

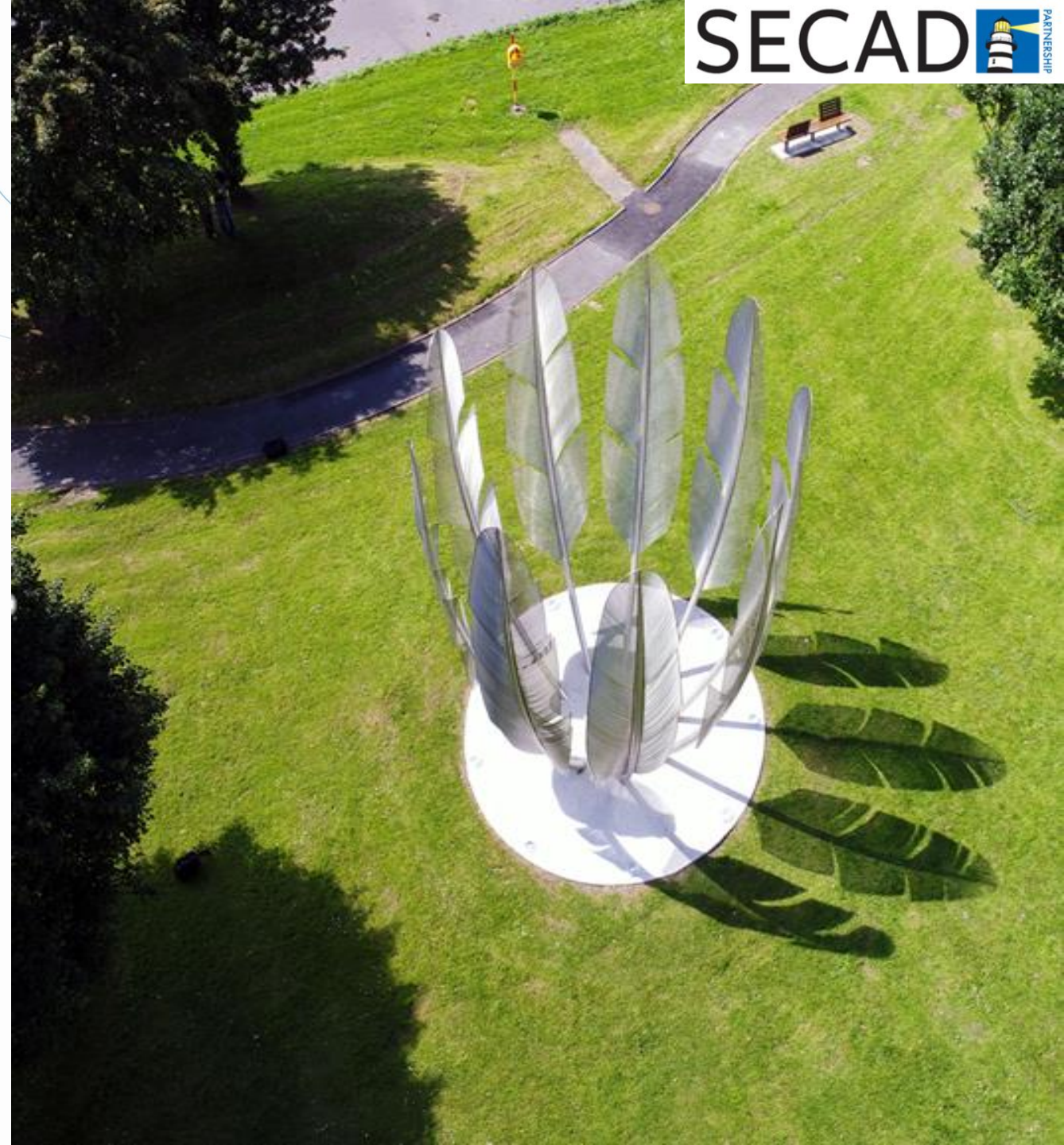
Vantage RE Community Benefit Funds

Eilish Walsh & Nuala O'Connell, SECAD
Duleel Community Facility - 30th April 2025

SECAD Partnership CLG

Experience and Capacity

- Established in 1995, Midleton, Co. Cork
- Managed €120m+ of public (EU, State and Local Government) funds and services
- Team of 42 professionals including expertise in community engagement, social enterprise, social inclusion, employment advice, personal development and confidence building, self-employment and artisan business support etc
- Industry leading financial management controls, project management supports and production of related reports and analysis

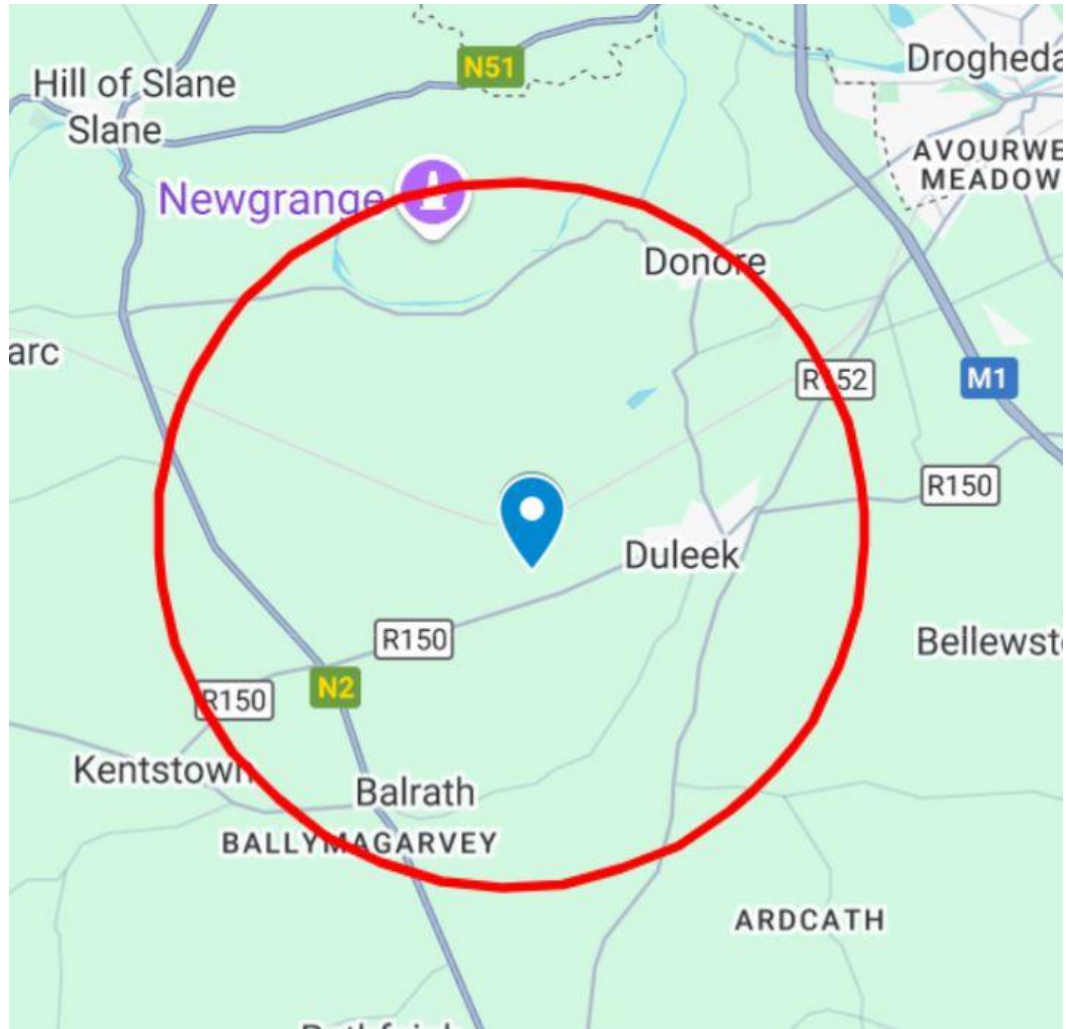


Vantage RE Community Benefit Funds

Vantage owns, develops and operates renewable energy assets in the UK and Ireland. With their portfolio of 908MW installed across solar, onshore wind and offshore wind, Vantage is making an important contribution to the supply of clean electricity. Vantage acquired Rosspile Solar Farm and Gillinstown Solar Farm from Highfield Energy in January 2024.

FUND VALUE	€350,000 Approx	(2023 & 2024 values combined)
OPENING DATE	Monday 28th April 2025	
CLOSING DATE	Monday 9th June 2025	
RESPONSE DATE	End July 2025	

Gillinstown Area of Benefit



The fund supports projects and activities which clearly benefit at least one or more of the following categories

- **Longterm and legacy projects:** Projects that will have a lasting and enduring impact on Communities nearest the Solar Farms
- **Education and skills:** In particular those that encourage STEAM-Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Maths learning in the Community
- **Tackling Climate Change:** Projects that support Environment, Energy Efficiency and Habitat/Biodiversity conservation projects
- **Social Inclusion and Wellness:** Project that supports both physical and mental health, recreation, safety and wellbeing
- **Sustainable Communities:** Projects that enhance the capacity of the population to achieve sustainability and self-sufficiency.
- **Culture and Heritage:** Projects that support history, heritage and culture.

How to Apply

- Please visit <https://solarcommunityfunds.ie/vantage-re/> where you will find a guide to completing an application and the online application portal
- **Financial details** - Submit a copy of a statement header from your organisation's account
- **Your constitution** - Submit a copy of your organisation's signed and dated constitution. If the group doesn't have a constitution, please contact SECAD
- **Verify value of each item** - You must submit quotations to verify the value of each item that you are seeking funding support
 - If any individual item is less than €5,000, you need one quote for that item.
 - If it costs €5,000 or more, you must provide three quotes from three different suppliers, or evidence that you tried to obtain three quotes.

Evaluation will take into account

SECAD 



Project location (area of benefit)



Demonstration of the need and potential impact of this project on the people and communities who live within the target area



Project Life-Span / Appropriate project timelines and costs



Contribution to the thematic objectives of the fund

 **VANTAGE**RE

Tips for Completing your Application

Before you start

- Check and note the fund opening and closing dates
- Read the fund guidelines and keep a copy to hand when completing your application
- Confirm your group and project meet the eligibility criteria and are within the AOB

During the Application Process

- Gather your documents, constitution (signed & dated), copy bank statement (BIC, IBAN & group name visible) and quotations to support your project costs (costs in excess of €5,000 require three quotations)
- If your project includes construction/civil works, check with your local authority if there are any planning/exemption requirements
- If the property where the project will be completed is not owned by the group, ask for written permission from the property owner for the proposed project

Before you submit

- Take a look through your application, does it make sense? Are there any changes needed?
- Once you have answered every relevant question and uploaded all required information you are ready to hit submit

Common Pitfalls

- Applications where the project is not located within the Area of Benefit
- Applications where the project is poorly described
- Incomplete applications with information missing, quotes, bank statement, constitution, local authority permissions
- **IF IN DOUBT CONTACT SECAD, WE ARE HAPPY TO HELP AND ADVISE**

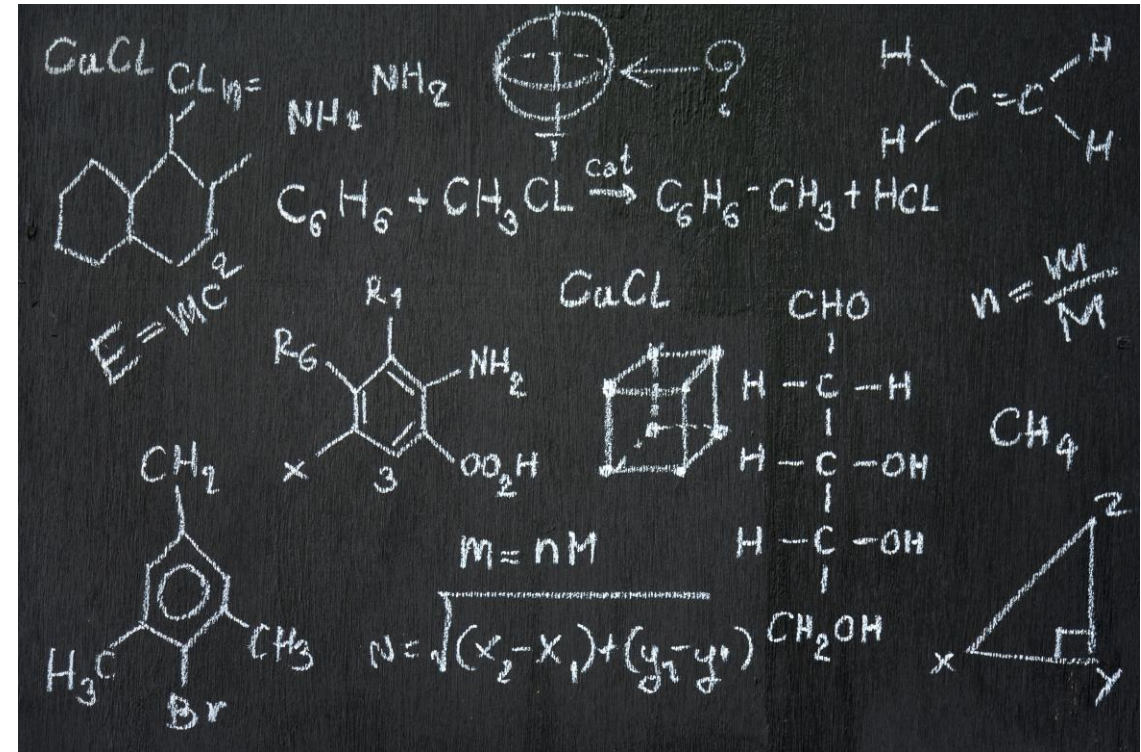
Case Studies

Large Scale Projects:

- Newcastle West Regional Athletics Hub
- Ballyfad Community Centre

Small Scale Project - 100% funded through the community benefit fund

- New Horizons at the Mill 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 the last 8 years. The physical development of the project which began in June 2021 is still in progress with drainage and foundation work nearly completed on the nine-acre site.



SECAD Community
Engagement Services
Community Industry Partnerships

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



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

💡 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. ’



What was the idea

Cloughmills Community Action Team has been around for more than 20 years promoting community development and good relations in the rural village of Cloughmills and surrounding area of around 8000 people. A capacity building project was envisioned, designed to bring people of all ages together to learn new skills in crafts and creative arts with the intention that craft groups can be promoted to provide much needed recreational and social opportunities for a community coming out of the covid -19 pandemic restrictions. The crafts included willow weaving which is being grown as a local resource on site at the mill and creative arts such as felting, painting, pyrography as well as some wood working/ wood turning using the facilities at the local men's shed.

Planning for the future

The project was designed to build capacity within the volunteer group to engage in craft activity and learn new skills that can be passed on to others in the community. Everyone who took part gained a sense of achievement from learning how to complete a piece of willow craft. This group will provide the backbone of a willow weaving group that others can join, and it will add to the existing range of craft activities we can offer at the mill.



How has this funding made a difference?

'The group bonded well and were supportive of each other. The key lesson learned was how to prepare willow for weaving which was important as we grow willow on our site. The basic techniques for starting a piece of weaving were also very important and this will be enhanced through use of online tutorials as we go along.'

'The finished articles from the workshop were put on display at an open day at the mill in November under the caption ' Made at the Mill '. This was well attended by the community and new recruits were registered for the future. The group made willow trugs for use in the garden and also completed willow baskets for storing logs or vegetables from the garden'

NEW HORIZONS AT THE MILL PROJECT



Wind Farm
Altaveedan Wind Farm



Amount Awarded
£1,060 commitment

Jim Whitten - Treasurer



"Our project was a great example of how the NTR Community Benefit Fund can be used to build capacity within the community by opening up a whole new craft experience for local people to enjoy. Barbara, one of our volunteers, commented that ' There was a real sense of achievement from everyone on our willow weaving workshops. To take something that is growing naturally on our garden site and making it into a small and beautiful work of willow art gives you an inner belief that you can go on and inspire others to enjoy the same experience"



Key Users
Active Age groups
The Men's Shed
Youth Groups

Linked to Sustainable Development Goals



Project Financing
Wind Farm Community Funds

Community Stream

Stream Priorities

- Develop outdoor recreation space
- Develop and enhance community meeting space
- Develop and upgrade sports facilities
- Youth and active age facilities and initiatives
- Town and village enhancement
- Promote accessibility and inclusions
- Support culture, heritage, community-led tourism and festivals
- Community wellbeing initiatives
- Address dereliction, an example of this is a project to improve the view of abandoned building in a town or village
- Integrate new communities



Sustainability Stream

Stream Priorities

- Community renewable energy initiatives
- Community building energy upgrades
- Sustainable energy communities
- Cycling and walking infrastructure
- Supporting sustainability through schools
- Training and education
- Establishing and developing collaborations and networks
- Community transport
- Community gardens and 'grow your own'
- The circular economy, waste management and recycling initiatives



Biodiversity Stream

Stream Priorities

- Conservation of lakes, forests, rivers and coasts
- Enhance greenways, walkways and cycle routes
- Trails
- Pollinators, parks and gardens
- Native tree-planting and community woodlands
- Enhance infrastructure and information at biodiversity sites
- Training, education and information
- Manage invasive species
- Research, mapping and specialist ecology support
- Digitalisation of biodiversity information
- Inter- and cross-community collaborations



Viability and Sustainability of your project

Your project must aim to make a positive social and, or environmental impact.

If your project needs to purchase physical goods or materials, the project team must commit to sourcing the most environmentally and socially sustainable option available.

The project must show how it is linked to our Sustainable Development Goals.

The project should have the potential for longevity, and you should be able to show you can manage it in the long term. You should have thought about future funding or maintenance costs if relevant.

Your Capacity and Track Record

You must be able to show that you have a history of community involvement and experience delivering community projects. Otherwise, you must show that you have access to the relevant expertise and are registered with the Public Participation Network.

Project value for money

Your proposal should show value for money. Our funding should give you the support that you cannot get elsewhere through alternative funding.

SECAD will approach the fund design, implementation and evaluation to successfully complete the process of providing Grant Making Services to the satisfaction of all key stakeholders. Vantage RE have identified focus areas for the fund as follows:

Legacy projects

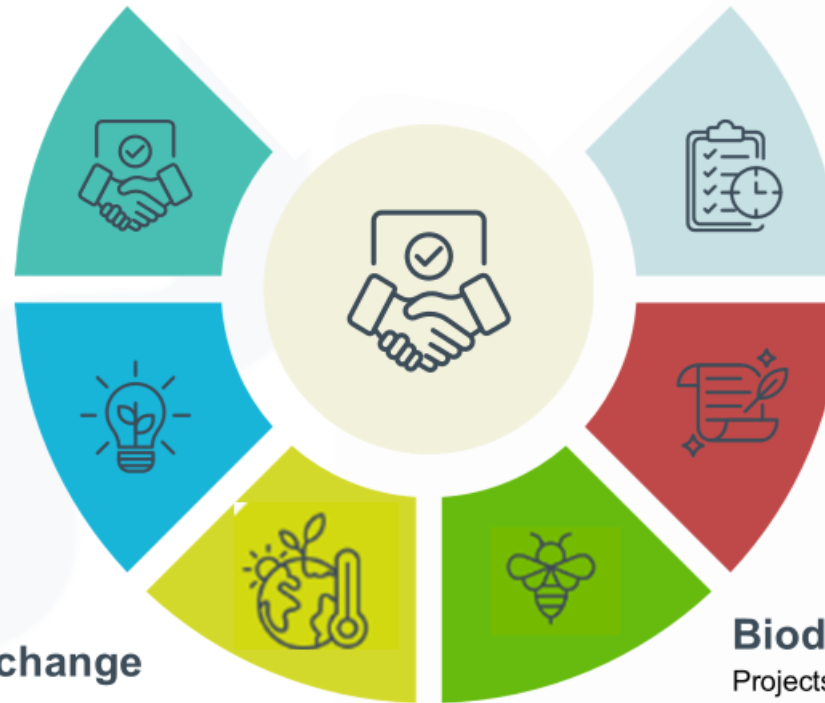
Targeting legacy projects that will have the greatest impact on the most important social and environmental challenges facing communities

STEAM projects

Projects that develop access to educational opportunities in Science, Tech, Engineering, Art and Maths.

Tackling climate change

Projects that are helping to tackle climate change and encouraging sustainability



Sustainable Communities

Supporting the community: Projects should contribute to the success and sustainability of the community. Building the capacity of voluntary organisations to learn skills to become sustainable organisations

Leverage value

Through analysis of local, national and European funding sources - explore possible areas where the Community Benefit Fund could act as the 'matching finance or leverage' for these investments

Biodiversity

Projects that and enhance the biodiversity of the local area and communities' access to the natural world.

NOTE: through our engagement with META we identified potential areas of overlap and where we can collaborate with a key focus on leveraging community engagement (participating in events like open days as opportunities to promote renewables/Vantage such as visits to solar farm, STEAM projects etc). Through this collaboration we can ensure that the benefit is dispersed across a wide range of projects (linked to key funding principles as above) and compliments the existing META community benefit framework. META funds open annually in September with grant recipients announced in spring.

- Please take a look at this website [Solar Farm funds](#) for further information about the Vantage RE Community Benefit Fund
- If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us
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- *SECAD Partnership CLG*
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