

GUIDANCE ON MICRO GRANT SCHEMES

Some community councils and other community-based groups receive funding from SSE Renewables to operate a micro-grants scheme for their area. Guidance on running such a scheme is provided here, along with terms and conditions relating to SSE Renewables' funding for this.

For simplicity, we refer to community councils throughout, however, this guidance is for all groups running micro-grant schemes that we fund.

What is a micro-grants scheme?

A micro-grants scheme provides the community council with a sum from the main community benefit fund, usually on an annual basis, for onward distribution in the form of micro-grants.

Micro-grants can be awarded to:

- non-constituted groups;
- constituted groups;
- individuals who are helping others or representing their community.

Where there is high demand for micro-grants, and applications are of sufficient quality, non-constituted groups should normally take priority over constituted groups as they are unable to apply to the main community benefit fund for a grant.

The community council makes decisions and administers the micro-grants scheme locally, on behalf of SSE Renewables.

How much can the community council award as a micro-grant?

The upper limit on micro-grant awards from funding provided by SSE Renewables is currently £1,000. However, the community council may set a lower threshold for micro-grants, considering the overall amount of money available for distribution and the volume of applications it's experiencing.

What can be funded through a micro-grant?

Micro-grants can support activities that meet any purpose the main community benefit fund can support. They must bring about some benefit to the local community. Similarly, the restrictions that apply to the main community benefit fund (i.e. what it cannot support) apply to micro-grants schemes too.

Application and award process

The availability of micro-grants should be widely promoted across the area served by the community council, for example via local newsletters, noticeboards, e-mail lists, social media and relevant websites. It should be clear who and what may be funded, how and by when to apply, and how long a funding decision will take.

The process of applying for and receiving a micro-grant is intended to be relatively quick and light touch. The community council may decide to accept applications by letter or may choose to make a short application form available.

Applicants should be asked to make clear how much they are applying for, what items they will spend the grant on, and how this would benefit the community.

When deciding on micro-grant awards, normal good practice should be applied in relation to conflicts of interest. Most community councils have a clear policy covering this.

Terms and Conditions for micro-grants schemes

The following terms and conditions apply to community councils and other groups ('your group') who receive funding from SSE Renewables ('us') to run a micro-grants scheme:

- 1.** The grant, expenditure of the grant, and any remaining balance will be clearly identified in your group's annual accounts under a heading in the name of the community benefit fund micro-grants. We also ask that your group provides us with a copy of its approved accounts when they are available.
- 2.** If your group goes into abeyance or is wound-up, the remaining balance of micro-grants funds must be returned to SSE Renewables and will then be credited to the main community benefit fund.
- 3.** Your group will ensure that the availability of micro-grants and any related application criteria are widely promoted in the community (both online and offline) and that applications will be accepted from all eligible parties for consideration.
- 4.** Your group will notify us when its contact details change, providing us with the most up-to-date details.
- 5.** Your group will notify us when its constitution is amended, providing us with a signed copy of the most up-to-date version.
- 6.** The support of SSE Renewables will be acknowledged in all publicity regarding the micro-grants scheme and in micro-grant award letters issued by your group.
- 7.** SSE Renewables will provide your group with a Micro-grants Report form, to be completed by your group and returned to SSER within twelve months of the date that your group receives each payment for the purpose of operating a micro-grants scheme (unless extended by agreement with us). Micro-grants funding in each subsequent year will normally be released to your group following the receipt of a satisfactory report, and where the majority of the previous year's micro-grant funding has been awarded by your group.
- 8.** In normal circumstances, only one top up payment per annum will be awarded.
- 9.** Your group may carry forward any micro-grant funding not awarded at the end of the most recent grant period.
- 10.** Your group will comply with all reasonable requests for participation by us in publicity in connection with the micro-grants scheme, including publications, websites, provision of photographs etc.

Further Information

If your group has any questions about running a micro-grants scheme with funding from SSE Renewables, please contact your SSE Renewables Community Investment Manager.

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