



# Energy Co-operatives Ireland

## Building community energy networks

[energyco-ops.ie](http://energyco-ops.ie)



## Own Your Community's Renewable Energy Opportunities

- PV Solar Electricity
- Biomass
- Waste-to-Energy
- Wind
- Small Hydro

## To Better Your Community

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# Maximize your Community Benefit

## Plug in to the Co-op Network



The ability to consult with others and learn from the experience of supportive co-ops will be key to the early stages of any Renewable Energy Co-op. Energy Co-operatives Ireland (ECI) facilitates this mutual support through seminars, workshops and one-to-one communication.

ECI is recognised nationally at the highest level as the strongest representative of Renewable Energy Co-operatives in Ireland. ECI is in regular contact with Local Authorities, the SEAI and the DCCAE as we help

our network of co-ops benefit from making the most of the transition to a low carbon economy.

The Irish Co-operative Organisation Society (ICOS) is a co-operative umbrella organisation that serves and promotes commercial co-operative businesses and enterprise, across multiple sections of the Irish economy. With 120 years of experience in the co-operative sector, ICOS affiliated co-ops have an annual turnover of €14bn. There are now opportunities for all of these co-ops to get involved in the energy sector



## Renewable Energy is in Your Hands

The proposed changes to electricity generation support schemes in Ireland (RESS) could mean that communities could be central to renewable electricity generation. Community groups that are well organised and supported should find themselves front and centre of this new environment. ECI, ICOS and established energy co-operatives believe that they can offer the strongest model of community ownership for a renewable, sustainable, community centred future.

Soon, for many renewable energy projects, those that host them locally should be in a position to partially own them. That means people that live near developments could directly benefit from the income generated by their local resource: wind, water or sunlight directly—because they own some of those projects.

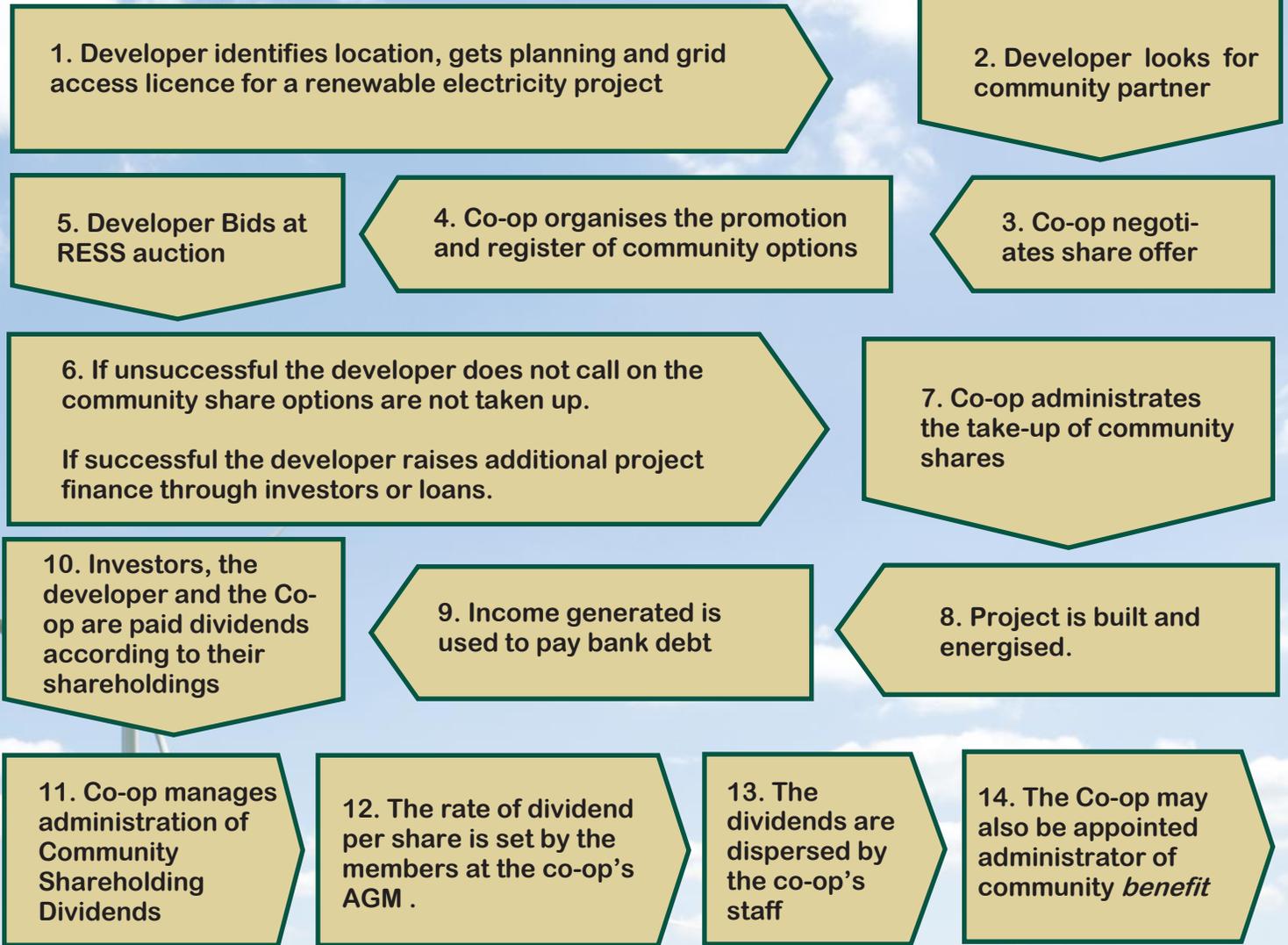
For some host communities that could mean having a shared ownership of the developments, for others, those developments could be 100% locally-owned.

What this means is that the most organised communities should be able to get the largest share of the benefits of local electricity generation. The time is NOW to prepare for the future and to decide just how much of your local energy resources you want to own.

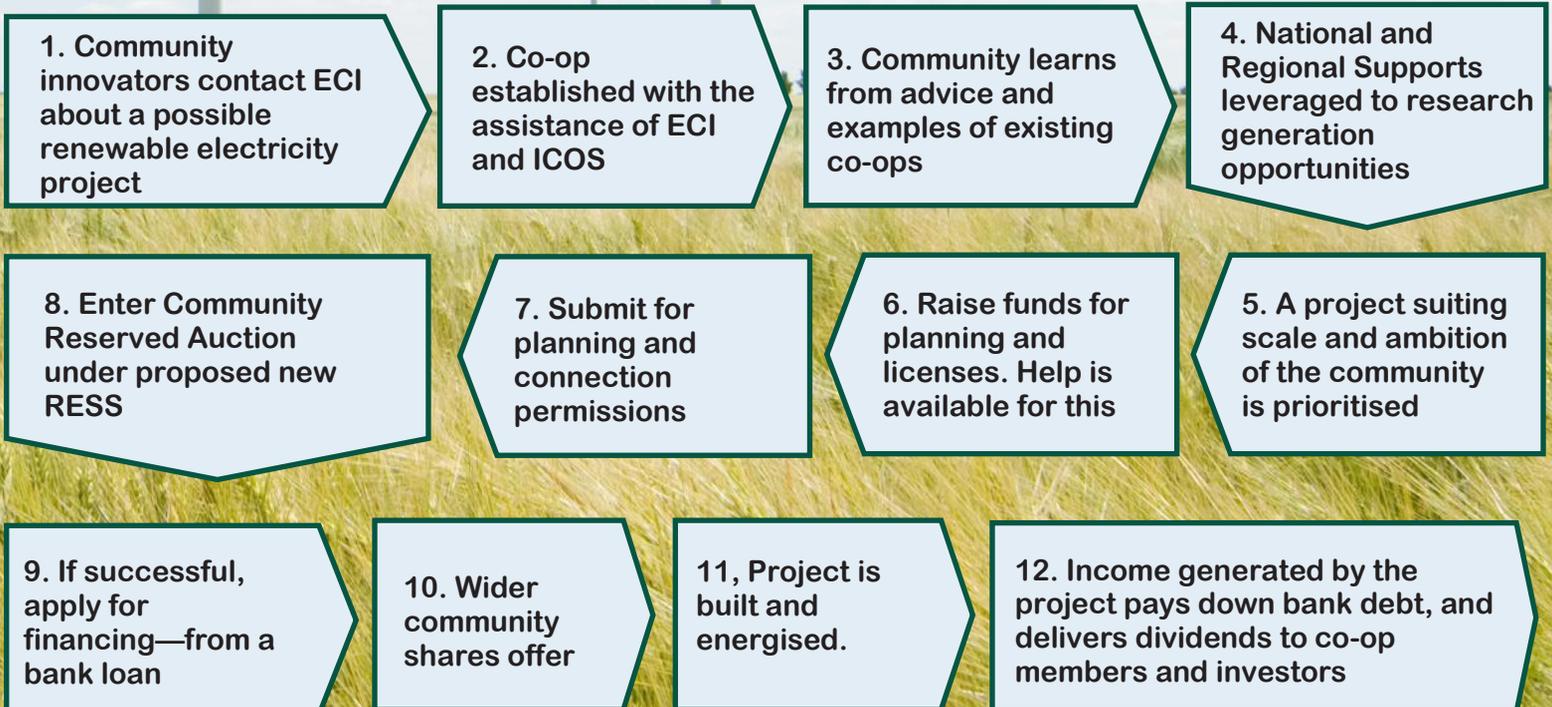


# RESS Opportunities ROAD MAP

## Developer Led Projects



## Community Led Projects





## The Co-operative Ethos.

Co-operatives are subject to less complicated regulations than limited companies. They are democratic in structure and give as much emphasis to sustainability and community building as to the generation of profits and/or benefits to their members. They benefit from their association's with other co-operatives. A co-op is significantly different from other forms of companies in a way which make it the ideal choice of business structure for community based energy generation projects.



We support co-operatives that have as wide a community membership as possible and seek to distribute benefits to the community as a whole. Co-operatives are required to have a democratic structure and should offer a membership open to all those within their defined geographical area regardless of land ownership.

Co-operatives are encouraged to offer collegial support to fellow co-ops. This has been evident in the openness of existing co-ops to share their information and experiences with newly formed groups.

## Co-operatives: the best model

The new RESS is likely to require all renewable electricity developments to have an element of community ownership. This will result in the creation of income for the

community. Wind farms have an average 25 years lifetime and can achieve payback in as little as 6-7 years, so they are very profitable. How those profits are distributed in the community has to be handled with great sensitivity.

We are confident that the co-operative structure, ethos and accountability make the co-op the ideal model for community engagement with RESS both in 100% community-owned and in developer led projects.

Co-ops are open to all residents in the defined community, with a published clear set of rules of association and a democratic control, with one vote per shareholder.

They are ideal as a structure to prevent unequal access to opportunity in the allocation of a community's benefits.

## The time to get organised is right now

In two to three years well organised communities should be selling electricity to the grid. Planning, licences, financing and construction takes 2-3 years for most projects.

That means if your community want be ready to reap the benefits of the new opportunities, you'll have to start getting ready today.

