Lessons learned from EirGrid Community Benefit

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Public Engagement Team

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Delivering a cleaner energy future

Who are EirGrid?

- We operate and develop the electricity grid

- Independent from ESB since 2006

- State-owned company that works for the benefit of all electricity users

- Plans and responds to electricity needs: now, tomorrow and for years to come

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Community
Benefit Policy

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Typical Community Benefit Scheme

Community	Sustainability	Biodiversity
Delivered through community fund with flexibility for participatory grant making initiatives.	Transform how communities think about, generate and use electricity. Delivered through retrofitting, smart tech and partnerships.	Leave a positive legacy on communities who facilitate our projects. Delivered through grass root biodiversity initiatives.

Managed by the Community Forum of stakeholders and partners, and guided by a local Community Benefit Strategy.
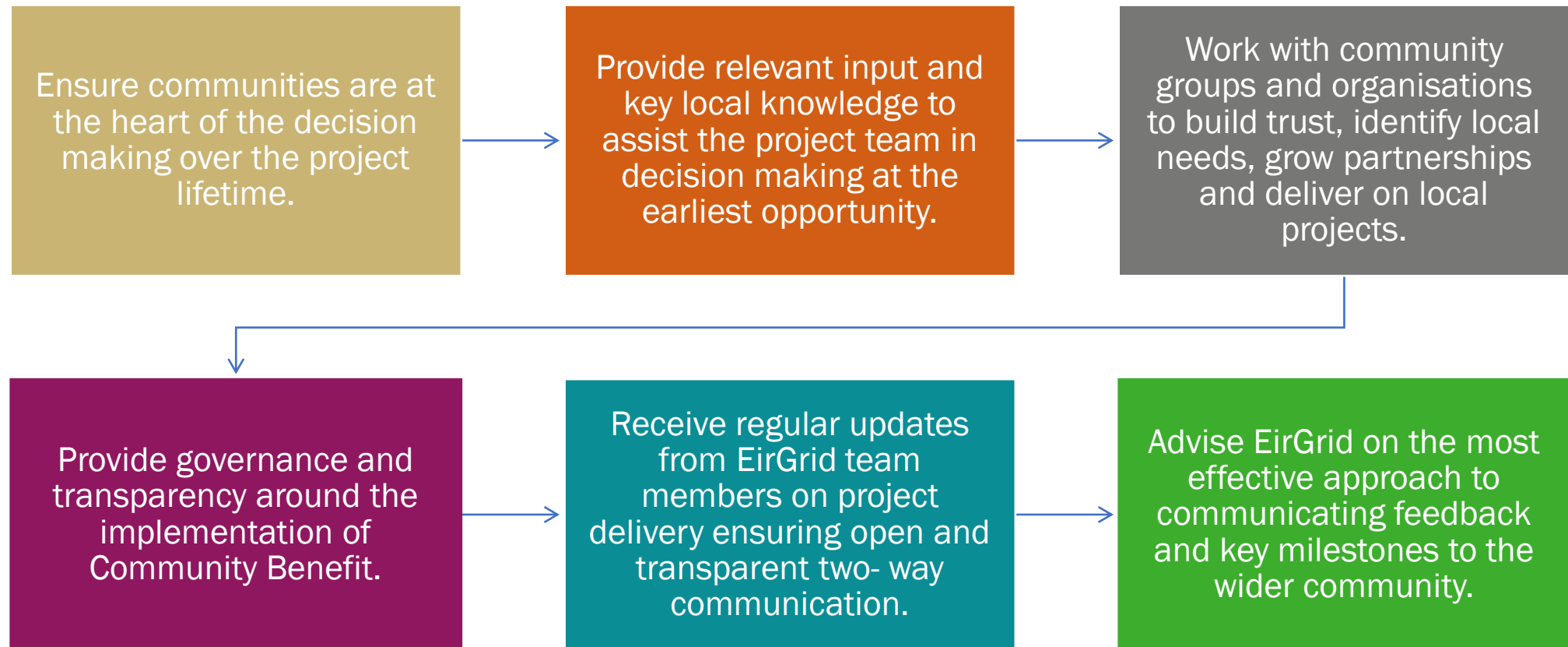
Examples of projects funded

Organisation	Funding	Purpose
Brookpark Community Enterprise LTD.	€10,000	Create/construct 3 pods comprising 6 individual offices on site
Carrigadrohid Community Playground	€33,000	Funding for development of a new playground through initial design, and planning stages
Ballinakill Community Development Ass	€40,500	Outdoor community swimming pool -the groundworks, fencing and solar panels
Knockanure GAA Club	€10,000	New pitch drainage system and carpet surface.
Macroom Senior Citizens Housing Development Ltd	€25,000	Purchase of an EV for meals on wheels delivery and services for the Elderly
Duagh Family & Community Centre Ltd	€3,896.83	Sensory room for children with autism and special needs

Community Forums

Community Forums

- Setup on Celtic Interconnector, Laois Kilkenny Reinforcement, Clashavoon Dunmanway, North Connacht and Kildare Meath Grid Upgrade

Ensure communities are at the heart of the decision making over the project lifetime.

Provide relevant input and key local knowledge to assist the project team in decision making at the earliest opportunity.

Work with community groups and organisations to build trust, identify local needs, grow partnerships and deliver on local projects.

Provide governance and transparency around the implementation of Community Benefit.

Receive regular updates from EirGrid team members on project delivery ensuring open and transparent two- way communication.

Advise EirGrid on the most effective approach to communicating feedback and key milestones to the wider community.

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From a funders perspective

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How to write a successful application

- How does your project standout from others?
- Does it capture the reader's imagination? Tell your story
- Tailor your proposal to the needs of the funder. What is it that the funder is trying to achieve?
- Show good governance structure
- Building in biodiversity
- Social inclusion
- Sustainability

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How to write a successful application

- Take time to analyse if applying for a particular grant is really the best way to fund the desired project/campaign.

- Read the grant opportunity Guidelines and Terms & Conditions carefully to make sure that your organisation qualifies.

- Write out a check list of requirements that need to be supplied with the application e.g. photos, videos, budgets, map location, Company Registration Number, Charity Registration Number, Supplier Quotation, Tax Clearance Certificates, bank details, committee structure etc.

- Make sure you have the resources and time to conduct your research. Are there any elements of the Guidelines and Terms & Conditions that you cannot adequately fulfil?

- Has your community group the capacity to deliver on the proposed project?

- Is there somebody in your organisation that has the language and creativity required to write the grant proposal or do you need some external assistance?

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Leveraging other funding streams

- EirGrid
- SEAI
- LEADER
- Town and Village Renewal
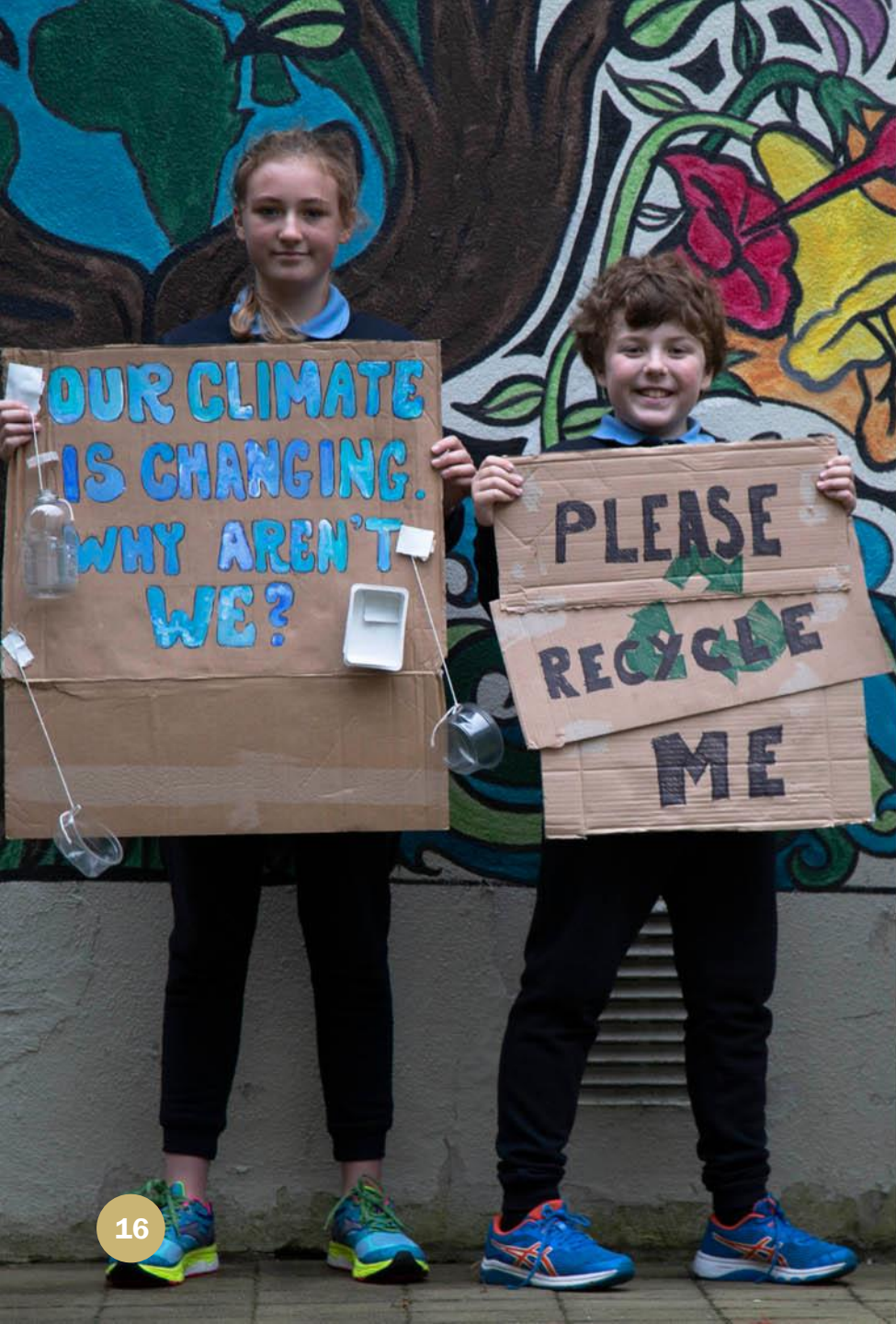- Climate Action Fund

Lessons Learned

- A good proposal is not only about articulating and presenting the project well. The evaluators will always try to see beyond the written proposal to discover the full impact of the project on the community. Therefore, applicants should try demonstrating this as much as possible in their proposal

- The clear, simple, well-presented approach works well.

- Avail of additional one-to-one support or clinics that the funder may offer.

- Attend any relevant workshops or training on how to write successful grant applications

- Endeavour to get the best value for your project/community. Collaborate with other funding bodies – if possible.

- Do not leave it until the last minute to apply – ensure the funder is aware of your project well in advance so they can work with you.

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Lessons Learned

- Many applicants don't adequately outline or break down costs. Its useful to include a table with a breakdown of costs.

- Clearly inform the funder about any relevant planning permission. In applications for capital works, it is often unclear if applicants owned the premises or had/required planning permission for development.

- Given the potential for funds to be oversubscribed, applicants should clearly demonstrate what they would prioritize and deliver if less amount given.

- Ensure you use all available tools – video, testimonials etc.

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Potential reasons for not funding

- Project located outside the relevant area.

- Insufficient detail regarding governance and delivery.

- Application deemed ineligible due to the primary request for ongoing operational cost.

- Application deemed ineligible as it was proposed by a private company.

- Insufficient community need demonstrated in line with other projects from the area.

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