



Northern Powergrid's Net Zero Community Energy Fund

Net Zero Community Energy Fund

Our vision is one for a thriving, connected, and strong community energy sector in our region, where decarbonisation, resilience, energy democracy, energy security, and innovation go hand-in-hand.

We want to work with the communities we serve to tackle the climate emergency together. With many community energy organisations volunteer-led, we know that developing low carbon, local energy projects is not easy. The knowledge new groups need is available, but getting it – or funding it – can be difficult.

We know we have a role to support them, both as an anchor institution and also as a key player in the energy sector locally and nationally with the relevant expertise and networks.

For these reasons, and building on the programme of work set out in our [Community Energy Engagement Strategy](#), we are launching the Net Zero Community Energy Fund, to support communities across the North East, Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire on their net zero journeys.



Since 2014, when we launched our community energy support programme, we have seen a marked increase in community groups interested in energy or emissions reduction, but a slow growth in new projects or initiatives.

The purpose of this fund is to support projects at the early stages, explore feasible project ideas, enable access to the right expertise, and encourage new and existing community energy organisations to develop their project ideas.

Guidance and criteria

Net Zero Community Energy Fund overview:

- In-kind support **and/or** grants up to £10,000 for building capacity of local community energy groups
- Applications assessed bi-monthly between 1 April 2022 to 31 July 2022
- Apply here: form.typeform.com/to/R3KKvXcE

This document contains more information on:

- Context and purpose of the Fund
- Eligibility criteria
- Application process
- Assessment process
- Post grant evidence



Who is Northern Powergrid?



Northern Powergrid is a Distribution Network Operator (DNO). We manage the electricity network that powers everyday life for more than 8 million people across 3.9 million homes and businesses in the North East, Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire.

We have a key role to play in facilitating the energy transition, and recognise that supporting the growth of community energy helps to ensure this transition is as fair as possible with no one left behind.

In 2014, we were the first DNO to launch a Community Energy Seed Fund.

In 2020, we published a [Community Energy Engagement Strategy](#) for 2020-2023, setting out 26 commitments to support the community energy sector.

What is the Net Zero Community Energy Fund? (cont.)

- Northern Powergrid is working with Regen to administer £50,000 in funding to support new and existing community energy organisations and climate action groups across the North East, Yorkshire and North East Lincolnshire. Grants of up to £10,000 are available. Applications will be assessed bi-monthly until 31 July 2022.
- The aim of this fund is to help new and existing groups to build capacity, access expertise and explore feasible project ideas in the early 'at risk' stages of project development, and support emerging community energy organisations with start-up costs.
- We are open to your ideas for support which will help your community achieve net zero or identify actions to achieve net zero, and want to support you to develop these ideas further.
- This document sets out the criteria, application process and how the applications will be judged for this funding.

What is the Net Zero Community Energy Fund? (cont.)

The first round of funding can be used to support start-up costs, training or project specific activities, and in-kind* support, including:

- Technical expertise and mentoring
- Formal training
- Feasibility studies
- Researching a new business model
- Setting up a legal entity**
- Supporting staff time for a specific project
- Producing materials to support the scheme



*Non-monetary support. We would match you with (and arrange) the support requested

**Successful applicants will need a bank account to accept funding

What is the Net Zero Community Energy Fund? (cont.)

- Peer mentoring (online or in person), including matching you with an experienced community energy group
- Facilitated discussions/workshops with experts or community
- Proof of concept trials
- Funding, bid writing, governance advice or training
- Other in-kind support to support you with exploring how barriers can be overcome – please let us know what you may require



Who can apply? (cont.)

We will accept applications from community-based organisations and charities which meet the following criteria:

- You are a volunteer-led group, a registered charity, community benefit society, community interest company or a not-for-profit organisation with charitable aims
- You have formal constitution and a bank account with at least two signatories
- You are run by local people with clear local benefits to the project and demonstrable community links
- You can demonstrate an awareness of projects which will result in carbon savings, alleviate fuel poverty, or increase awareness of energy and climate-related issues
- You have an organisation income of less than £100,000 in the most recent financial year
- Note: Applicants can apply to the community benefit fund for 100% of project costs, with no match funding required.

Who can apply? (cont.)

We would encourage applications from groups focusing on, but not limited to, the following:

- Alleviating fuel poverty
- Delivering energy efficiency
- Feasibility of large-scale renewable energy projects
- Decarbonisation of heat
- Low-carbon transport
- Education and public engagement on energy



Who can apply? (cont.)

Organisations and the majority of the project's beneficiaries need to be based in one of the following areas:

- County Durham
- Darlington
- Hartlepool
- Middlesbrough
- Northumberland
- Redcar and Cleveland
- Stockton-On-Tees
- Gateshead
- Newcastle upon Tyne
- North Tyneside
- South Tyneside
- Sunderland
- Pendle
- East Riding of Yorkshire
- Kingston upon Hull
- York
- North Yorkshire
- Craven
- Hambleton
- Harrogate
- Richmondshire
- Ryedale
- Scarborough
- Selby
- Barnsley
- Doncaster
- Rotherham
- Sheffield
- Bradford
- Calderdale
- Kirklees
- Leeds
- Wakefield
- High Peak
- North East Derbyshire
- North Lincolnshire
- North East Lincolnshire
- East Lindsey
- West Lindsey
- Bassetlaw



Support not in scope

While we want to be flexible, we will not normally consider the following:

- Projects or business models that have been proved to be unviable by other community energy groups
- Applications from individuals
- General running costs including employment costs
- Projects that have already taken place or applications for retroactive funding
- Any costs associated with the development, completion or submission of an application to this fund
- Applications from commercial organisations
- Applications for political or religious causes
- This list is not exhaustive - please contact us if you have any questions about your organisation's eligibility

How will the applications be assessed?

Each application will be reviewed within four weeks to ensure eligibility criteria are met. The applicant may be contacted within this time to clarify responses provided, if required.

- Following receipt of applications to the Net Zero Community Energy Fund within the stated deadline, Regen will make an initial assessment of applications to ensure that they are fully completed and meet eligibility criteria.
- Applications that are found to be incomplete or in-eligible will not be considered, but the applicants will receive feedback and will be encouraged to re-apply. Unsuccessful applicants will be provided with short feedback on the application and advised by phone or email as to whether they are able to re-submit a revised application at a later funding round.

Next steps after application (cont.)

Regen and Northern Powergrid, along with a panel of independent community energy experts, will apply the evaluation criteria outlined here to assess applications and award funding.

- Further to the eligibility check, project applications will be fully assessed by an expert panel at bimonthly intervals. The possible outcomes from this assessment will be:
 - the application fails to secure funding as it does not meet the priorities of the fund or other applicants scored higher; or
 - the application is approved for funding.

Next steps after application (cont.)

- Following the approval of an application, a grant offer letter (including terms and conditions of grant acceptance) will be sent to the successful applicant.
- The applicant will be required to sign and return of the acceptance and terms and conditions of grant forms within one month of the grant offer being made and prior to the start of the project (if the project is started before the acceptance of grant and terms is returned, the grant offer may be withdrawn).
- Following confirmation that all documentation has been received, project applicants must start their project within three months.

The evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description	Weighting
Need	There should be a demonstrable need from within the community for the project. Applicant should clearly articulate where (or what) they propose to focus on and why, and what outcomes they expect (aspire) to deliver. There should be a clear link between the applicant's objectives and the objectives of this Fund.	20%
Impact	The project should deliver a significant positive contribution towards emission reduction and/or upskilling in the local community. Plans for community engagement and dissemination of outcomes have been considered and outlined in the proposal.	30%
Value	The project should demonstrate clear value for money, taking into account the project's potential benefit relative to the grant amount.	15%
Capability	The applicant should demonstrate they have the experience and capacity to implement their project proposals successfully, when both their current capabilities and any capabilities identified for support (direct or capacity building) through the allocation of this fund are considered. Timescales and key milestones have been identified in the application. The applicant can demonstrate understanding and awareness of the energy sector and the community energy sector.	15%
Long-term sustainability	The project should be sustainable once the initial investment has been made, and there should be clear evidence that there are sufficient resources to continue the future management and maintenance of any assets which are developed or improved through the initiative.	20%

Grant payment and post-grant evidence

- 100% of the grant funds (or in-kind support) allocated from the community benefit fund will be released within two weeks of receipt of signed copied of the grant offer letter and terms and conditions. The grant funding will be in the form of a bank transfer as provided in the application process.
- A final project report will be required from all successful applicants within six weeks of project completion. This should include a description of activities undertaken, social, economic, environmental or community benefits/outcomes realised, financial records for the project and any other supporting evidence of successful delivery, e.g., photos, videos, testimonials or asset details.
- Failure to comply with this condition may result in the requirement for the applicant to pay back the grant award in full.

Contact us or apply now



View a list of application questions: regen.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022-NPg-NZCE-Fund-application-questions.xlsx



Email: psumaria@regen.co.uk



Phone: 01392 494 399

Apply: form.typeform.com/to/R3KKvXcE