

RESOURCE HUB DOCUMENT

SUSTAINABLE CLUB PROGRAMME



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

The Sustainable Club Programme is an initiative of the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment (DCEE).



Introduction

Welcome to the Sustainable Club Programme which has been developed by the Department of the Climate, Energy and the Environment (DCEE) as an initiative under the National Dialogue on Climate Action (NDCA)

The purpose of this programme is to help a sports or recreational club on a journey to becoming as environmentally sustainably as possible. Each club and organisation is unique and this programme is designed to help you to assess, identify and take actions in four areas that match what is possible for your club:

- Biodiversity
- Water
- Energy
- Travel

The Sustainable Club Programme is divided into three parts.

1. Introduction and Mapping your Actions (this Document)

In addition to providing some tips for starting your programme, this document provides you with the foundations of the club's programme through understanding which areas the club and members want to prioritise and gather the necessary expertise from inside and outside the club.

2. Resource Hub - Four Separate Documents

A step-by-step guide to taking action in four key areas of your club.

3. Sustainability Club Tracker

An Excel document that enables you to capture all the information you need to progress the actions within the programme including timelines and designated individuals/people responsible for each action.

Planting the Seeds of Success



1

Set up a Sustainability Team

Consider setting up a team within your club to lead your actions. A team of circa four people can work and can consist of members with diverse age ranges and background – consider including at least one youth member in the team.

Work within the structures of the club to maximise buy-in and that might mean setting up a sub-committee.



2

Invite Club Members to Contribute

The programme includes a short member survey. This survey link can be shared across email or social media. In addition to capturing the thoughts of members, it is a great starting point build awareness and identify potential volunteers.



3

Opportunity Mapping

With the aid of the members survey, the sustainability team can use the Impact Mapping exercise in this document to agree priorities for the club.



4

Start Small to Build Momentum

There are a over 40 actions that are possible within this programme. Actions that are easy to plan and implement, that are visible and deliver quick wins can establish the programme. Once you have this momentum you can tackle some of the more challenging actions.



5

Reach out to the Community

Organisations across your communities are already taking climate action. Reach out to your contacts and explore what else is happening. This guide provides you with ideas to help your search.



6

Keep up-to-date on Expertise and Funding Opportunities

There are numerous organisations with expertise that may be useful. There are also opportunities for funding to assist the work you are trying to complete. This guide will give you some available options and how to contact them.

Mapping Your Actions



Why is mapping important?

Mapping is a means to identifying what your members have the energy to get behind, prioritise potential projects within the club and identify current and prospective partners within both the club and the wider community. This stage of the programme is vital as it anchors the structure to deliver change to your club.



The three stages of Mapping your Actions are:

1. Member Survey

Identifying experience, expertise and enthusiasm within the club with the intention of involving these interested club members in Green Club planning and activities.

2. Impact Mapping

An assessment of existing club activity in the areas of Biodiversity, Water, Energy, and Transport.

3. Membership & Community Mapping

Identify the partnerships and expertise that already exist within the club.

Start to explore and identify potential links in the community that the club can align with.

Step 1: Member Survey

- 1 | A short, ready-to-go Sustainable Club Member Survey is available for clubs to issue to their members as a first step in the club's Sustainable Club planning.
- 2 | The survey is made up of four questions and is designed to find out which areas and actions the wider club membership is interested in as well as to identify if any other members would be interested in getting involved.
- 3 | To manage the survey and gather responses, you or another Sustainable Team member will need a Microsoft-based email account to log in, following these simple steps:
 - Go to <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-climate-energy-and-the-environment/publications/national-dialogue-on-climate-action-ndca/#sustainable-sports-programme>
 - Click on the relevant link and click on 'Duplicate it' at the top of the screen.
 - Log in with your Microsoft-based email account.
 - Click on 'Collect responses' (top right on a computer/laptop or via the arrow at the bottom of the screen on your phone or mobile device).
 - Ensure that 'Anyone can respond' is selected and copy the link.
- 4 | If your Sustainability Team wants to amend the survey title, content and/ or format, this can be done before copying and sharing the link with club members.

For Further Club Consultation:

Consider running an in-person mapping or consultation - such as a pop-up stand or a survey team at a club match or an information evening in your club grounds. Consider opportunities to present to and get feedback from your club executive and/or from club sub-committees. A Sustainability Club match-day stand or information night could be expanded to include members of the wider community, as part of a combined club & community mapping event.

Step 2: Impact Mapping

Use the five thematic questionnaires below to help your Sustainability Team identify priority action areas for your club. If you have carried out a club survey as part of your club mapping, the results of this survey will also be valuable in settling on your priority action areas. These mapping tools are intended as a guide to decision-making only. Many factors may influence your team's choice of priority action areas.



Biodiversity

Yes No N/A

We manage some of our off-field grass to promote wildflower growth.....

We have recently planted native trees on our club grounds.....

We have planted biodiversity-friendly flowers or shrubs on our grounds.....

We have stopped or reduced the use of herbicides in our club.....

We have created habitats for birds or wild bees in our club grounds.....

We have raised awareness of our local biodiversity and natural heritage,
e.g., through signage, club events or online communications.....



Mostly NOs? Consider Biodiversity as a priority action area for your Sustainability Team

Even clubs with very little green space can make a big difference with simple biodiversity engagements. Patches of grass, e.g., behind goal areas, can be transformed into mini-wildflower meadows and planters, hanging baskets and flower boxes can be planted with biodiversity friendly bulbs and flowers. See the Biodiversity Document for more details.



Water

Yes No N/A

We have taken steps to reduce water losses (e.g., from leaks, dripping taps) in our clubhouse.....

We have implemented measures to reduce our water use (e.g., reduced-flow taps and showers, cistern blocks, a shower challenge).....

We collect and recycle water in our grounds (e.g., water harvesting butts or tanks).....

We carry out regular checks to reduce water pollution risks (e.g., of drains, oil and fuel storage, septic tanks, chemical storage).....

We have mapped our club's location in our water catchment area or we have conducted water sampling in our nearest waterway.....

We have taken action to protect our waterways (e.g., created a biodiversity buffer zone, created a mini-wetland, organised a waterway awareness initiative).....



Mostly NOs? Consider Water as a priority action area for your Sustainability Team

Sustainability Club Water actions cover both water conservation and water quality, including your club's impact on waterways and biodiversity. See the Water Document for more details.

Step 2: Impact Mapping



Energy

Yes No N/A

Our clubhouse is used primarily for training & matches and is rarely used during the day outside of weekends.....

We have done a full analysis of our energy bills (e.g., electricity, gas, oil).....

Our clubhouse is well-insulated and interior lighting is LED.....

Our hot-water showers are only occasionally used or our hot water is heated by renewable energy.....

Our pitch floodlighting is LED.....

We have assessed the feasibility of on-site generation and low carbon technologies (e.g., solar PV, heat pumps) for our club.....



Mostly NOs? Consider **Energy as a priority action area for your Sustainability Team**

If your club is a low energy user, e.g., where a club building is used primarily as a changing facility, where players only occasionally use hot water shower facilities and where interior lighting is well-managed, Energy might not be a priority action area for your club Sustainability Team. However, most clubs can still make immediate energy and cost savings by taking simple, straightforward actions. See the Energy Document for more details.



Travel & Transport

Yes No N/A

We have carried out a travel survey to establish how our members travel to the club grounds.....

We promote carpooling to training and matches.....

We run initiatives to promote walking and/or cycling.....

We have been involved in active travel planning in the local community.....

We run 'no-idling' awareness campaigns to reduce the air pollution in our club grounds...

Our parking areas are managed to encourage active travel and ensure safety and accessibility for members and visitors with disabilities or mobility issues.....



Mostly NOs? Consider **Travel and Transport as a priority action area for your Sustainability Team**

Clubs in different locations will have different Travel & Transport priorities and possibilities. The 'Start By' guide and the Travel Survey will help your Green Team identify suitable travel & transport actions for your club. See the Travel Document for more details.

Membership Mapping

1. Using your knowledge of the club, and in conjunction with the membership survey, identify five club members who have skills or expertise that could be of benefit to your Sustainability Club activities. These club members might not want to commit to the Sustainability Team membership but could be interested in bringing some of their ideas or experience to elements or stages of your planning and action.

Club Mapping 1 - Membership Expertise	
Club Member	Area of Expertise
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

Community Mapping 1 & 2

There are two elements to this step - 1. Existing and 2. Potential Links

1. Identify up to five partnerships or projects in the wider community with which the club is already involved and that could support Sustainability Club engagement or to which the club's Sustainability Club actions could contribute (see the bottom of this page for examples).
2. Identify five partnerships or projects in the wider community with which the club is **currently not involved** but that could contribute to or benefit from the club's Green Club activities. These may emerge over time and can be added to as the Sustainability Programme evolves.

Community Mapping 1 - Existing Links

Project/Partner	Green Club Relevance
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Community Mapping 2 - Potential Links

Project/Partner	Green Club Relevance
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Examples Of Community Partnerships & Projects (Non-Exhaustive List):



- Tidy Towns
- Men's Sheds
- Green/Eco Schools
- Sponsors/local business
- Sustainable Energy Communities (SECs)
- Involvement in local area travel planning
- Local coastal or river preservation groups
- Local inclusion and accessibility projects
- Community health & well-being initiatives
- Community Response Initiatives
- Other users of your club grounds/facilities
- Collaborations with other sports clubs

Final Mapping Checklist

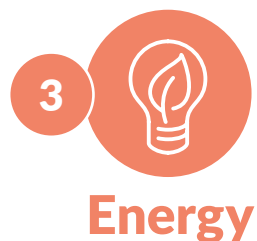
- ✓ We have completed our Member Survey.....
- ✓ We have completed our Impact Mapping.....
- ✓ We have completed our Community Mapping.....

Club Name:

Date:

Using the Resource Hub

The Resource Hub is divided into four themes:



You can find more details on what is involved on each of these areas in the Resource Hub document

Each of the four themes is divided into the following headings:

Overview

A summary of contents of each theme

Assess

Resources such as checklists and simple audit forms to help you form a picture of the current state-of-play at your club

Identify

A wide range of ideas from which your club can choose to take action

Act

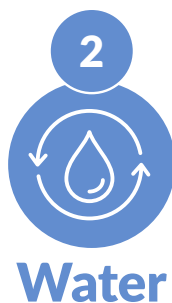
Simple action plan templates to help your club plan and track your actions



The Resource Hub is designed to work best by following the Assess-Identify-Act steps outlined above but all resources can be used as standalone documents.

The Four Themes

The Resource Hub is divided into four themes:



1

Biodiversity

The Biodiversity Hub provides a range of simple actions from which a club can choose to enhance biodiversity and encourage pollinator activity on club grounds. There are a range of actions, such as reduced mowing of non-playing grass, hedgerow management, the greening of your club walkway, and the planting of native trees and pollinator-friendly shrubs and flowers.

The Biodiversity Hub offers actions suitable for clubs of all sizes, in both rural and urban areas. It provides a comprehensive guide with a compilation of main action ideas and concise individual action sheets.

2

Water

The Water Resource Hub contains advice and guidance on water conservation and quality in your club. The water conservation section of the Hub includes a simple club house audit to help your Sustainability Team identify areas where you can make water savings in your club and grounds. The Hub also contains a water conservation action sheet, containing a range of short, medium and longer term actions your club can choose from to conserve water in your clubhouse.

The water quality section of the Hub focuses on measures you can take in your club to prevent contamination or pollution of water and waterways. It also suggests simple and engaging biodiversity and communication actions that you can take to enhance local waterways and to celebrate your club and community's water heritage.

Each of the four sections of the Resource Hub is divided into the following headings:

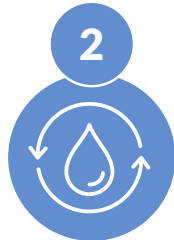
- **OVERVIEW** A summary of the contents of each theme's toolkit.
- **ASSESS** Resources such as checklists and simple audit forms to help you form a picture of the current state-of-play in your club.
- **IDENTIFY** A wide range of ideas from which your club can choose to take action on.
- **ACT** Simple action plan templates to help your club plan and track your actions.

The Four Themes

The Resource Hub is divided into four themes:



Biodiversity



Water



Energy



Travel

3

Energy

The Energy Resource Hub contains advice on tracking your energy use and on making immediate savings through energy efficient behaviour. The Hub also includes information on a range of medium to long-term energy-saving and renewable energy projects, from clubhouse insulation through heat pumps to solar PV generation and LED floodlight upgrades.

The Energy Resource Hub is designed for clubs who are interested in learning about energy saving opportunities or are at the early stages of planning energy actions. Clubs who have already carried out an energy audit and who have identified priority energy projects should contact a qualified independent professional for advice.

4

Travel

The Travel Resource Hub is designed to encourage sustainable and active travel in your club and community. It contains a range of simple audit and assessment forms from which your clubs can choose, depending on the travel and transport actions that make sense for you.

The Travel Resource Hub contains a selection of action ideas – including actions on carpooling, cycling, walking, buses and car park management – from which your club can choose to support active and sustainable travel for club members. The Travel Toolkit also includes guidance on managing your club and grounds for accessibility for all.

Each of the four sections of the Resource Hub is divided into the following headings:

- **OVERVIEW** A summary of the contents of each theme's toolkit.
- **ASSESS** Resources such as checklists and simple audit forms to help you form a picture of the current state-of-play in your club.
- **IDENTIFY** A wide range of ideas from which your club can choose to take action on.
- **ACT** Simple action plan templates to help your club plan and track your actions.

Funding Opportunities

The landscape for community, sustainability and sports funding is a dynamic one. This information sheet provides a non-exhaustive list of current and recurring funding opportunities that might be of interest to your club and includes some practical tips on what to consider when drafting and submitting funding applications.



Top Tips

- Follow the media channels and website of your local council for news of upcoming funding programmes.
- **26 Counties:** Register with your Public Participation Network (PPN) to receive updates on funding opportunities in their council area. <https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation-information/a58b8-community-groups-public-participation-networks/>
- Visit websites like <https://www.wheel.ie/funding> and <https://www.communityfoundation.ie/apply-for-funding/> for current funding opportunities

Fund Name	What it is	Who manages it
Community Climate Action Fund	Funding provided to local authorities to support projects to build low carbon, sustainable communities.	Local Government
Where to get information Register with your local Public Participation Network (PPN) to be informed once the next round of the funding opens		
Community Water Development Fund	Annual fund for community projects and initiatives that enhance or raise awareness of the local water environment. Includes a fund for small-scale projects.	Local Government
Where to get information Visit https://lawaters.ie/funding/ or register with your local Public Participation Network (PPN)		
Support Scheme for Energy Audits	Clubs with a total energy spend of over €10,000 may be eligible for a €2000 voucher towards the cost of a professional energy audit.	Sustainability Energy Authority of Ireland
Where to get information Visit https://www.seai.ie/grants/business-grants/energy-audits . Although labelled as a business grant, sports clubs are also eligible. Please note that VAT costs aren't covered by this voucher.		
Local Property Tax funding	A small percentage of local property tax goes towards climate change initiatives in communities.	Local Government
Where to get information Contact local Councillors within your Municipal District to enquire about support for small scale projects		
Community Enhancement Programme	Capital funding for the enhancement of facilities in disadvantaged areas.	Local Government
Where to get information Register with your local Public Participation Network (PPN) or contact your Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)		

Funding Opportunities

Community Events Grants Scheme	A grant to assist community event organisers of small-scale community events. Available from some local authorities only.	Local Government
Where to get information Register with your local Public Participation Network (PPN) and follow your local council media channels		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity Grants • Creative Ireland Funding • Sports Partnership Grants • Arts Grants • Community Grants 	Funding opportunities and grants that are available through local authorities annually or periodically.	Local Government
Where to get information Register with your local Public Participation Network (PPN) and follow your local council media channels for updates		
Leader Funding	Funding to support locally-led rural development and community capacity building. Includes a funding stream for Sustainable Development and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation.	LEADER is an EU programme administered locally by Local Action Groups (LAGs)
Where to get information Visit https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/8ac2b-leader-programme-ireland/ or contact your local action group at https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/c45498-local-action-groups/		
Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) Community Energy Grant	The SEAI supports energy efficiency community projects through capital funding, partnerships, and technical support.	The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI)
Where to get information See https://www.seai.ie/grants/community-grants/		
Sports Capital Programme	The main government support programme for the development of sports facilities. Awards marks for climate and sustainability action.	Department of Culture, Communications and Sport
Where to get information The last round of awards was announced in September 2024. For information oin the programme visit https://www.gov.ie/en/service/d13385-sports-capital-programme/		
Community Benefit Funds	Funding related to renewable infrastructure projects to be used for the wider economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being of the local community	Various bodies. The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) maintains a register of renewable electricity community development funds
Where to get information: https://www.seai.ie/community-energy/ress/community-benefit-funds		

Club Funding Advice

Tops Tips from a Green Club



1 Keep Records

Having up-to-date and easier accessible records will make it a lot easier for you to report to funders, apply for new funding and to keep the club updated on your projects and successes. Some things to pay particular attention to are:

- **Electronic and paper copies** of all funding applications. Many grants have on-line applications forms so remember to print and save your own copy before you submit
- **Receipts and Remittances.** Keep and file copies of all receipts and records of spending, as proof for funding bodies, and of remittances of all grants and funding received, so the club is aware of the funding you are bringing in
- **Take photos** before, after and during your funded project, to report to funders, for award applications and for club communications
- **Log all grants**, e.g., on a spreadsheet or as a written, dated list - for easier management of grants and projects, for reference for future grant applications and to report to the club, for examples at the AGM

2 Demonstrate Impact

Identifying and demonstrating impact is a key part of funding applications and a track record of impactful projects will increase your club's chances of success in future applications

- Specify **who or what** will benefit from your project - e.g., young people, marginalised groups, older members of the club and community, the environment/planet
- Identify **the type of impact** the funded project will have; e.g., increasing participation (in sport, physical activity, community activities, environmental awareness), improving accessibility (physical and/or social), enhancing health & well-being, reducing carbon emissions, environmental harm or resource waste
- Record and report **the numbers and figures** of your impact - e.g., numbers attending funded events or training, numbers using club facilities, numbers benefitting from funded resource or projects, club membership numbers, reduction in club energy use or increase in on-site energy generation (kWh), reduction in waste (kg), reduction in water use or increase in water harvesting/reuse (m³/l), reduction in car travel (km)
- List any other **community groups** with which you will collaborate on the funded project and/or the benefits to the community from your project. Community impact is an increasingly important element of funding calls and grants
- Emphasise any **co-benefits** to your project - e.g., inclusion and diversity, health & well-being, if the project is in a socio-economically deprived area

3 Miscellaneous Tips

- Keep your **club bank details** and a copy of a recent statement to hand so you have ready access them when filling out applications
- Success **breeds success** - if you build up a track record of spending funding fully, appropriately and on time this good reputation will weigh well with funders
- Consider **applying for awards** - some are attached to small grants and relevant awards one may strengthen future funding applications
- Many funding schemes ask for **three quotes** for project works or services - give yourself the time to gather these before the funding deadline
- Funding applications can be very time consuming - try to **share the burden** within the club or Green Team
- Prioritise your applications by **weighing the likely benefits** and result against the time and effort required

Sustainability Club Tracker

A tracking journal is available to enable the Sustainability team to document the progress that the club is making on climate action. A copy of the document is available at <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-climate-energy-and-the-environment/publications/national-dialogue-on-climate-action-ndca/#sustainable-sports-programme> This document can be saved separately for the club as a record.

The document allows you to choose up to five actions within each sustainability via drop down menus and then track each action in terms of:

- Anticipated Completion Date
- Anticipated Level of Difficulty
- Anticipated Outcome
- Progress to Date
- Final Outcome
- Final Benefit to the Club

This document can be updated throughout the club's journey.

Acknowledgements

The Sustainable Club Programme is an initiative of the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment (DCEE) with the assistance of the Gaelic Athletic Association.

The programme was developed with the support and expert input of:

GAA

The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI)

The Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPro)

Uisce Eireann

My Waste Ireland

The National Biodiversity Data Centre

The National Transport Authority (NTA)

The Road Safety Authority (RSA)

Sustainable NI

Keep NI Beautiful

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) NI

NI Water

Action Renewables

Derry City & Strabane District Council

Donegal County Council

The Department of Agriculture, Environment Rural Affairs