



## Energy Communities Tipperary Cooperative (ECTC)



DIRECT ENERGY  
PRODUCTION /  
CONSUMPTION



RURAL



COLLECTIVE

### Summary

Energy Community Tipperary Cooperative ECTC brings together 14 communities in the Tipperary region. It aims to enable communities in Tipperary and surrounding areas to create local employment and to benefit from reducing their carbon footprints and generating community-owned energy. ECTC facilitates energy efficiency work on older houses and community buildings by leveraging grants from the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland and the Just Transition Fund.

### Why is it a case of energy citizenship?

ECTC shows the collective agency of civic engagement. It emerged as a community initiative and has since activated and supported other communities to become active – a cooperative of communities. ECTC's main concern has been with retrofitting houses to improve efficiency.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101022492.



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE  
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

gr<sup>in</sup>dependent  
Institute

## Goals

Overall, ECTC has the mission of “allow[ing] communities in Tipperary and surrounding areas to create local employment and community benefit through reducing their carbon footprint and generating community-owned energy”. Through this, it strives towards its vision “of a community-led energy transition, which benefits communities, creates warmer, healthier homes while saving homeowners money, helps tackle climate change, and in a post-COVID world helps create new employment” (Energy Master Plan).

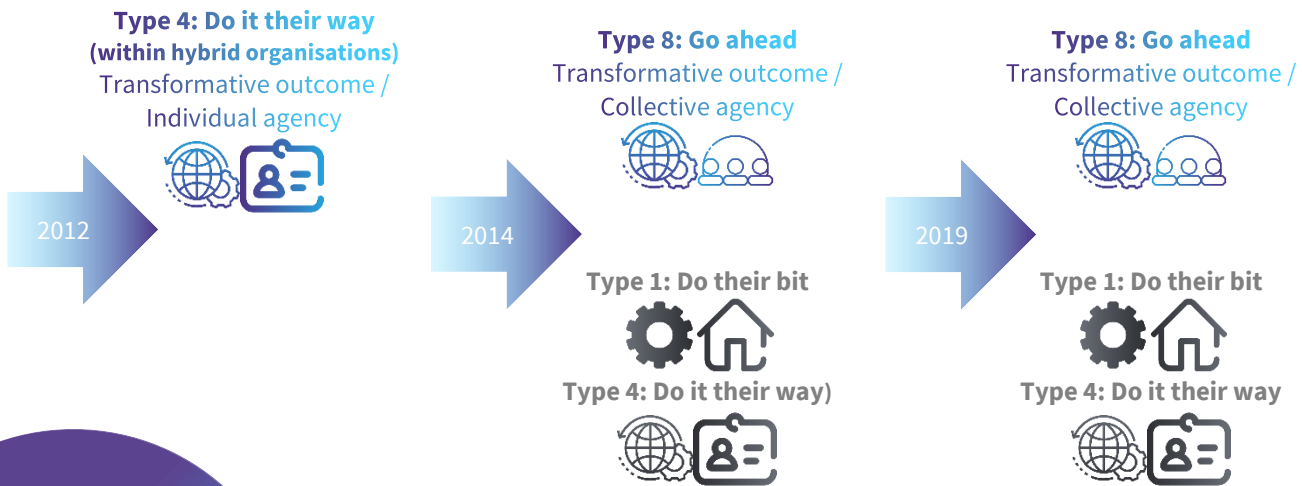


More concretely, ECTC goals include:

1. Citizen empowerment by helping communities to become more resilient, especially regarding their energy use;
2. Using energy efficiency and generation as a means and driver of local economic benefit;
3. Keeping money and jobs in the area, creating employment

## The story and the typology

Since ECTC's emergence in 2012, four phases can be distinguished in the evolution of energy citizenship. Whereas the formation of the case in Phase 1 was marked by agency embedded in another organisation, the main form of agency since then has been collective and community-based (classified as Type 8 in the EnergyPROSPECTS typology). The differentiation between phases 2-4 is due to other factors, as outlined below.



Case history summary



For the summary methodology, click [HERE!](#)



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101022492.



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE  
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

grIndependent  
Institute

Phase 1: Emergence of the case and its establishment as a cooperative, 2012 - 2014

The genesis of the case was linked to a community team exploring ways to improve the area's economic development. The emerging organisation first ran as a pilot project of the Tipperary Energy Agency, involving four communities.

The focus on energy and retrofitting ultimately led to the formation of ECTC as an organised citizen-driven initiative in the form of a cooperative in 2014.

	Individual			Collective	
					
 Reformative	1. Do their bit (in the household)	3. Do their bit (within organizations)	5. Make their voice heard	7. Do their share	9. Do the job
 Transformative	2. Do their own (in the household)	<b>4. Do it their way (within organizations)</b>	6. Make their vote count	8. Go ahead	10. Make their claims

**Main type: Do it their way**  
Transformative outcome / Organisationally embedded agency

Phase 2: Developing from individual to collective agency, 2014 - 2019

The establishment as a cooperative marked the beginning of the second phase. This meant a clear shift from organisationally embedded agency to new collective agency in the form of the newly founded organisation (cf. the arrow in the figure). While retaining its general transformative outcome orientation, this was reinforced by the continuously growing number of communities joining the cooperative, which necessitated the forging of a suitable internal governance structure.

At the same time, the organisationally embedded agency described in Phase 1 continued to play a role even after ECTC was formalised as a cooperative, specifically in the communities that have become new members over the years. Usually, these new member communities build on or emerge from pre-existing community groups with another focus, e.g., tidy town groups, local development teams, etc. Furthermore, private agency in households became

another form of secondary agency. With the main focus of ECTC being leveraging grants for home retrofits, the participating homeowners – the “target group” of the case’s activities – express agency by committing to these retrofits and financing a substantial part of the investment.

	Individual			Collective	
					
 Reformative	<b>1. Do their bit (in the household)</b>	3. Do their bit (within organizations)	5. Make their voice heard	7. Do their share	9. Do the job
 Transformative	2. Do their own (in the household)	<b>4. Do it their way (within organizations)</b>	6. Make their vote count	<b>8. Go ahead</b>	10. Make their claims

**Main type: Go ahead**  
Transformative outcome / Citizen-based and hybrid agency



**Secondary types:**  
**Do it their way**  
Transformative outcome / Private in the household agency  
**Do their bit**  
Reformative outcome / Organisationally embedded agency



Phase 3: Focusing on renewables and becoming a trusted point of contact on community engagement, 2019 - 2023 and ongoing

While still growing in terms of the number of member communities, in an (ongoing) third phase, ECTC has advanced in two significant ways. First, it has expanded its focus to include new leadership roles by investigating options for community-owned renewable energy generation, not least in developing an Energy Master Plan. Second, ECTC has become a trusted point of contact for the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) – a government-funded agency – in respect of providing policy advice and programme implementation. ECTC has gained legitimacy through its expertise and working “on the ground” concerning issues of community engagement in energy-related governance and is regularly contacted for advice.

Furthermore, ECTC plans to collaborate more with local councils, especially when providing information for residents and their communities. During this phase, the expression of energy citizenship agency did not fundamentally change.

	Individual			Collective	
					
 Reformative	<b>1. Do their bit (in the household)</b>	3. Do their bit (within organizations)	5. Make their voice heard	7. Do their share	9. Do the job
 Transformative	2. Do their own (in the household)	<b>4. Do it their way (within organizations)</b>	6. Make their vote count	<b>8. Go ahead</b>	10. Make their claims

**Main type: Go ahead**

Transformative outcome / Citizen-based and hybrid agency

**Secondary types:**

**Do it their way**

Transformative outcome / Private in the household agency

**Do their bit**

Reformative outcome / Organisationally embedded agency



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101022492.



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE  
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

grIndependent  
Institute

## The aspects of energy citizenship

The project aims at **creating a more democratic, and in the longer run, self-sufficient energy system, first, by strengthening local communities both socially and economically, and, second, in the longer term, through promoting and enabling the community ownership of renewable energy.** It actively contributes to raising energy awareness, reducing energy poverty, strengthening community and providing financial benefits locally.



In this case, citizen power/control is a key aspect, with **elements of self-governance**. “**Belief and trust in people**” and “**principles of community cooperation and self-organising**” are stated to be core values. The cooperative is made up of local communities, which themselves are represented by local community councils and development associations, which are usually perceived as being democratic institutions.

**Citizen power/control**  
**Citizens exert effective control, and their votes have to be taken into account**

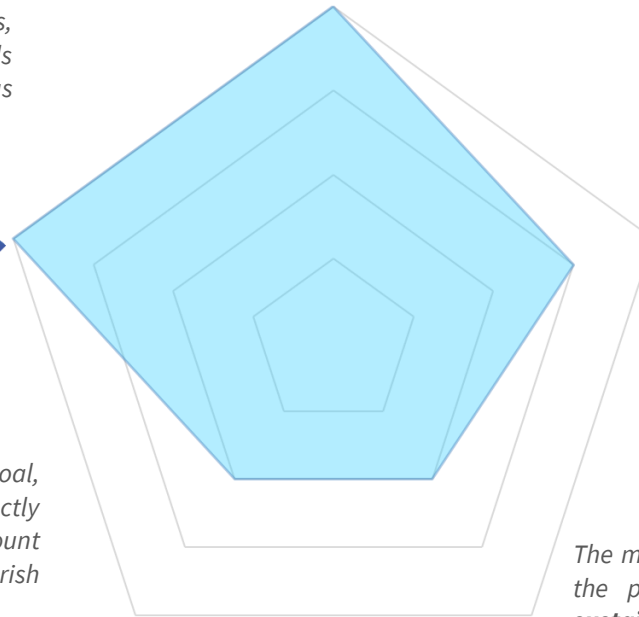


As with the “environmental sustainability” goal, environmental limits and carbon footprints are not directly mentioned in organisational goals but are taken into account through the acknowledgment of the goals of the Irish Government, and are important context for the case.

**Carbon limit**  
**Implicit recognition of the carbon limit**



**Democratic energy future**  
**A more democratic energy future is a core concern of the case, and is part of the vision**



The case touches upon **core aspects of justice and equity, especially those related to energy poverty**. It emerged from a situation after the financial crisis after 2008, by which the Tipperary region was heavily impacted. Energy-saving measures implemented in the context of ECTC were one instrument for easing the economic burden and revitalising local economies. Fuel poverty is specifically addressed. However, issues of justice and equity are delineated by the geographical focus of the case.



**Equity and justice**  
**Equal access is granted, but limited by various criteria**

The main rationale of the case is using energy-related measures for the purpose of local (economic) development. **Environmental sustainability aspects are acknowledged and are a part of the motivation, but not necessarily central ones.** Assumptions about the benefits for sustainability of using renewables (compared to fossil fuel-based energy) and energy are acknowledged, but have not been made primary goals.



**Environmental sustainability**  
**Environmental sustainability issues are not explicitly taken into account**



## Further information



[facebook.com/EnergyCommunitiesTipp](https://www.facebook.com/EnergyCommunitiesTipp)

[www.youtube.com/channel/UCwRW3ZO3zillyIkW1gamc9Q](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwRW3ZO3zillyIkW1gamc9Q)



[energycommunitiestipp.ie](https://energycommunitiestipp.ie)



[info@energycommunitiestipp.ie](mailto:info@energycommunitiestipp.ie)



## References

- Energy Communities Tipperary Cooperative (2023). Website Energy Communities Tipperary Cooperative. URL: <https://energycommunitiestipp.ie/> (Accessed 11.03.2023).
- TEA Tipperary Energy Agency (2020). Energy Communities Tipperary Cooperative Energy Master Plan. URL: <https://energycommunitiestipp.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Local-Energy-Master-Plan-ECTC-Community-2021.pdf> (Accessed 11.03.2023)
- Watson, C., Mullally, G., & Gallachóir, B. (2015). Community Engagement on Energy Workshop. URL: <https://www.marei.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/1.-Community-Engagement-on-Energy-Workshop-Report.pdf> (Accessed 11.03.2023)
- Interview with one of the leaders of the case
- Vadovics, E., Szóllóssy A., and Vadovics K. (2023). Introduction and Methodology for the EnergyPROSPECTS Detailed Case Summary Reports. EnergyPROSPECTS (PROactive Strategies and Policies for Energy Citizenship Transformation). Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10075408>



## Source of images

[energycommunitiestipp.ie](https://energycommunitiestipp.ie); [facebook.com/EnergyCommunitiesTipp](https://www.facebook.com/EnergyCommunitiesTipp)



## Case study authors

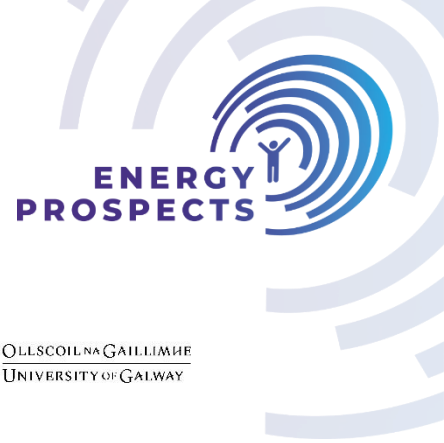
### Mapping and detailed case research by:

Benjamin Schmid, University of Galway

### Case study summary prepared by:

Edina Vadovics & Anita Szóllóssy, GreenDependent Institute

**Proofreading by** Simon Milton / **Reviewed by** case participants



## EnergyPROSPECTS partners

**University of Galway (GAL)**  
University Road, H91 TK33, Galway, Ireland



**Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB),**  
Avenue Franklin Roosevelt 50-1050, Bruxelles, Belgium



**GreenDependent Institute (GDI),**  
2100 Gödöllő, Éva u. 4., Hungary



**Universiteit Maastricht (UM),**  
Minderbroedersberg 4-6, 6200 MD, Maastricht, Netherlands



**Applied Research and Communications Fund (ARC Fund),**  
Alexander Zhendov Street 5, 1113, Sofia, Bulgaria



**Notre Europe – Institut Jacques Delors (JDI),**  
18, rue de Londres 75009, Paris, France



**University of Latvia (UL),**  
Raiņa bulvāris 19, LV-1586, Riga, Latvia



**Technische Universität Berlin (TUB),**  
Straße des 17. Juni 135, 10623, Berlin, Germany



**Universidade da Coruña (UDC),**  
Rúa da Maestranza 9, 15001 A Coruña, Spain



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101022492.



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE  
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

