

SECAD Partnership CLG

**Community Benefit Fund
Management**



SECAD  **PARTNERSHIP**

Community Benefit Fund Specialist

About SECAD

www.secad.ie

- Established in 1995, SECAD Partnership CLG is a Local Development Company located in Midleton, Co. Cork
- SECAD provides a range of innovative and effective rural development and social inclusion supports
- Team of 50+ including expertise in community engagement, community development, social enterprise, social inclusion, project management, ecology and biodiversity, area analysis, governance etc
- Local, regional & national reach - Network of Local Development Companies and linkages across Ireland

- Almost 30 years' experience of investing in sustainable development with communities
- Supporting the collaboration and networking of key stakeholders in the community, business, state, and academic sectors
- Vast knowledge of public, private and philanthropic funds
- Rural development and Social inclusion investments that could provide leverage and matching funding opportunities, adding value and impact

(e.g. LEADER, SICAP, PEIL, Tus, RSS, ESF....)



SECAD Grant Management Services

- **Community Engagement**
- **Building Collaborative Relationships**
- **Supporting small projects with big impacts**
- **Enabling large scale and legacy projects**
- **Financial and Project Reporting (ESG and SDG compliance)**



SECAD is currently working with
13 Renewable Energy
Companies



Managing 56 sites – Wind farms, Solar
farms, Infrastructure projects and
proposed offshore Wind Farms



500,000+ - Community members
have benefited from projects and
initiatives undertaken with the
support of Community Benefit
Funds



1300+ - Community groups
and Projects have been
supported



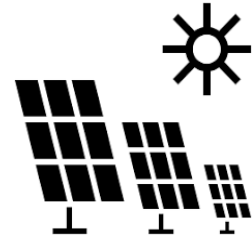
Since 2015 over 5 million -
Invested in community
projects across Ireland.



Breakdown of Community Benefit Fund projects:



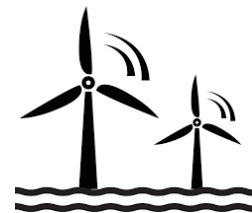
35 Wind Farms



16 Solar Farms



2 Infrastructure Funds



3 Proposed Offshore Wind Farms

2025 Community Benefit Fund Locations

Blue – ESB

Dark Green – NTR

Light Green – Amerenco

Red – Sliabh Bawn

Black - Joint venture ESB & Bord Na Mona

Yellow – EirGrid North Connacht Interconnector

Brown – Oriel/Parkwind

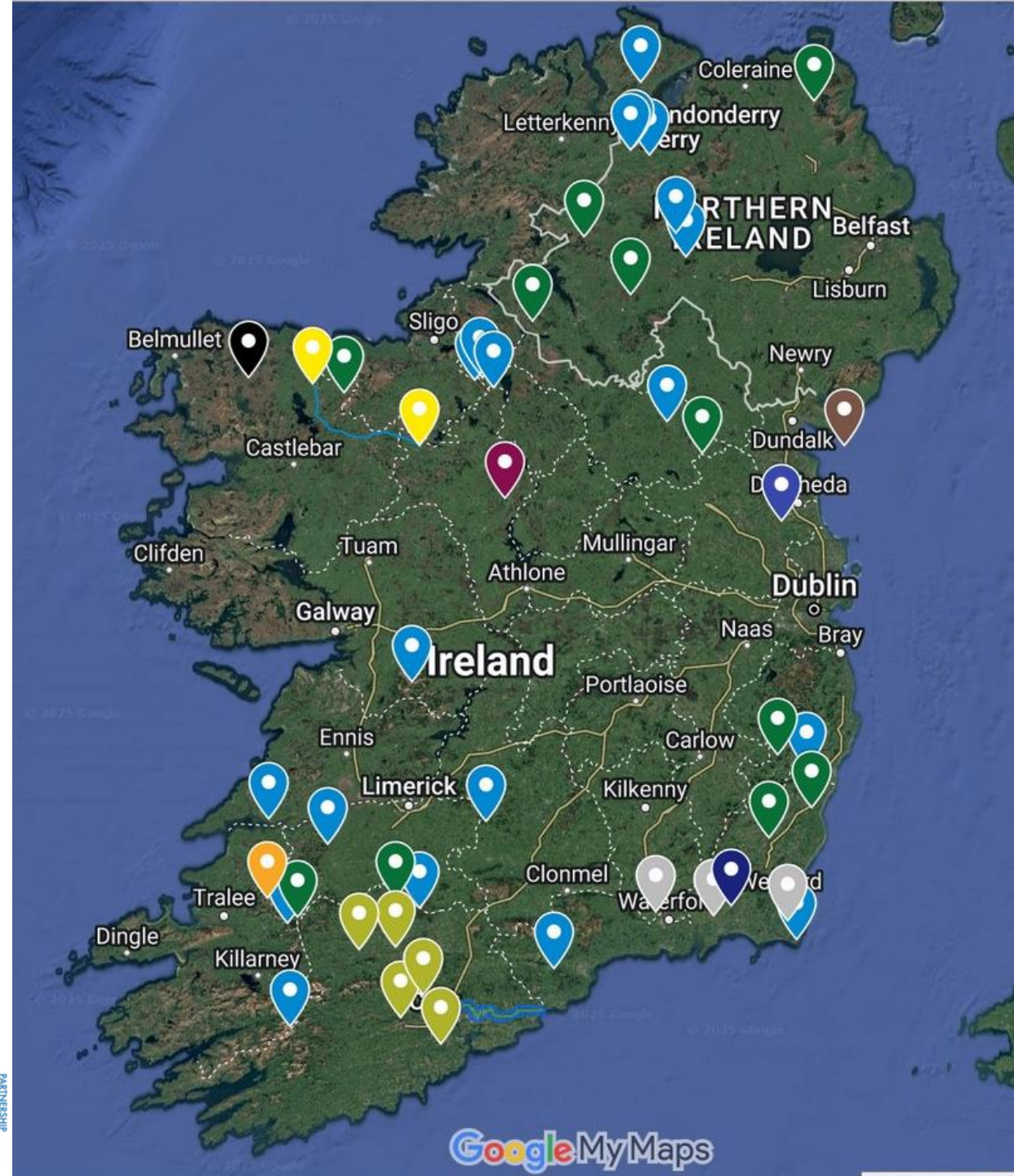
Grey – EDF

Maroon - Coillte & Bord Na Mona Sliabh Bawn

Orange – RWE

Dark blue - Vantage Energy

Blue line – EirGrid Celtic Interconnector



Community Benefit Fund Priorities

- Priorities vary depending on; developer, policies, local area needs, scale of fund etc
- Themes may include;
 - Community
 - Sustainability
 - Biodiversity
 - Outdoor recreation
 - Climate action
 - Youth, facilities and services
 - Active age, facilities and services
 - Sports Clubs, facilities and initiatives

Maximising the Benefits

- **Partnership (Fund Committee, other stakeholders)**
- **Planning (Strategy)**
- **Process (Approach)**
- **Projects (leverage, legacy and impact)**
- **Performance (Reporting)**



From Community Consultation to Fund Strategy



DESK BASED RESEARCH

POLICY REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

PREPARATION OF STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS

FUND DIVISION & PRIORITY INVESTMENTS

POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS - MATCHING FUNDS

A MEETING TO ENDORSE THE COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND STRATEGY DOCUMENT

Community Benefit Funds

? What are Community Benefit Funds

- Community Benefit Funds are made available to provide direct benefits to communities who are closest to a new renewable energy site, such as a Wind Farm or Solar Farm

? What is the purpose of a Community Benefit Fund

- The overall aim is to leave a positive legacy in the communities near the renewal energy site i.e. in the area of benefit

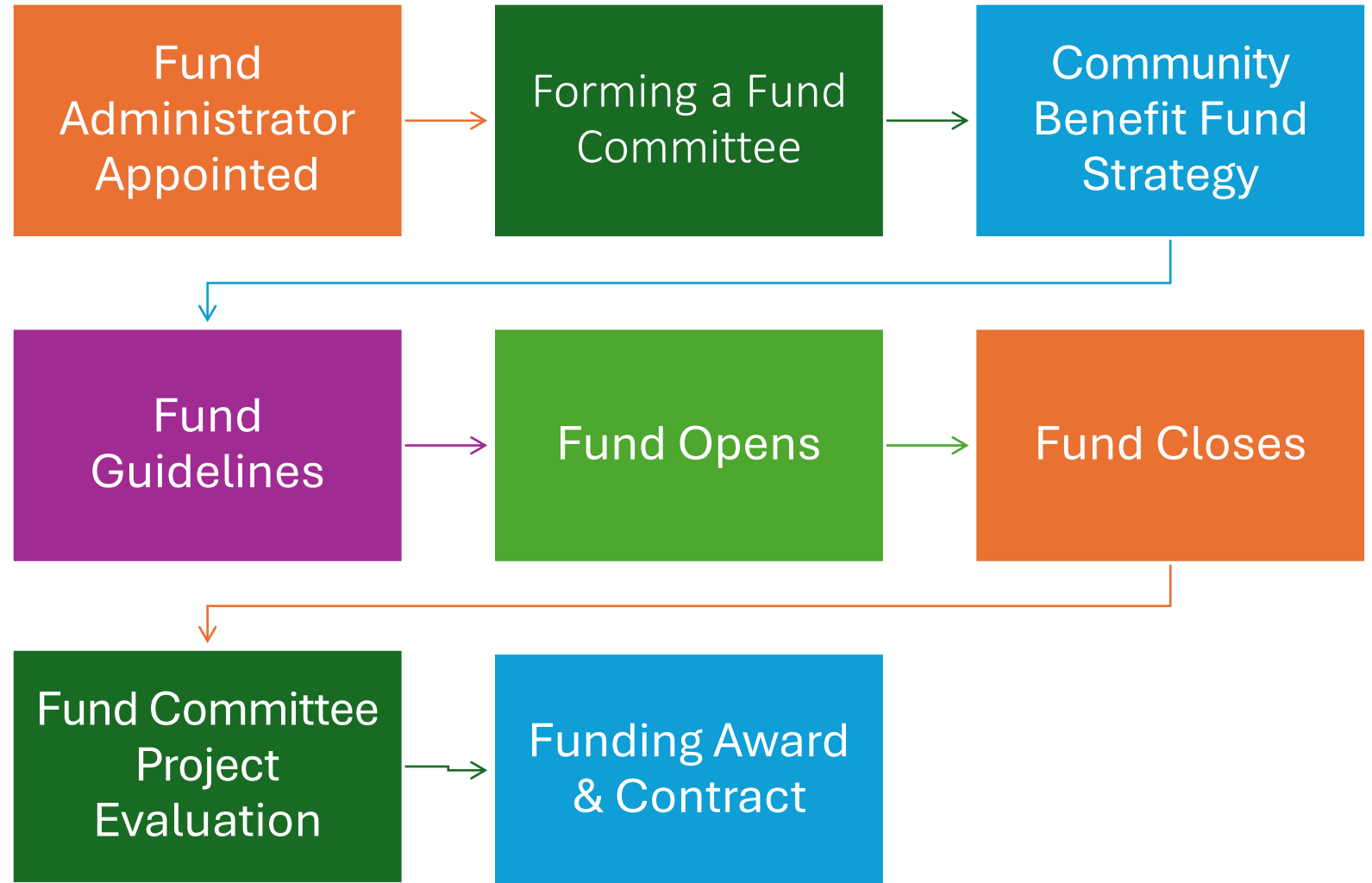
? How often are funds available

- In most cases funds are available annually through an application process, and the fund values are proportional to the scale of the energy produced

? Who is eligible to apply

- Community groups, Not for Profit Organisations and groups with Charitable Status are eligible to apply to the funds for large or small-scale projects. There is a defined 'area of benefit' agreed in advance of any fund opening e.g. up to 10km

Community Benefit Fund Process





Community Benefit Fund Specialist

Community Benefit Funds

As fund administrator SECAD has the following responsibilities

- Compliance with RESS guidelines in the case of RESS projects
- Promoting the funds with local partners, PPN's, Local Development Companies within the area of benefit and contact databases
- Fund design e.g. strategic planning, development of fund guidelines
- Forming and supporting Fund Committees
- Supporting applicants throughout the application process; one-to-one clinics, information webinars.
- Fund management e.g. fund opening and closing, due diligence checks on applications submitted.
- Evaluation of project applications (local community panels and in house panels)
- Responding to applicants i.e. successful and unsuccessful
- Issuing contracts and agreeing payment structure for successful applicants
- Processing claims for payment
- Reporting to the renewal energy companies, SEAI etc as per RESS requirements
- Completing case studies, fund reports, organising webinars to showcase and celebrate successful projects.

Community Benefit Fund Application Process

Fund reopens for year 2

Claim Stage:

Successful applicants are provided with information necessary to claim their grant amount
Assistance is given to applicants when submitting their claim
Claims are checked and verified by SECAD before payment is issued

Pre-Fund opening:

Fund Committee is set up
Fund Guidelines are prepared
Database is prepared
Application Form is prepared
Scoring Criteria agreed

Fund Opening:

The database are notified
Fund opening period 6-8 weeks
Assistance given to applicants

Fund Closing:

Due diligence process on each application
Applications scored by a Fund Committee
Fund allocated by the Fund Committee to the top scoring applicants

Applicants Notified:

Each applicant is notified with the result of their application
Successful applicants receive a contract and letter of offer
Unsuccessful applicants are encouraged to request feedback

Community Benefit Funds

Large Scale Grants V's Small-Scale Grants

A **large-scale** strategic project will maximise the benefit of the Fund and identify substantive areas of funding priority that are likely to have an enduring positive and permanent impact on the community with a lasting legacy.

E.g., significant refurbishment of a community hall, development of a walkway, sports club upgrade – Astro turf etc.

Such legacy/strategic projects may often be expensive and will need to also be supported through public funding sources.

Small scale, big impact projects - smaller and medium sized projects, such as the purchase of equipment for a Tidy Town group, a defibrillator project, a shed for community storage. These projects often transform services and community groups that already exist into something more valuable. Such projects can open up opportunities for further growth for the groups and communities that use the facilities/services.



Community Benefit Funds

What is a Multi-Annual Award?

- **A Multi Annual Award** could be considered when the funding requested by an applicant is greater than the amount of funding available in any given year. For example, if a project requests a grant of €60,000 but only €20,000 is available, a multi annual commitment of funding of €20,000 each year for 3 years could be awarded

What does this mean for a community group?

- This lump sum is a guarantee of funds over a number of years. If a group requires bridging finance to complete the project your group can now take this offer of a multi annual fund award to a social finance organisation *such as [Clann Credo](#) and [Community Finance Ireland](#) who can offer you an up-front loan based on this offer.

**Similar supports may be available through your local Credit Union and banking institutions.*

How will a contract be structured?

- Your contract will state the full amount awarded to your group along with the term (number of years) of the contract and the amount payable each year to the group, during the term of the contract.

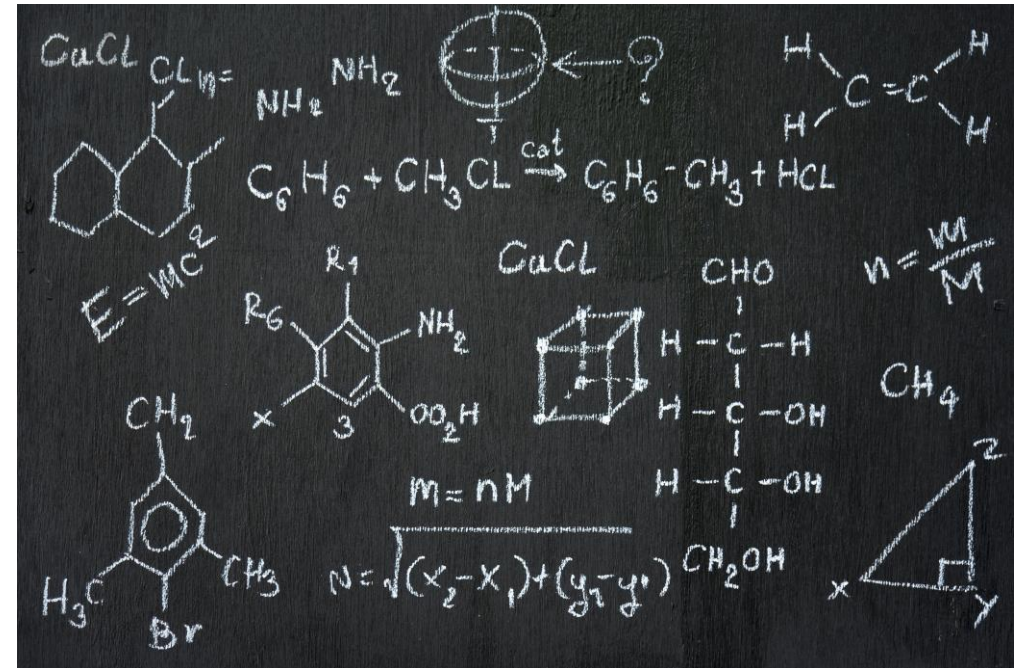
Case Studies

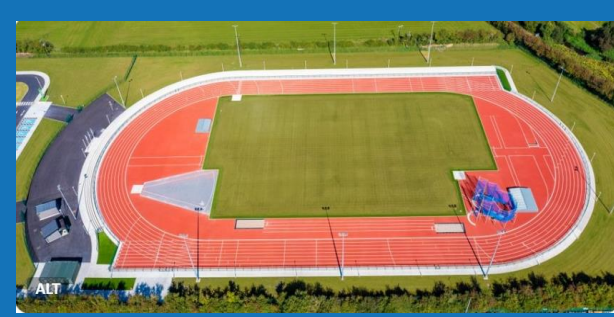
Large Scale Projects:

Newcastle West Regional Athletics Hub
Ballyfad Community Centre

Smaller Scale Projects:

Hazelwood Tennis Club
Ballyhea Community Childcare
Croghan Barrack Community project





NEWCASTLE WEST REGIONAL ATHLETICS HUB PROJECT

💡 What was the idea

A steering committee was set up in January 2015 to plan and develop a fully equipped 400m, eight lane athletics track for the athletic community in Newcastle West. The project received huge support from schools both primary and secondary, the athletics clubs, the disability sector, community games areas and the general public. A large area of County Limerick and part of North Cork and North Kerry will benefit from having the facility .

👑 Planning for the future

The project which received full cross-party support from local politicians and Limerick City and County Council has gone through a process over 8 years. The physical development of the project which began in June 2021 was completed in 2023, with the official opening in September of that year.

How has this funding made a difference?

The group were successful in their application for funding from the Wind Farm Community Funds, this along with additional sources of funding permitted the project to progress.

'The steering committee who went to source and secure funding towards the cost of the development would like to thank SECAD who administer The Wind Farm Community Funds on behalf of the E.S.B, this fund provided us with an opportunity to seek out part of the funding required for our project'

'The multi annual commitment from the fund along with the flexible support in relation to contract dates, has taken huge pressure off our committee'

'We would like to thank all the staff at SECAD for all their kind words, help and support and for sticking with us on this very long journey.'



Wind Farm
Grouselodge Wind Farm



Amount Awarded

€60,000 commitment, €6,000 per annum for a duration of 10 years

Jim Galvin– Newcastle West Regional Athletics Hub



"It was a pleasure to experience the professional and warm way in which the staff of SECAD have worked with us throughout the project, the pandemic and everything else we met along the way"



Key Users

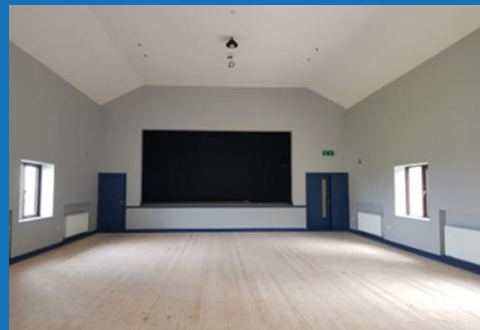
- Athletics Clubs
- Primary & Secondary Schools
- The Disability Sector
- Recreational Users
- Competitively Trained Athletes

Linked to Sustainable Development Goals



Project Financing

- Wind Farm Community Funds
- Large Scale Sport Infrastructure Fund
- Sports Capital Programme, Hinterland Fund
- Limerick City and County Council, JP McManus Benevolent Fund
- Local Government and Heritage, Department of Housing



BALLYFAD COMMUNITY CENTER PROJECT

💡 What was the idea

It had been a long journey for the group, who came together in 2003 to plan ahead with the option of refurbishing an old 1800`s schoolhouse in very bad repair or knock down the old building and replace it with a new modern style hall.

👥 Challenges

Many obstacles had to be cleared including planning permission and financing. Financing a project of this size was a major concern for a small community. However, the committee forged ahead, and planning permission was granted by Wexford County Council in 2015 for the construction of a new hall and funding secured through the Raheenleagh Wind Farm community fund along with additional sources of funding.



How has this funding made a difference?

‘The ESB who fund the Raheenleagh Wind Farm Community Fund showed a keen interest in the development of a new hall.’

‘We are glad to say our application for funding was successful and the grant aid we received greatly assisted us to proceed with our project. Along with additional sources of funding and hard work by community volunteers we have now completed the project and made the hall available to the community in the area’

‘Our New Community Hall will be the focal meeting place and will serve well to keep the community together and the opportunity for all interested groups to come together and enjoy their leisure time in a modern comfortable facility.’



Wind Farm
Raheenleagh Wind Farm



Amount Awarded

€94,800 commitment, €7,900 per annum for a duration of 12 years

Myles Carroll – Ballyfad Hall Committee



“We appreciate the funding we received from the Raheenleagh Wind Farm Community Fund and also the help and assistance we received from SECAD staff in relation to queries we had during our application process”



Key Users

Junior and Leaving Cert After School Study Group.
Mindfulness group with sound & music.
Ballyfad ICA.

Ballyfad Tidy Village Group.
CEP Person (Wexford CC)..
Kilanerin Ladies Football AGM.
Gorey Youth Needs.

Coolgreany Drama Group.
Kilanerin Ballyfad Community Development Association (KBCDA)

Linked to Sustainable Development Goals



Project Financing

Raheenleagh Wind Farm Fund, Wexford County Council, Parish Committees, Amenity & Arts grants, Donations, Fundraisers



HAZELWOOD TENNIS CLUB PROJECT

💡 What was the idea

Hazelwood Tennis Club has been in existence since 1961. The Club has more than 100 members from the local area. If Hazelwood tennis Club was able to improve their second court, they would be able to run competitions, hold blitzes and offer more lessons for the local schools.

👤 Planning for the future

Hazelwood Tennis Club has two tennis courts, one court was re-surfaced in 2015. There is great interest in tennis in the local area, but the group were constrained by the lack of facilities. The proposed project was to resurface the second court which had become unplayable, to the same standard as the first court, enabling the club to host competitions and increasing the number of people using the facility.

🌐 How has this funding made a difference?

The group undertook a major re-development programme and gratefully received funding from the Castlepook Wind Farm Community Fund for new seating and equipment. The Committee, again with the help of funding from the Castlepook Wind Farm, started on the next round of developments to resurface the second court and as a result membership has grown. The club for the first time ever were able to field a team for the Munster Winter League. The team did remarkably well, and this success locally is encouraging new members. This has had a massive impact on local children who want to get involved in a successful club. 'We hosted the first ever Summer Cup Competition in Hazelwood Tennis Club recently. In order to host a competition you need to have two courts, which we now have'

 **Wind Farm**
Castlepook Wind Farm Community Fund

 **Amount Awarded**
€22,500 commitment, awarded over four fund years

Niamh Kenny- Hazelwood Tennis Club

"The assistance from SECAD and the Community Benefit Fund has transformed our little club and given it a new lease of life. Many thanks to all involved"

Key Users

Tennis has experienced a significant boost as one of the few sports which people could play towards the end of the Covid-19 restrictions. The membership of Hazelwood Tennis Club has doubled this year as a result of the increased interest and in particular because of the new facilities which we can now offer. We have recently started a new round of lessons and have approximately 70 people participating 50 of which are young people and children'

Linked to Sustainable Development Goals



 **Project Financing**
Castlepook Wind Farm
LEADER Funding
Local Authority Grants
A Bridging Finance Loan



BALLYHEA COMMUNITY CHILDCARE PROJECT



Wind Farm

Castlepook Wind Farm Community Fund



Amount Awarded

€10,000+ commitment, awarded over two funds

Michelle Barrett – Ballyhea Preschool

“The building is projected to be in use for the foreseeable future and will support generations of preschool children from the community of Ballyhea and its surrounding area’s2



Key Users

Children from aged 2 – 10 years

Linked to Sustainable Development Goals



Project Financing

NTR Boolard & Rathnacally Fund

ESB Castlepook Wind Farm

Local Fundraising

Sponsorship Events

Online Donations

Flag Days

Raffles

Community Events

Community Financing

What was the idea

Ballyhea Childcare Limited is an organisation created by parents for the parents of the area, for the purpose of providing a range of Quality Childcare facilities. It is a Community Childcare Organisation catering for children from 2 years 10 months to Primary School age. The preschool had been operating out of a prefab for over 14 years. The recommended life span of a prefab is only 10 years. The board of management felt that it was imperative to create a more suitable setting for the preschool staff and children.

Planning for the future

Ballyhea Preschool had been located on a prefab adjacent to Ballyhea National School for 13 years ago. As the prefab aged repairs became more frequent and costly. The constant upkeep of the prefab was a financial drain on the funds of the preschool. As the committee had been saving money in order to update the preschool setting, plans were drawn up and planning permission sought and granted from Cork County Council to replace the prefab with a new block building structure. After much investigation and information gathering, it was decided as a committee that a new build would be more beneficial in the long run and would be a much more suitable environment for the much-loved preschool.



SECAD Community Engagement Services
Community Industry Partnerships

How has this funding made a difference?

“It is with great comfort that we can say our preschool is now at the standard to service the Ballyhea community and beyond for generations to come. Ballyhea Preschool offers not only employment and local preschool places to the wider community, but it also offers its place in the development of preschool children on our doorstep. It is a service we are proud to be able to continue after the previous prefabs were deemed no longer fit for purpose”

CROGHAN BARRACK COMMUNITY PROJECT



Wind Farm

Raheenleagh Wind Farm Community Fund



Amount Awarded

€22,500+ commitment over several fund years

Mary Graham – Community Member

“We are so grateful to SECAD for their continued support in funding for our little Community Project with the big impact. Not only their financial support, but in so many other ways like their friendly and helpful staff, who help in guiding us through our application and understanding some of our challenges. Their communication is also a key factor is the ease of applying for and getting funding for grants”



Key Users

Community members, young and old

Linked to Sustainable Development Goals



Project Financing

Wind Farm Community Funds



🔍 What was the idea

The group are a very small Community group seated at the foot of Croghan Mountain. In 2012 some residents took it upon themselves to commence the clean up of the common ground area at Croghan Barrack. This 0.8ha of ground was used as a dumping ground for years and it lies on the edge of the river Bann which eventually finds its way to the Slaney and into the sea. The group had to find funding and hence created the Croghan Barrack Community Project. They aim to keep this area in its natural environmental state and to create a space of natural beauty for all.



Planning for the future

The group have planted wildflower seeds and native trees on this piece of ground and continue to be challenged with many deer who have eaten a lot of the trees. Last year they decided to fence part of the area to create living structures and a small forest of native trees. The group have received various environmental awards from Wexford County Council for their efforts. They take pride in their small Community and have many people visiting, especially during lockdown. They feel they have inspired many and created a space for people to reconnect with nature. The group were then seeking to create natural living Willow structures and also to carve some structures from some cypress trees that have died



How has this funding made a difference?

“Without this support we would not have been able to carry out some of the works that have enhanced not only our community but the environment. The introduction of the beehive and the natural willow structures, the planting of native trees and wildflowers has enhanced and introduced so much more to our natural habitat and environment. We very much appreciate this and look forward to your continued support”

SECAD PARTNERSHIP



**SECAD Community
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Community Industry Partnerships

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www.secad.ie/managing-community-benefit-funds

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