



**Roinn Cumarsáide, Gníomhaithe
ar son na hAeráide & Comhshaoil**
Department of Communications,
Climate Action & Environment

Renewable Electricity Support Scheme

Empowering communities

National Renewable Energy Co-operatives Conference,

Tullamore – 18 October 2018



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Community Energy: The policy backdrop





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Community Energy Policy Backdrop: 1) 2012 Infrastructure Policy Statement

Building Community Gain Considerations into Energy Infrastructure Planning and Budgeting

The Government would like to see enhanced co-operation with local authorities on the potential for delivering landscape, biodiversity and civic benefits as part of Grid 25 and other energy infrastructure development. Delivering long lasting benefits to communities is an important way of achieving public acceptability for infrastructure.



Grid 25 and other essential energy infrastructure will have positive impacts for all local communities in underpinning regional and economic development and jobs. While everyone ultimately benefits from national energy infrastructure, potential negative impacts resulting from concerns about visual amenity and health and safety need to be mitigated through the consultation process and

appropriate, community gain measures. The Government considers greater focus needs to be given to co-operative work with local authorities and local authorities on landscape, biodiversity and civic benefits bringing long lasting benefits for communities. The Government therefore underlines the appropriateness for the State and energy project developers to examine appropriate means of community gain considerations into their project budgeting and planning. The Government is therefore fully supportive of a community gain approach in the delivery of energy infrastructure.

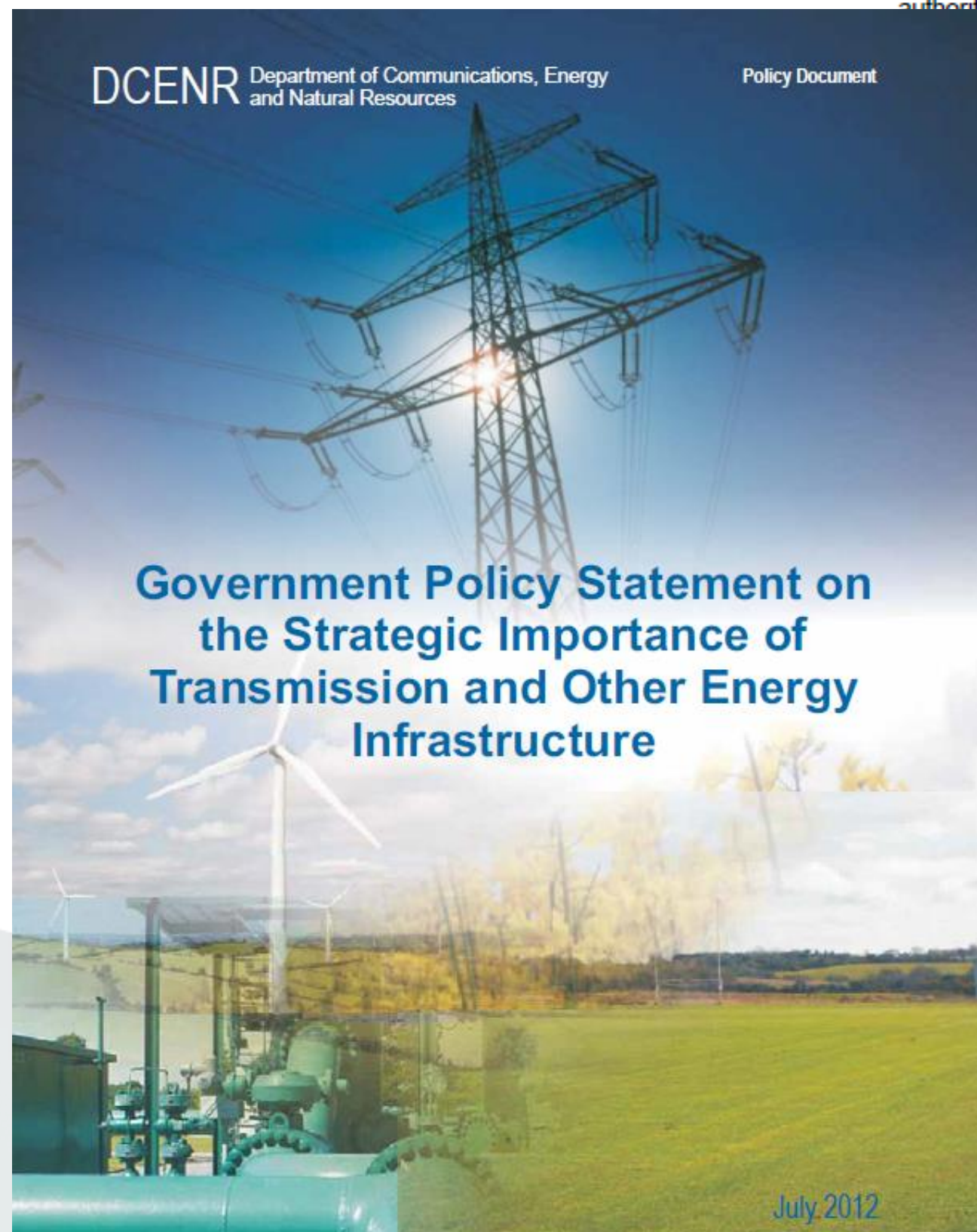
Conclusion

The Government reaffirms, in conclusion, the imperative need for investment and renewal of our energy networks, in order to meet both economic and social policy goals. The planning process provides the primary framework for ensuring that all necessary standards are met and that comprehensive statutory and non-statutory consultation is built into the

The Government acknowledges the need for social acceptance and the appropriateness of various ways of building community gain considerations into project planning and budgeting. Delivering long lasting benefits to communities is an important way of achieving public acceptability for infrastructure.

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Community Energy Policy Backdrop: 2) 2015 White Paper

- Support community participation
- Facilitate access to national grid
- Funding and supports
- Examining shared ownership opportunities





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Community Energy Policy Backdrop: 2) 2015 White Paper

Government will widen the opportunity for citizen participation in energy matters by:

- examining shared ownership opportunities for renewable energy projects in local communities
- developing a framework for agreeing how communities share in the benefits of substantial new energy infrastructure located in their area, and establishing a register of community benefit payments
- facilitating access to the national grid for designated renewable electricity projects, and developing mechanisms to allow communities to avail of payment for electricity, such as the ability to participate in power purchase agreements
- We will ensure that grid connection policy has due regard to current and future renewable energy policy, including in relation to community renewable energy projects.
- landowners, neighbours and communities will be able to engage with infrastructure providers and local government to ensure acceptable outcomes for all energy users.
- citizens and communities will be active participants in the energy transition, with robust public and stakeholder engagement in energy policy



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Community Energy Policy Backdrop: 3) DCCAE Statement of Strategy (PfG)

High Level Objective 5- Climate Action & Energy

Strategy: Ensure citizen and community participation

Performance Indicators:

- Support for citizens and communities investing in energy efficiency and renewable energy.
- Strong citizen and community participation in the energy transition including sharing in the benefits of new energy infrastructure

Commitments:

- We will facilitate the development of solar energy projects. Solar has the potential to provide a community dividend. (with Dept of Ag)
- It is also important that there is community participation in renewable energy and energy efficiency projects as it is in both the national and local interest.



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Statement of Strategy 2016 – 2019





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Community Energy Policy Backdrop: 4) REPDF

Renewable Electricity Policy and Development Framework - REPDF

The Framework will be primarily for the guidance of An Bord Pleanála, planning authorities, other statutory authorities, the general public and persons seeking development consent in relation to projects for the generation of renewable electricity on land. It will set out policy in respect of environmental considerations, community engagement and other characteristics of the current energy landscape in Ireland. It will seek to broadly identify suitable areas in the State, where large scale renewable electricity projects can be developed in a sustainable manner while simultaneously examining the scope for renewable electricity developments at various other scales at the national level.



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Community Energy Policy Backdrop: 5) The Political Wind

Unwavering demands for **community energy and microgen in Leinster House (incl previous ministers)**

“I wanted to ensure that the new scheme would provide opportunities for **rural communities, including farmers, to participate in and benefit from renewable electricity projects.**” – *Gurteen College*

“Community led electricity and energy projects offer a real opportunity for local economic growth. Our role is to put the **levers for change into people's hands**” “I am talking about citizens having the opportunity to invest in and own and financially benefit from renewable energy projects within their own community and bringing that down to community level and individual level” – *Croke Park*



“Which technologies will be used, which projects will get support from the State, where will they be located, and how can individual citizens and communities be part of the solution? The transformational change is **starting with** the new Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS)” – *Renewable Energy Summit*



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Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Project Ireland 2040

**National
Development Plan**
2018–2027



Community Energy Policy Backdrop: 6) NDP and PfG

- Additional 4,500 MWs of renewable electricity by 2030
- Energy system – radical transformation
- Community participation in renewable energy ... as it is in both the national and local interest
- Provide support for community-led projects in the initial stages of development, planning and construction



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Community Energy Policy Backdrop: 7) Citizens Assembly

Recommendation 6

- 100% of the Members recommended that the State should act to ensure the greatest possible levels of community ownership in all future renewable energy projects by encouraging communities to develop their own projects and by requiring that developer-led projects make share offers to communities to encourage greater local involvement and ownership

Key Finding

- The Citizens' Assembly believes that a move away from non-renewable sources of energy is necessary and believes that community -owned and - sold renewable electricity is the best approach.





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Community Energy Policy Backdrop: 8) Climate Change Advisory Council

Annual Report 2017

- There is currently opposition to the deployment of renewables and the accompanying infrastructure. Effective engagement with communities to address their concerns is essential.

Annual Report 2018

- Good community engagement that fosters a collaborative approach has been shown to increase the social acceptability of wind. Engaging the public in the decision-making processes from the beginning, addressing public concerns and incorporating suggestions from the public all act to allay public concern regarding these developments





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Community Energy Policy Backdrop: 9) The CEP and NECP

- EU Clean Energy Package & recast Renewable Energy Directive
 - Agreed EU-wide target of **32%** Renewable electricity
 - Support for **renewable energy communities** and **renewable self-consumers**
- Draft National Energy & Climate Plan (by end 2018)





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Community Energy Actions / Initiatives underway



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- Better Energy Communities Grant Scheme
- Sustainable Energy Communities – SEAI Network
 - Develop sustainable energy projects for the benefit of the community
 - 200+
 - 55 developing Energy Master Plans
 - Learn, Plan, Do.

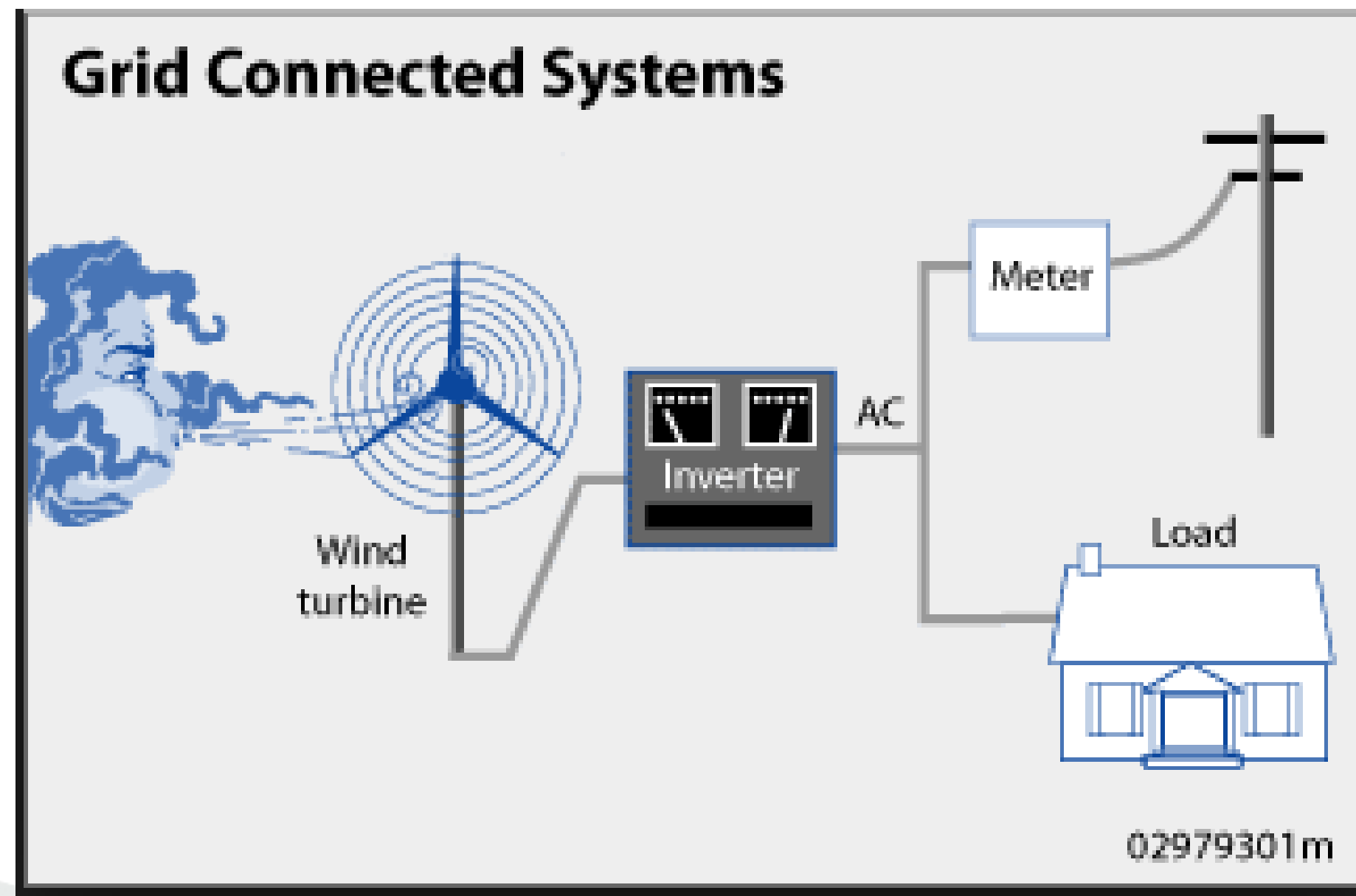
Community Energy Actions: 1) BEC and SEC





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Community Energy Actions: 2) Grid Connection



Issue is non-discrimination.

Energy Act 2016

Amendment of section 9 of ERA of 1999 11. (page 25)

(s) to have regard to the need to ensure that grid connection policy takes account of renewable energy policy, including any such policy in relation to community energy projects.”.



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Community Energy Actions: 3) Pilot Micro Gen Scheme



- Announced 31st July 2018
- Initially targeting self-consumption, solar PV, battery storage and domestic customers
- Check eligibility through <http://www.seai.ie/grants/home-grants/solar-pv/>
- Grants of up to €3,800 available
- 6 month review – to examine broadening the technologies and groups supported





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Community Energy Actions: 4) Renewable Electricity Support Scheme

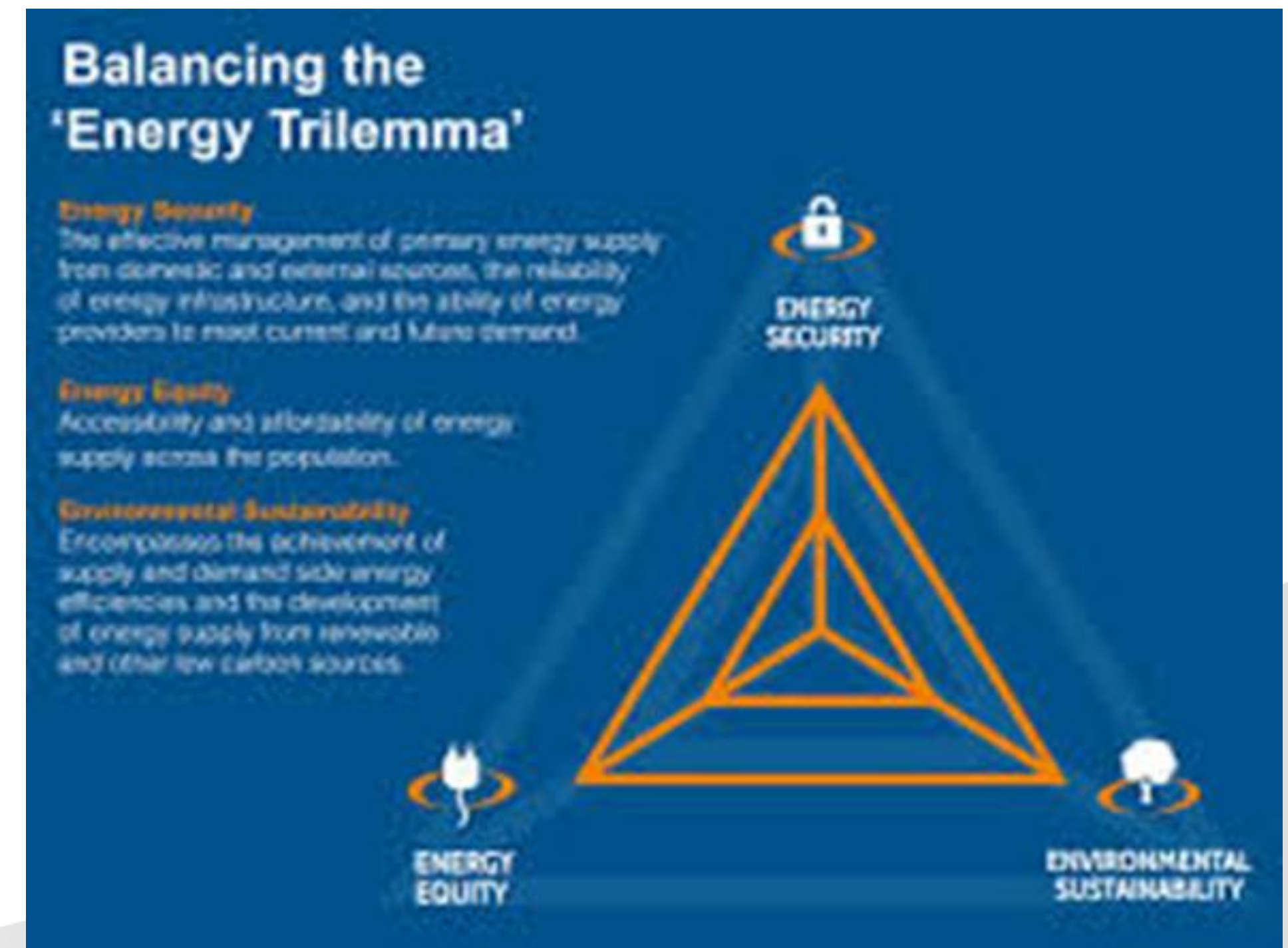




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Renewable Electricity Support Scheme

- Latest government support scheme for renewables
- Government approval of high level design – July '18
- Aim: To deliver Ireland's contribution to EU wide 2030 renewable electricity (RES-E) target
- Meet multiple other policy objectives
 - Enhancing security of supply
 - Supporting multiple technologies
- Underpinned by sound evidence base
- Enabling framework for community participation





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Renewable Electricity Support Scheme: Community Study



- Literature Review / International Experience
- Long List of policies and support measures developed
- Short list - detailed multi assessment criteria (via stakeholder interviews and workshop)
- Stakeholder workshop:

Identified barriers / solutions to community ownership and participation

50 experts across 13 different sectors including Community, Developers, Finance, Grid, Planners, Agencies, Suppliers

- Interaction with DCCA economic study
- Ranking of support policies
- Public consultation on the proposed high level design including the community support measures



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Renewable Electricity Support Scheme: Public Consultation

- 1,250 submissions
- Strong public and industry support for Community proposals
- Circa 50% of questions - community ownership/participation
- Strong public support for micro generation
- Strong support for competitive auctions but with caveats
- Strong call for increased technology diversity





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Renewable Electricity Support Scheme: Key Community Principles

- Mandatory community investment offering in every project
- Separate community category in support scheme
- Enabling framework for community energy projects – range of supports
- DCCAE now working on details



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Renewable Electricity Support Scheme: Community Journey?

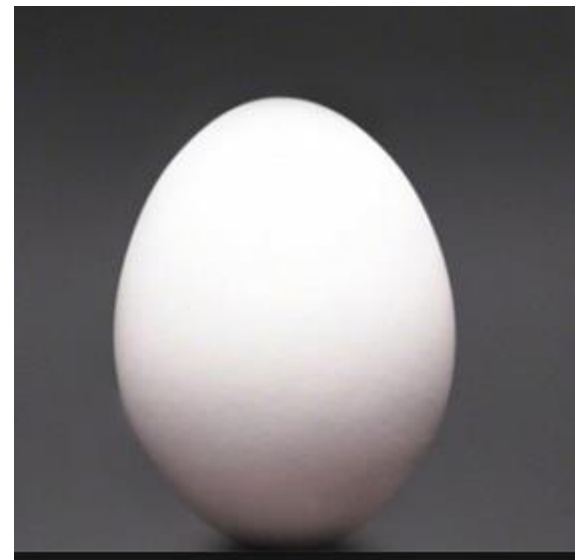




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Renewable Electricity Support Scheme: Community Journey?

- Go-to person
- Independent broker
- Information provider
- Energy expertise
- Community expertise



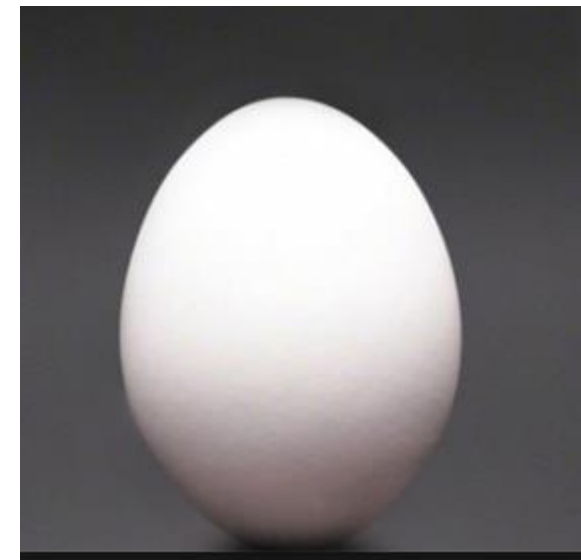
Trusted intermediary





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Renewable Electricity Support Scheme: Community Journey?



Trusted advisors

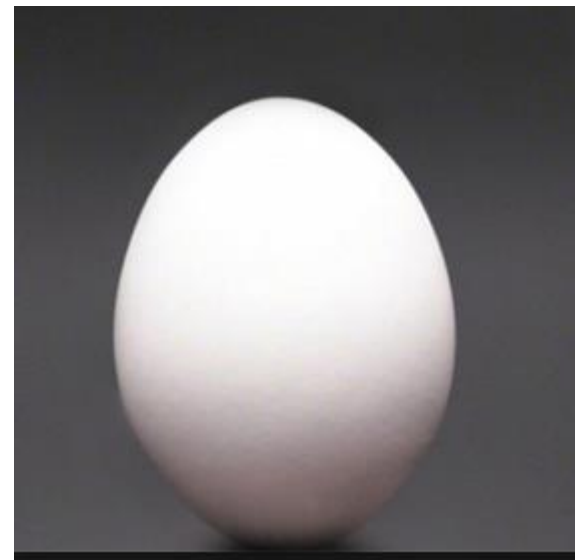


- Intermediary links to:
- Technical expertise
- Financial guidance
- Legal advice



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Renewable Electricity Support Scheme: Community Journey?



Complete jigsaw

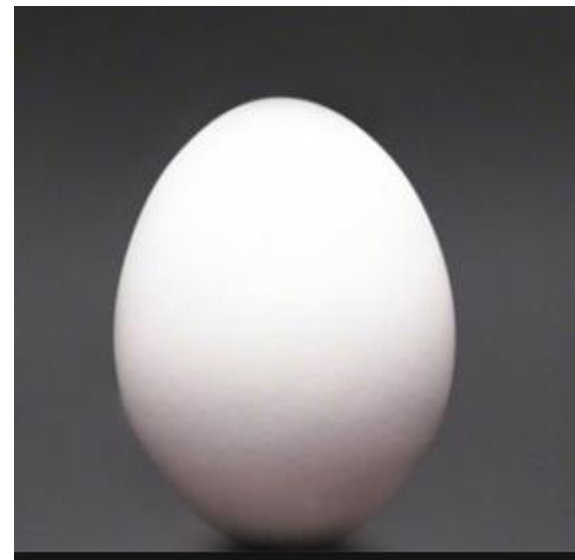
- Planning
- Grid
- Finance





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