



Energising communities in rural Ireland

Community Funds - Republic of Ireland
Annual Review 2016/17

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Foreword

At SSE Airtricity we believe in making a positive difference. That's why as well as promoting green energy generation, we believe the communities where we locate our wind farms should benefit too.

Since 2008, our business has been building and operating wind farms in Ireland: providing clean, renewable energy; investing in local jobs and businesses; and supporting community projects. Over the years it has become clear that a large part of our success is down to the relationships we have built and grown in the communities close to our projects.

We strongly believe in playing our part by contributing to the social, environmental and economic well-being of communities surrounding all of our wind farms. One of the most important aspects of developing and operating wind farms is working with the local people to deliver real benefits for their communities which we do through our Community Fund programme. Our funds have grown in numbers, status and impact, with SSE Airtricity providing grants for important and valuable projects near our onshore wind developments.

The Community Funds aim to support, energise and help invigorate these communities. From rain water harvesting to energy efficient football pitch lighting and the provision of 'meals on wheels' for elderly individuals, SSE Airtricity granted over €700,000 in 2016/17 to help support close to 240 different projects in the Republic of Ireland. The case studies in this report show the difference those excellent projects and initiatives have made to these local communities.

Our commitment is to support the people who live near our wind farms and to make sure the communities are able to maximise the opportunities the funds offer. We hope this report will help show that commitment as well as provide inspiration to other local communities and groups seeking to develop new projects.

We look forward to seeing more valuable community projects being supported in 2017/18 and beyond.



Mark Ennis CBE
SSE Ireland Chairman



Stephen Wheeler
SSE Ireland Managing Director



Introduction to SSE Airtricity's Community Funds

SSE Airtricity is the Republic of Ireland's largest provider of wind power. The SSE Airtricity Community Fund provides voluntary community funding to support energy efficiency and sustainability projects for community groups near SSE Airtricity's wind farms across the Republic of Ireland.

All communities within a 20km radius of the wind farms are eligible to apply for the funds, however priority is given to community groups located within a 5km vicinity. The fund is paid out annually, starting one year after the wind farm starts producing electricity. By providing this funding, SSE Airtricity seeks to enable local regeneration through community-led economic, social and environmental development.

In 2016/17, the SSE Airtricity Community Fund awarded over €700,000 to community groups and supported 247 projects in the Republic of Ireland. By the end of March 2017¹, SSE Airtricity had awarded over €5m across the country and supported a total of 2,140 community projects.

The size of each Community Fund is calculated based on the total amount and value of electricity produced at the wind farm each year. This means that during particularly windy years, the Community Fund will be larger. The SSE Airtricity Community Fund is only paid for wind farms wholly owned by SSE Airtricity.

€714,090

Community Funds granted in 2016/17

€2,366,595

Total value of Community Fund projects in 2016/17

67,660

Beneficiaries from projects funded in 2016/17

114

Projects funded within 5km of SSE's wind farms in 2016/17

51

New community groups received funding in 2016/17

€5,042,957

Community Funds granted since 2008

Examples of projects funded include:

- Insulation and double glazing for schools, soccer clubs and community halls
- Energy efficient pitch lighting for sports clubs and sports halls
- Composters for community projects
- Replacement of windows and doors
- Installation of solar lighting
- Rainwater harvesting systems
- Installation of an energy efficient electric heating solution
- Carbon monoxide alarms
- 'Meals on wheels' and transport services for local senior citizens

¹SSE Airtricity's community funds are awarded in line with SSE's financial reporting year. This report covers grants made in financial year 2016/17 which runs from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017. No grants made after 31 March 2017 are included within this report.

Voices from the community

Investing in community assets, facilities and people helps support community cohesion, rural regeneration and overall well-being. The success of the projects supported by SSE Airtricity's Community Funds rely on the dedication of local community members who volunteer their time to work with SSE Airtricity to make them a reality.

247

Community projects supported in 2016/17



2,140

Community projects supported since 2008



"We are a rural drama group made up of members from all walks of life and age groups. SSE Airtricity has provided such wonderful support in our area and for our group, enabling us to provide a social and cultural outlet for neighbouring areas as well as our own. We called the group 'The Windmill Players' drama group in honour of the Kingsmountain wind turbines because they have helped our club so much and are a real landmark for the community."

Jacinta Gormley
The Windmill Players Drama Group

Powering creativity

'The Windmill Players' is a drama group based in Templeboy which received funding from the Kingsmountain and Dunneill Community Fund in 2016/17 for energy efficient stage lighting.

Transforming community services

Coiste Halla Baile Mhuirne in the Gaeltacht Mhúscraí, West Cork, is a community hall attached to the local parish and local primary school. The hall received funds from the Coomacheo and Curragh Community Fund in 2016/17 for new energy efficient windows and doors.

"We were delighted to receive funding from SSE Airtricity. Through the installation of triple glazed windows, we greatly improved the energy efficiency of our community hall which has lowered our bills and brought about a much more comfortable meeting place for everyone in the area to enjoy. Without the assistance of the community fund, we would not have been able to achieve such a dramatic change in such a short period of time."

Conchúr Ó'Luasa
Coiste Halla Baile Mhuirne



"I'm fortunate to have a job that allows me to meet so many passionate and interesting people. The best part is definitely getting out from behind the desk to award the funds to successful groups, and meeting community leaders who make projects a reality. It is lovely to see the final result when I come back to the area the following year and hear what impact it has made to those living there. Over so many years, I've really got to know the people in the communities and it's obvious what the funds mean to them."

Anne Reynolds
SSE Airtricity Community Development Officer

"Living and working in Templeboy gives me a unique insight into how much the local funding has helped the community. One particular project which really stood out was the upgrade of the Templeboy Pastoral Council building where the presentation of the community funds to successful groups is held each year. This is an important building and a focal point in the area, dating back as far as 1876. The funding facilitated a number of energy efficiency measures which I am sure will add to the longevity of the building and the enjoyment of the award ceremony next year."

Martin Burns
SSE Onshore Wind Site Operator



"I had the pleasure of being the photographer for the Meentycat Community Fund awards ceremony and the annual Meentycat Sponsored Walk. As a local myself, I really enjoyed meeting the various groups, hearing about what projects they are undertaking in the area and walking with the community around the wind farm to raise funds for worthy causes. The positivity and happiness of both days really shone through in the photos. I was proud to be part of such a fun-filled community day."

Clive Wasson
Photographer for the 2016 Meentycat Community Fund and Meentycat Sponsored Walk



Going green

Energy and the environment

SSE Airtricity encourages applications for energy efficiency measures as a way to help communities benefit from the funds over the longer term. By granting funds to upgrade community facilities, the initial investment goes further to reduce both financial and environmental costs.

€505,660

granted for energy efficiency projects in 2016/17

This year many applications came in to improve the energy efficiency performance of sporting facilities and community buildings. As the impact of these measures on energy bills materialise, community groups receive a lasting benefit which allows them to invest their energy and resources in what really matters. Funds have gone towards projects like the replacement of old doors and windows and the installation of double glazing, insulation, efficient lighting and heating.

Although energy efficiency projects continued to be the focus for community grant funding in 2016/17, with approximately 71% of the total funding granted for this category of project, other environmentally-focussed community initiatives also received funding. These included 124 projects like the installation of solar lighting and rainwater harvesting systems, ecological activities and education days at schools, and the upgrading of nature walkways.

Community Employment Childcare Network (CECN)

Received funds from Cavan and
Monaghan Community Fund

CECN is a community employment project which provides opportunities for local people to gain employment in childcare through skills modules and training. The group employs two full-time employees, 66 part-time employees and has 24 volunteers, all from the local community. In 2016/17, the group received funding towards cavity and wall insulation for their training rooms and offices.

"CECN is very much a focal point of the Cavan community. The training rooms are used by teachers and students when undertaking computer training, course preparation skills and job seeking skills. Before we received funding, it definitely wasn't a very comfortable environment to learn in! Such vital improvements ensures volunteers and participants remain warm during the winter months, while reducing noise levels from the main road outside and allowing students to concentrate on the lessons at hand."

Sheila Traynor
Supervisor at CECN



Dunmanway Community Garden

Received funds from Coomatalin Community Fund

Dunmanway Community Garden in Co. Cork was opened in 2013 with funding from Safe Food Ireland and Healthy Food for All as a project to transform a piece of waste land in the Dunmanway social housing estate of Tonafora into a garden for the whole community. The project has continued to grow and is now used by over 5,000 people in the local community. To support the development, economic and environmental sustainability of the project, the Coomatalin Community Fund helped fund the installation of energy efficient solar power garden lights in 2016/17.

Photo: Dunmanway Community Garden Day, 2016

Bright futures

Education and development

Many of the energy efficiency measures funded by the SSE Airtricity Community Fund go towards upgrading older school buildings. Investing the funds in this way means the schools save money over the long-term, allowing the cost savings to be directed instead towards investing in what really matters: education and the development of young people.

A total of 36 schools across the Republic of Ireland were awarded funds to improve their facilities in 2016/17, totaling just over €160,000. This will generate a substantial reduction in carbon emissions as well as a decrease in costs for the institutions over many years to come from reduced energy bills, with immediate benefits like warmer classrooms for pupils too. Many of the schools receive funding from the wind farms close to them over a number of years, funding continued upgrades and bigger transformational projects.

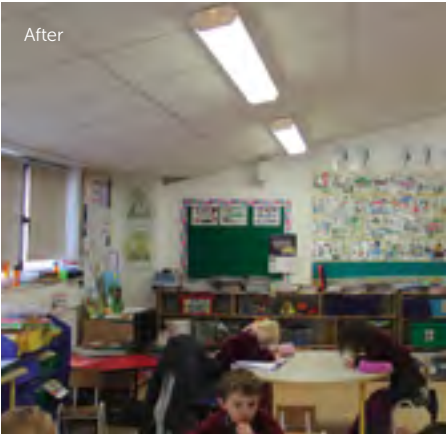
€161,807

granted to schools in 2016/17

Athea National School

Received funds from Athea Community Fund

Athea National School has approximately 150 pupils and is located in the village of Athea, Co. Limerick. The school's old roof was made of a thin sheet of aluminium so, during 2016/17, the school successfully applied for funding from the Athea Wind Farm Community Fund to install suspended ceilings into each classroom. By replacing the old roof with a fortified insulated roof, the sound of rain and wind was reduced by about 23%, meaning teachers no longer need to use microphones to teach each class. The insulation also helps retain heat, keeping students warm during lessons and reducing energy bills over time, allowing the school to spend its budget on other valuable projects. In 2016/17 the school received further funding to complete the project and install new draft-proof doors.



St Fintan's National School

Received funds from Richfield Community Fund

St Fintan's National School in Co. Wexford is a co-educational primary school in the heart of Mayglass, Bridgetown. The school was built in 1932, with a new building added in 1987 but with limited upgrades since then. The Richfield Community Fund provided funding in 2016/17 to help build a porch area surrounding the main door and entrance to the school building.

"The old door swung open and closed during windy weather, disturbing students during class and allowing the rain and cold to enter during the colder season. The upgrade ensures heating is conserved and pupils are not exposed to the elements – reducing sickness as well as energy bills!"

Bernadette Leahy
Principal, St Fintan's National School



Power for good

Community services

At the core of a healthy and thriving community are the robust relationships between individuals and the community groups built and maintained by active community members. Wide benefits including community cohesion and well-being are gained from strong community assets, facilities and services.

Recognising this, SSE Airtricity has supported a range of community groups beyond funding energy efficiency projects. A key theme for funding in 2016/17 was supporting the most vulnerable in the community, particularly through the enhancement of community care services for the elderly by funding community transport, the purchase of carbon monoxide alarms and providing 'meals on wheels' services.



Daily 'meals on wheels' delivery from Comhlacht Tithe agus Forbairt an tSuláin Teoranta

€101,904

granted for social projects in 2016/17

Comhlacht Tithe agus Forbairt an tSuláin Teoranta

Received funds from Coomacheo and Curragh Community Fund

Comhlacht Tithe agus Forbairt an tSuláin Teoranta provides services in Gaeltacht Mhúscraí in Co. Cork to improve the quality of life for older people and people with additional needs, and assist them with independent living in their community. The service collects people each day from their doorstep and brings them to Ionad Lae for a meal and social activities and, for those who are house bound, a hot meal is delivered to their home. The group's transport service also supports trips to the post office and other journeys. In 2016/17, the group received a grant from Coomacheo Wind Farm Community Fund for the purchase of a new bus, helping ensure this essential facility and its services are maintained for so many local people.

2015 Meentycat Sponsored Walk

Received funds from Meentycat Community Fund

The 2016 Meentycat Sponsored Walk in Co. Donegal was supported by the Meentycat Community Fund for the ninth consecutive year. The annual event is organised by SSE Airtricity and in 2016/17 helped support over 40 community groups from areas including Ballybofey, Cloghan, Convoy, Curragh, Drumkeen, Letterkenny, Stranorlar and the Finn Valley. In September 2016, over 760 local people walked the 15km route through the rolling landscape of SSE Airtricity's Meentycat and Culliagh Wind Farms. The groups fundraise to take part, and raised just under €50,417 for their local community projects. The Meentycat Community Fund then topped-up the fundraising by an additional €48,099. A further €56,508 from the Meentycat Community Fund was awarded between 20 worthy and forward-thinking community projects in 2016/17.



Photo: Walkers at the Meentycat Sponsored Walk
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Generating activity

Sports and recreation

Investment in sports and recreation continued to be a popular theme with local communities applying for the community funds throughout 2016/17. SSE Airtricity works alongside local groups to provide necessary funding and guidance where possible to help keep clubs running and benefit as many people as possible.

There was a wide variety of sports and recreation applications, from significant facility renovations to smaller requests to upgrade community sports halls and outdoor pitches. The 69 successful sports club projects in 2016/17 had a strong focus on maximising the impact of investments received, aiming to increase sports inclusion by enabling facilities to stay open throughout the year, encouraging new participation and increasing access for those with additional needs.



Photo: Thomas O'Brien, SSE Airtricity (left) and Boyd Robinson (right) with the the Letterkenny RFC U10s

Letterkenny Rugby Club

Received funds from Meentycat Community Fund

Letterkenny Rugby Club provides sporting activities for young people in north east Donegal, with the club facilities used by a wide range of other groups including the canoeing club, the athletics club and the drama society. Due to the high volume of users each day, the club decided to install a sewage treatment system and applied to the Meentycat Wind Farm Community Fund in 2016/17 for support. The club was granted funds and the project aimed to improve facilities as well as protect public health and the environment. Over the years SSE Airtricity has also provided funds for energy efficiency lighting, cavity and wall insulation.

€211,674

granted to sports clubs in 2016/17

Clondrohid Community Recreation Centre

Received funds from Coomacheo and Curragh Community Fund

The Clondrohid Community Recreation Centre in Co. Cork aims to provide a facility that can be used all year round to promote social inclusion and healthier living for groups of all ages within the local area. In 2016/17, the centre received funding from Coomacheo and Curragh Community Fund for a 'ride on' lawnmower to cut the pitch grass during all seasons. This is the fifth consecutive year the centre received funds, with previous grants supporting a new astroturf pitch and running track as well as energy efficient outdoor lighting.

"SSE Airtricity's Community Fund has helped us become a more sustainable and environmentally conscious group over the last few years. We have noticed a marked reduction in our energy bills which has allowed us to redirect those savings to address other needs within the recreation centre."

Noel McDonagh
Chairperson, Clondrohid
Community Recreation Centre



Photo: New energy efficient lighting at Clondrohid Community Recreation Centre
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How to apply

The application process for the SSE Airtricity Community Fund is simple. Firstly find out which wind farm is in your vicinity and make sure you meet the criteria listed below:

- Your group is a Not-for-Profit organisation
- You are requesting funding to benefit a community initiative, not an individual (although individuals may apply on behalf of a community project)
- Your community is situated within a 20km radius of the related wind farm. Priority is given to projects within a 5km radius.

Next check the opening and closing dates for the relevant SSE Airtricity Community Fund on the SSE Ireland website, www.ireland.sse.com/being-responsible and make sure your project fits in one of the following categories. Please note that SSE Airtricity currently prioritises energy efficiency projects.

- **Energy Efficiency:** Delivers reduced energy consumption
- **Sustainability:** Drives community-centred environmental and/or social sustainability interest
- **Safety:** Improves safety for the community

Lastly fill out the three short application forms listed below, telling SSE Airtricity about your community group and project, and remember to attach quotes for the measure you are applying for. These forms can be found on the SSE Ireland website.

1. Republic of Ireland Community Fund Application Form
2. Republic of Ireland Contractor Quote Form
3. Republic of Ireland Community Fund Declaration Form

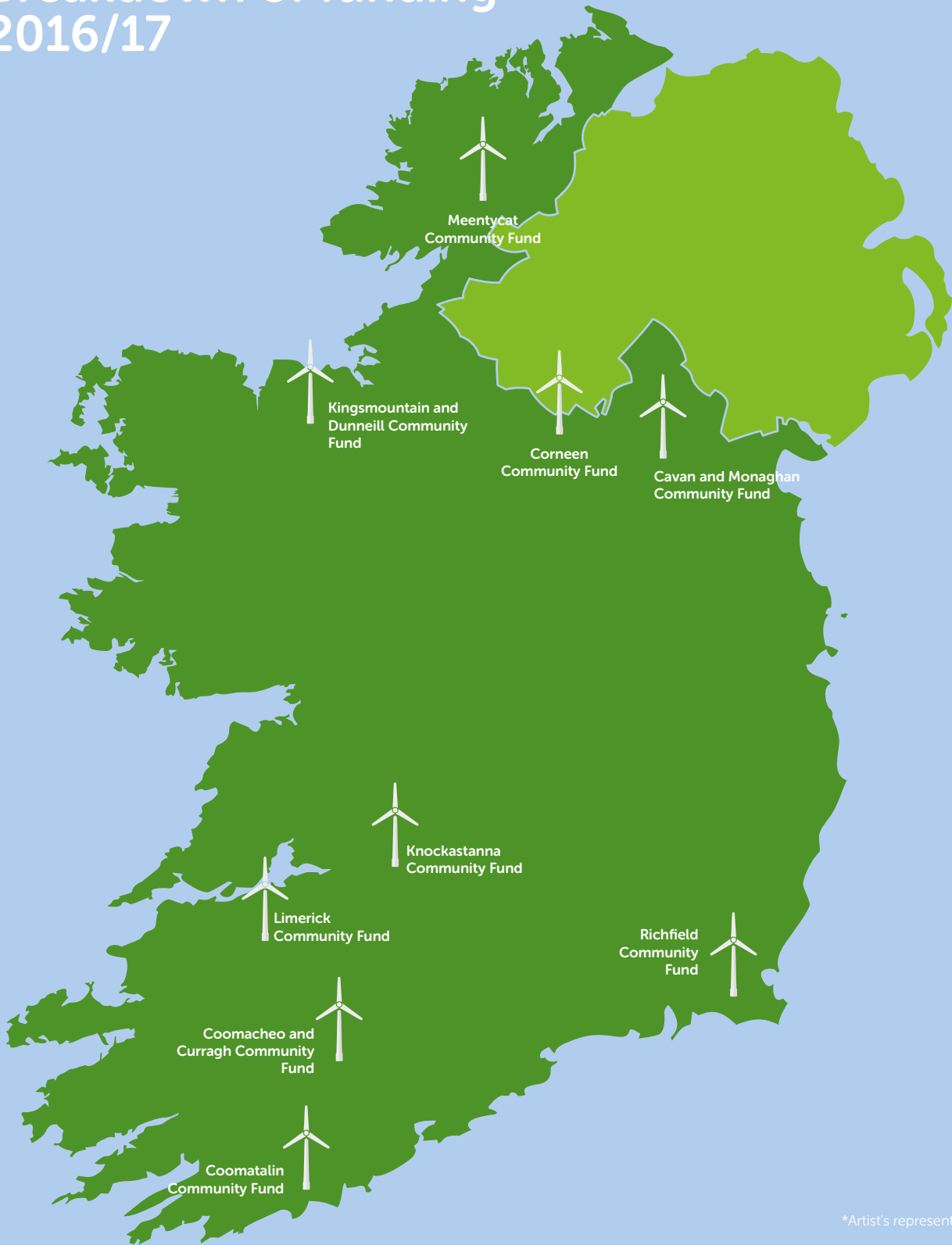
Completed application forms should be submitted via email to communityfundireland@sse.com or sent by post to SSE's Community Development Officer, Anne Reynolds, SSE Airtricity, Red Oak South, South County Business Park, Leopardstown, Dublin, D18 W688.

All Community Fund applications are evaluated on a competitive basis by a scoring panel. Proximity to the wind farm and number of beneficiaries will be key considerations. All applicants will be informed whether they are successful or unsuccessful. If successful, the team will let you know how much your project will be awarded and will organise a visit to your area to present successful groups with their funding.

If you have any queries regarding these forms or the community fund please contact the team by emailing communityfundireland@sse.com or call Anne Reynolds on 01 655 6556.



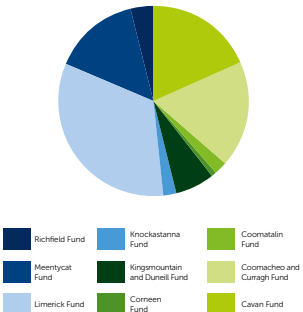
Breakdown of funding 2016/17



*Artist's representation.

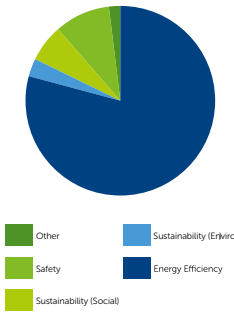
For more information on each wind farm, please visit ireland.sse.com

Republic of Ireland total funding



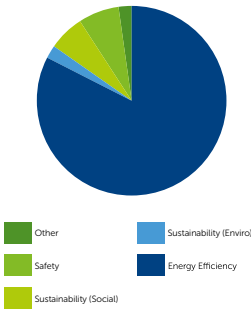
Knockastanna Community Fund

Wind farms: Knockastanna



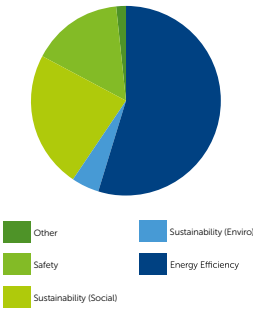
Cavan and Monaghan Community Fund

Wind farms: Bindoo, Gartnaneane, Mullanault



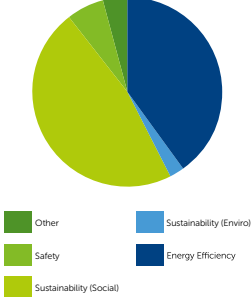
Coomacheo and Curragh Community Fund

Wind farms: Coomacheo, Curragh



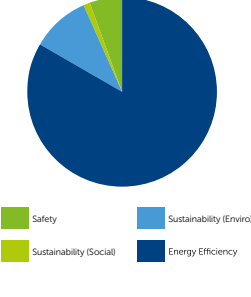
Meentycat Community Fund

Wind farms: Meentycat, Culliagh, Meenbog, Cark Extension



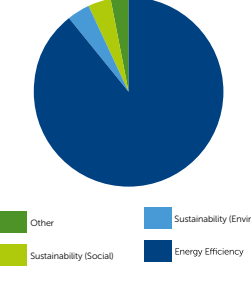
Limerick Community Fund

Wind farms: Tournafulla 1 and 2, Rathcahill, Dromada, Athea



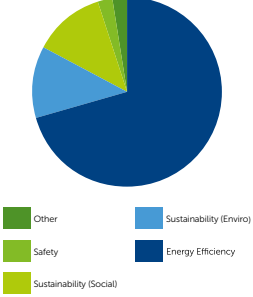
Richfield Community Fund

Wind farms: Richfield



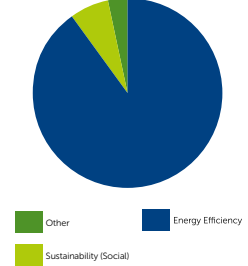
Kingsmountain and Dunneill Community Fund

Wind farms: Kingsmountain, Dunneill



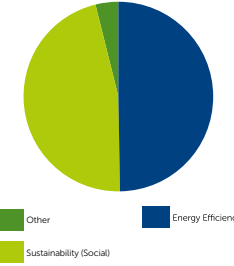
Coomatalin Community Fund

Wind farms: Coomatalin



Corneen Community Fund

Wind farms: Corneen





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