fund represents an opportunity for existing community groups and civil society organisations to receive funding to evaluate the potential for energy efficiency – or renewable energy – measures within their area. However, the first application phase closes in just **2 weeks time at 12 Noon on the 22nd December**.

CSE is offering support with the development and submission of bids for groups who wish to apply for this fund. We can support your group with the development of a proposal and the delivery of a project that will result in better modelling of the scope for energy efficiency measures in your community (and how the forthcoming Green Deal could provide this), along with the development of renewable energy schemes.

What is the Fund?

The fund is designed to help communities to prepare for, and benefit from, new opportunities arising from the Green Deal, the Feed-in Tariff (FIT), and the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI).

DECC is making available £10 million, aimed at reaching 200 communities with an average of £50,000 going to each successful community project. Maximum funding is £130,000 per group. The funding will be available for any legally incorporated not-for-profit groups – including voluntary groups, Parish Councils, CICs, Co-ops and Communities of Interest. In some cases, a legally incorporated non-profit group such as a local charity will be able to represent an un-constituted community group by acting as a lead organisation. In exceptional cases, public sector bodies may be accepted as lead bodies where they can justify that they are fulfilling a crucial role in support of a community group.

The funding will be issued in two phases as follows:

Phase 1: Applications are to be submitted online by 12 noon **22nd Dec 2011** and successful applicants will be notified in the week beginning **9th Jan 2012**.

Phase 2: Applications are to be submitted online by 12 noon **20th Jan 2012** and successful applicants will be notified by **31st Jan 2012**.

All work funded under LEAF must be completed by **31st March 2012** and communities will need to show that they can complete the proposed project within this 3 month period.

What is it for?

The funding can be used to help communities understand the potential for energy efficiency and renewable energy measures in their area, engaging the community with these opportunities, and

demonstrating relevant technologies to the wider community by using local homes and community buildings as exemplars of energy saving technologies.

Projects should take into account the energy hierarchy – this means that any energy auditing work and installation of energy efficiency improvements would be expected to precede work on renewable energy auditing, and groups can only apply for renewable energy funding if they can show that they have or will first assess the likely options for reducing energy use.

Examples of activities that can be funded by the program include:

Energy efficiency

- Community energy efficiency surveys reviewing the potential for energy saving in homes within your community. These studies should consider how measures could be delivered cost effectively under the Green Deal in a way that allows the community to realise some of the benefit.
- Installation of energy saving technologies such as solid wall insulation in local demonstration homes (these should be open to the public on a regular basis) and using community buildings as exemplars of energy saving technologies and measures.
- Running engagement events ahead of the above studies, to generate interest and help local people to understand the potential of energy saving measures and behaviours. A maximum cost for these activities of £5000 applies, though additional public engagement can be carried out following completion of the studies, as long as it can be delivered before the programme end date on the 31st March 2012.

Renewable energy

- Area-wide renewable energy studies to highlight which renewable energy technologies would be most appropriate and beneficial for the area.
- Outline feasibility studies into specific renewable energy projects that could be financed through Feed in Tariffs, Renewable Heat Incentive or the new renewable energy revolving fund.
- Engagement events, linked to the above studies that consult and inform local people on how renewable energy can be developed for the benefit of communities. A maximum cost for these activities of £5000 applies, though additional public engagement can be carried out following completion of the studies, as long as it can be delivered before the programme end date on the 31st March 2012.
- Developing community capacity, for example establishing community energy enterprises able to take forward projects through the Rural Renewable Energy Fund.

Where CSE can help

Communities can draw in expert advice and guidance within the development of their bid and if the bid is successful, up to £1,000 can be used to pay for the guidance and support received. CSE can therefore act as expert consultancy support available to help groups to develop and submit their bids to the fund, and recoup the costs of this work if the bids are successful (the risk therefore falls to us; if your bid is not successful, our time in helping you write it will not be paid).

Running on such a short time-scale, we know that many groups will simply not have the time to develop their own bids, which is why we are offering support from our development team to help groups write their bids. This will include providing groups with a plan, based on our understanding of what DECC are looking for, and template bids which you can add more detail about your own local circumstances to. We can also help by checking and editing your bids, using our many years of experience to help you increase your chances of success. We will also provide groups with a template budget proposal that will outline key guideline prices – for example, day rates for an energy surveyor or the cost of hiring a village hall for a community consultation event, through to the costs of installing solid wall insulation into homes as exemplar projects.

Communities may chose to include CSE in their bid as a paid consultant, to help them deliver part of the work they wish to do. Communities will also have the opportunity to outline and cost within their budget proposal the support and guidance from third parties that they feel would be beneficial to the success of their project. CSE provides a range of services and support that can help communities deliver their stated outcomes, which are outlined below:

Pre-submission services

- Development of bids for groups, including a template of text to include in proposals and identification of key deliverables and timescale.
- Template budget including average quotes for revenue and capital costs.
- Helping groups to find reputable local contractors for any survey, assessment or installation works.

Services available on award of grant funding

- Modelling of the energy efficiency of housing stock within your community, and provision of user-friendly home energy audit tools*
- Carbon foot-printing for a community building or wider area
- Community energy audits to identify areas for energy efficiency potential (from self-led to in-depth)

- Advice and guidance on how to hold a community consultation event, and expert knowledge on the process of community engagement and holding events to disseminate the outcome of energy audits
- Access to a wide range of information sheets and use of resources and kits for events and activities
- Design and facilitation of community energy events
- Help with marketing, promotion, and raising awareness of your project
- Bespoke training sessions on all aspects of energy efficiency and renewable energy (see our [website](#) for examples of some existing courses)
- Provision of legal documentation and support on drawing up tender specifications and tendering for contractors to carry out work (e.g. door to door house surveys or installation of measures)
- Assessment of the potential for different renewable technologies and outline renewable energy feasibility studies. CSE has extensive technical experience and capability covering the full range of community-scale renewable energy technologies, including solar, wind, hydro, biomass, heat pumps, anaerobic digestion, district heating and Combined Heat and Power (CHP). We undertake site-specific assessments and technology specific feasibility studies including advising on specifications, installation and financing options (including the Feed-in Tariff and the Renewable Heat Incentive)
- Specialist technical advice on energy efficiency and renewable energy, including behaviour change energy saving technologies, advice on heating systems and using technologies)
- Guidance on working with and contracting energy efficiency installers and linking into local supply chains
- Support with procuring external services and managing contractors
- Help with making decisions such as choosing the right governance model and structure
- Advice on financial planning and business planning
- Advice on monitoring the impact of the project (e.g. identification of key indicators) and evaluation.

**Community-wide energy efficiency audits*

CSE has developed a bespoke methodology that allows community groups to model the energy efficiency of all the homes in their community, which can then be 'field-tested' with a sample set of real household surveys (carried out by either volunteers or paid surveyors). The field-testing results can then be fed back into the model to refine it and CSE can produce a report and action plan outlining the best energy efficiency retrofit measures for the community, and in particular making the links to the Green Deal and ECO, so that free and discounted measures can be accessed wherever possible.

The process requires access to data layers containing information on housing (age, build type etc) as well as data on income, benefits uptake etc. CSE can purchase these data layers on your behalf to feed into the assessment for your area for a small fee (a few hundred pounds per 1,000 houses).