



Department  
of Energy &  
Climate Change

# Community Energy Support and Advice Resource

Call for Proposals

December 2014

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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at [communityenergyunit@decc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:communityenergyunit@decc.gsi.gov.uk)

## 1. Summary

- 1.1. The Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) is responsible for all aspects of UK energy policy, and for tackling global climate change on behalf of the UK.
- 1.2. The UK Government is working together with industry and the community energy sector to implement the Community Energy Strategy (CES). The Strategy sets out the Government's ambition for community energy to play a much more significant role in the UK's energy system, recognising that community energy projects are more likely to succeed where the community has access to the right information, advice and support, and can learn from each other and share information about what works.
- 1.3. The CES includes a commitment from DECC to provide seed investment for the community energy sector in England to develop and build on the existing information, advice and support resources. This should enable the sector to improve the capacity and capability of community energy groups and enterprises and drive engagement and uptake of relevant DECC policies and programmes, helping to meet the objectives set out in the CES.
- 1.4. Community Energy England (CEE) and supporting organisations<sup>1</sup> have undertaken a scoping study and presented recommendations<sup>2</sup> to DECC on primary activities and priorities for a Community Energy Support and Advice Resource (CESAR)<sup>3</sup>. The outputs of this work are available on CEE's website<sup>4</sup>. CEE suggested a multi-channel approach to CESAR with two priority services for DECC's seed investment grant: a national digital hub to signpost to existing information, support and advice, and a regional support telephone line to catalyse and develop community energy peer networks.
- 1.5. DECC is considering offering a single grant of up to £100,000 to a suitable grantee, or consortium of grantees, in the community energy marketplace. The funding will be split into two tranches, covering financial years 2014/15 and 2015/16. This Call for Proposals sets out the requirements of the grant to ensure value for money for DECC and the optimum use of the budget to meet the community energy sector's support and advice needs. It is informed by CEE's recommendations and DECC's existing evidence base on community energy.
- 1.6. The required outcome of the first tranche, eligible for funding no later than the end of March 2015, will be to develop and launch CESAR, the core service of which will be a national signposting hub to existing sources of information, support and advice on community energy. We expect that this service will realistically be delivered through an existing website. **Please note DECC will only consider proposals for a digital hub if it can be demonstrated that it will be built on the existing web domain of the grantee(s).**
- 1.7. The required outcomes of the second tranche, eligible for funding from April 2015 to the end of March 2016, will be to i) manage, maintain and develop CESAR during this period, and ii) provide a dedicated support service to catalyse and develop community energy peer networks. **Please note DECC does not wish to be prescriptive about how the grantee(s) will achieve the required outcomes of the second grant**

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<sup>1</sup> Including SE2 Ltd., Energy Saving Trust, RegenSW, Pure Leapfrog, Project Dirt, Community Energy Coalition, Renewable Energy Association.

<sup>2</sup> DECC awarded a £3,500 grant to CEE to undertake the scoping study.

<sup>3</sup> CESAR was referred to as a 'One Stop Shop' in the CES. This paper adopts CESAR suggested by CEE but the winning provider may need to agree with DECC and CEE what an appropriate name for the resource should be.

<sup>4</sup> <http://communityenergyengland.org/action/advisory/>

**tranche but is seeking proposals up to a maximum budget of £35,000 of the total maximum £100,000 grant available.**

- 1.8. Applicants should refer to section 3. for the overview of requirements of the grant. It is essential that work is completed and invoiced in advance of the end of the relevant financial year.
- 1.9. To underpin delivery of Tranches 1 and 2, DECC is seeking proposals that consider a strategy to sustain CESAR without ongoing government funding beyond the initial maximum grant available of £100,000. DECC is providing seed investment for the first two stages of roll-out of CESAR only. It is therefore essential that proposals address the longer-term financing needed to sustain CESAR. Proposals must set out how the grantee(s) will develop this strategy, including identification of the potential models and sources of funding it would anticipate exploring.

## 2. Required outcomes of competition

- 2.1. DECC seeks to appoint a suitable grantee, or consortium of grantees, to achieve the purpose of the grant through the delivery of the following 3 key outcomes:
  - Tranche 1: Develop and launch CESAR, including a core national signposting hub that meets the requirements set out in 3., no later than the end of March 2015;
  - Tranche 2: i) Manage, maintain and develop CESAR, and ii) provide a dedicated support service to catalyse and develop community energy peer networks that meets the requirements set out in 3., from April 2015 to the end of March 2016;
  - Development of a strategy to sustain CESAR without additional funding from central government.

## 3. Overview of requirements

- 3.1. This grant will provide seed investment to develop and implement CESAR to deliver the benefits of enhanced capacity and capability for the community energy sector in England. The initial aim of CESAR should be to cover the key stages of a typical community energy project with a decent range of guidance on the most important issues and to be launched promptly, and no later than the end of March 2015. Part of the remit of the grantee(s) will be to then manage, maintain and develop CESAR over time so it becomes a more comprehensive source of information, support and advice on all forms of community energy project in the CES: energy generation (heat and electricity); demand reduction; demand management; and, purchasing.
- 3.2. The target audience of CESAR should be focused on those with the greatest user need for support and those that will help achieve the objectives of the CES, including:
  - New or existing community groups and enterprises that want to start their own community energy project but with no previous energy experience;
  - Community groups and enterprises that are working towards an application for funding and support to the RCEF or UCEF;
  - Existing community energy groups and enterprises intending to broaden their remit (e.g. from electricity generation projects to those focusing on energy efficiency/fuel poverty);

- Community groups and enterprises looking to undertake a partnership or shared ownership project (e.g. with a commercial renewable developer or local authority).
- 3.3. The geographic scope of CESAR must focus on community energy groups and enterprises in England and be coordinated closely with established regional and local sources of advice and support for community energy, providing signposting so that local groups can be directed to people and organisations with the relevant knowledge in their area. It would also be preferable for CESAR to be linked to the main associations for community energy across the UK, in particular Community Energy England, but also Local Energy Scotland, Community Energy Wales, and Community Energy Scotland.

### Tranche 1: Develop and launch CESAR, including a core national signposting hub

3.4. DECC is seeking proposals that demonstrate how the grantee(s) will develop and launch CESAR, the core service of which will be a national signposting hub that facilitates comprehensive access to existing, and emerging, information, advice and support services (including sources of funding and accessing advice from legal and financial experts). Proposals must meet requirements in 3.1-3.5.

3.5. The specific grant requirements of Tranche 1 are:

- We expect that this service will realistically be delivered through an existing website. **Please note DECC will only consider proposals for a digital hub if it can be demonstrated that it will be built on the existing web domain of the grantee(s);**
- The grantee(s) must develop<sup>5</sup> and launch the national signposting hub no later than the end of March 2015;
- The design and functionality of the hub must be clear and user-centred, easily navigable and based around the key stages of the community energy project lifecycle (a Facebook page or simple wiki would not be fit for purpose).
- The grantee(s) will be required to consult with DECC in the initial stages of development and implementation of the hub to ensure it signposts to all relevant DECC policies and programmes and forms a coherent customer journey across these<sup>6</sup>.
- In addition to providing a comprehensive signposting service to existing resources, it is essential for the hub to include:
  - a helpful but brief summary of what each resource covers;
  - a high quality and dynamic indexing system and search facility to ensure that users can readily find the answers they need<sup>7</sup>;
  - a moderated question and answer service enabling an evolving (and similarly well indexed) FAQ section.

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<sup>5</sup> The Energy Saving Trust has good knowledge of existing available resources and has kindly offered to collate these in preparation for the appointment of the selected service provider. CEE and others have agreed to support this process.

<sup>6</sup> This will include making the database of development risk capital available to community energy projects that was developed by the Community Energy Finance Roundtable. See recommendation 5 of the Roundtable's final report here: [http://www.cse.org.uk/downloads/file/CEFRoundtable\\_report\\_to\\_DECC-CO\\_140729.pdf](http://www.cse.org.uk/downloads/file/CEFRoundtable_report_to_DECC-CO_140729.pdf)

<sup>7</sup>

Where one user asks "where do I find the money?", another looks under "funding" and a third might search for "share offers". The survey form and the mapping spreadsheet from the CEE scoping report provide some useful headings which could be used for this indexing.

- Proposals should also consider how user review capability, allowing participants to rate the various resources, could be incorporated to enhance the hub in due course.
- Any remaining budget should be used to develop and/or commission new content to fill any gaps in information provision for the community energy sector, which can be signposted to via the hub when available.

## Tranche 2: i) Manage, maintain and develop CESAR, and ii) provide a dedicated support service to catalyse and develop community energy peer networks

3.6. On i), proposals should satisfactorily demonstrate how the grantee(s) will manage, maintain and develop CESAR, ensuring that from April 2015 to the end of March 2016:

- relevant new resources are added and summaries provided;
- all summaries remain up to date and hyperlinks remain active;
- the indexing system and search facility are made compatible with these;
- the moderated question and answer service and FAQ section is well maintained.

3.7. On ii) proposals should also include an explanation of how the grantee(s) will provide an additional dedicated support service to catalyse and develop community energy peer networks, facilitating sharing of experience and networking between community energy groups and enterprises with a focus on those in 3.2-3.3. This is in recognition that the first place that emerging community energy groups are inclined to turn for advice is existing community energy groups and enterprises, which have confronted similar development requirements.

3.8. DECC is not being prescriptive but is instead seeking proposals that explain how the grantee(s) would best achieve this outcome for community energy networks in England<sup>8</sup>. Suggestions include:

- piloting telephone help-lines hosted by regional networks<sup>9</sup> with contacts in existing community energy groups and enterprises;
- providing online social networking functionality for community energy groups and enterprises, and their partner organisations via a digital hub;
- seed funding for regional network start-ups where they don't already exist (this could include facilitating initial workshop sessions, training of network managers etc.);
- a combination of the above and/or others.

3.9. Key requirements of this service are that it is closely coordinated with the signposting hub, and that it must proactively drive activity and discussion; it is not enough for the service to be reactive, it must stimulate networking activity and information sharing between groups and projects. **Please note DECC is seeking proposals for Tranche 2 up to a maximum budget of £35,000 of the total maximum £100,000 grant available.**

## A strategy to sustain CESAR without funding from government from April 2016

3.10. In addition to explaining how the grantee(s) will achieve the outcomes of Tranches 1 and 2, proposals should set out a strategy to sustain CESAR without funding from government beyond the initial maximum grant available of £100,000. There are various

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<sup>8</sup> Depending on the type of support service proposed, grantee(s) may wish to focus on a particular region in England where it can demonstrate a significant user need exists. CEE gave the example of East Anglia, based perhaps in Norwich – if suitable providers can be found.

<sup>9</sup> In some parts of the country networks already fulfil this requirement to some extent, e.g. Bath and West Community Energy, Oxfordshire's Low Carbon Hub in and RegenSW.

models and sources of funding that CESAR could take to enable long-term viability, including:

- Sponsorship and/or advertising
- Membership (i.e. through low cost subscriptions)
- Grants (for the development of specific services such as mentoring)
- Service delivery
- Funding by community energy associations

3.11. DECC is providing seed investment for the first two stages of roll-out of CESAR only. It is therefore essential that proposals address the longer-term financing needed to sustain CESAR. Proposals must set out how the grantee(s) will develop this strategy, including identification of the potential models and sources of funding it would anticipate exploring.

## 4. Terms of competition

4.1. DECC is considering offering a single grant of up to £100,000 to a suitable grantee, or consortium of grantees, to deliver CESAR that meets the overview of requirements set out in 3. The grant is offered under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC).

4.2. The funding will be split into two Tranches:

- Tranche 1 – delivery and payment no later than the end of March 2015; and,
- Tranche 2 – delivery and payment from April 2015 to end of March 2016.

4.3. Proposals should clearly set out how much of the grant funding is required for each Tranche of delivery. **Please note that of the total maximum £100,000 grant available, a maximum of £35,000 is available for Tranche 2.**

4.4. It is important that any grant funding complies with EU state aid rules. These rules apply where applicants are operating as an undertaking by providing goods or services to a market. If the grant constitutes a state aid, the grant can only be awarded if the grant falls within one of the narrow exemptions permitted under EU state aid rules and we propose to award such a grant as de-minimis aid in accordance with the EU de-minimis regulation<sup>10</sup>. Under that regulation, you can receive up to a maximum level of aid without this constituting an unlawful state aid. That level is usually €200,000 per undertaking over three fiscal years.

4.5. It is important to note that the de-minimis limit comprises the total amount of de-minimis aid you receive from the state during that period. That aid will include aid relating to other projects, aid provided by other public authorities and their agents, and aid other than grants (e.g. foregone interest on loans).

4.6. Therefore before any proposal can be accepted or offer made, the applicant must satisfy DECC that the grant, if added to any previous de-minimis aid you have received during the current and last two fiscal years, does not cause you to exceed the de-minimis limit.

4.7. For state aid and other reasons, the applicant must declare any other public funding (i.e. funding provided by or on behalf of any other UK public authority or European institution)

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<sup>10</sup> Commission Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de-minimis aid (OJ L 352, 24.12.2013, p.1).

that they have been awarded (or are applying for) in relation to the project or relevant costs.

4.8. **Please note that failure to comply with the requirements of EU law relating to state aid may mean that the grant will be withdrawn or (if paid) be repayable (with interest).**

4.9. Applicants must be in a position to claim funding for Tranche 1 of the grant no later than the end of March 2015 and Tranche 2 of the grant no later than the end of March 2016. It is essential that work is completed and invoiced, in advance of the end of the relevant financial year.

4.10. Funding is available for capital and revenue costs.

## 5. Format and deadline

5.1. Proposals should be made using the template at Annex B, and including the declarations at Annex C and Annex D by midday on 30/01/2015. Please use Arial 11 font.

5.2. Proposals should be submitted to the following email address with the subject heading 'Community Energy Support and Advice Resource Competition':

[communityenergyunit@decc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:communityenergyunit@decc.gsi.gov.uk)

## 6. Evaluation criteria

6.1. DECC will evaluate eligible proposals in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out at Annex A. Please note that DECC will treat as ineligible, and exclude, any proposals which do not comply with:

- a) the requirements set out in this Call for Proposals;
- b) the requirements of EU law relating to state aid (see above)

6.2. DECC may also treat as ineligible, and exclude, any proposals on the grounds in regulation 23 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006.

## 7. Further details

7.1. Any specific queries related to this call can be emailed to:

[communityenergyunit@decc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:communityenergyunit@decc.gsi.gov.uk)

with the subject heading 'Community Energy Support and Advice Resource Competition'

7.2. This Call for Proposals does not commit DECC to proceeding with awarding the grant. DECC reserves the right not to award any grants, in particular if DECC is not satisfied by the proposals received or if the funding assigned to the scheme is required for other, unforeseen, purposes. DECC will not, under any circumstances, make any contribution to the costs of preparing proposals and applicants accept the risk that they may not be awarded a grant. **Please note that any grant award will be subject to the applicant's agreement to, and compliance with, the terms and conditions that DECC will set out in a grant offer letter.**



## Annex A – Detailed evaluation criteria

Proposals will be assessed based on the following criteria:

### i. Understanding requirements and adding value (total weighting 30%)

Applicants must set out how their proposal meets the 'required outcomes' specified in section 2., and 'overview of requirements' in section 3. Applicants should demonstrate:

- That they have an understanding of what it is that DECC requires (weighting 15%)
- How they will add value in delivering against the requirements (weighting 15%)

### ii. Delivery Plan (total weighting 40%)

Applicants must show how they intend to deliver Tranche 1 of CESAR by end of March 2015 and Tranche 2 of CESAR from April 2015 to end of March 2016. Please include:

- Delivery plan for Tranche 1 of CESAR, including key performance indicators, milestones and risk management plan. **Please note DECC will only consider proposals for a digital hub if it can be demonstrated that it will be built on the existing web domain of the grantee(s)** (weighting 20%);
- Delivery plan for Tranche 2 of CESAR, including key performance indicators, milestones and risk management plan. It should show how applicants intend to i) manage, maintain and develop CESAR, and ii) provide a dedicated support service to catalyse and develop community energy peer networks (weighting 15%);
- How they will address the longer-term financing needed to sustain CESAR, including identification of the potential models and sources of funding they would anticipate exploring (weighting 5%).

### iii. Skills, Experience and Expertise (total weighting 20%)

Applicants should set out the expertise and skills of the organisation and staff, to cover:

- Capabilities and track record in the community energy marketplace relevant to the programme of work (weighting 5%);
- Delivery of Tranche 1 of CESAR to time, cost and quality (weighting 10%);
- Delivery of Tranche 2 of CESAR to time, cost and quality (weighting 5%).

### iv. Cost (total weighting 10%)

Applicants should set out the cost for their proposal, including a breakdown of cost for labour, materials, travel and subsistence, other costs, and VAT where applicable. Include an invoicing profile detailing dates, values and associated deliverables.

## Annex B – Template for responses (20 page limit)

| Annex B – Template for responses (20 page limit)         |   |    |
|--|---|----|
| <b>Name</b>  |   |    |
| <b>Contact Details</b>                                   | E:  | T: |
| <b>Organisation</b>                                      |   |    |
| <b>Proposal Summary</b>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Briefly set out how your proposal intends to meet the requirements of the call.</li> </ul>   |    |
| <b>EU State aid</b>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide us with the information required under 4.4-4.8</li> <li>Complete Annex D</li> </ul>  |    |
| <b>Other public funding</b>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide us with information about any other public funding awarded for the project (including the identity of the relevant public body awarding the funding and amount of the funding).                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OR confirm that you are receiving no other public funding.</li> </ol> </li> </ul> |    |
| <b>Understanding requirements and adding value (30%)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(refer to Annex A for guidance)</li> </ul>   |    |
| <b>Delivery Plan (40%)</b>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(refer to Annex A for guidance)</li> </ul>   |    |
| <b>Skills, Experience and Expertise (20%)</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(refer to Annex A for guidance)</li> </ul>   |    |
| <b>Cost (10%)</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(refer to Annex A for guidance)</li> </ul>   |    |

## Annex C – Questions for applicants

In some circumstances the Department may exclude you from participating further in a competitive grant process. If you cannot answer 'no' to every question in this section it is very unlikely that your application will be accepted, and you should contact us for advice before completing this form.

Please state 'Yes' or 'No' to each question.

| <b>Has your organisation or any directors or partner or any other person who has powers of representation, decision or control been convicted of any of the following offences?</b>  | <b>Answer</b> |
|--|---------------|
| (a) conspiracy within the meaning of <a href="#">section 1</a> or 1A of the Criminal Law Act 1977 or article 9 or 9A of the Criminal Attempts and Conspiracy (Northern Ireland) Order 1983 where that conspiracy relates to participation in a criminal organisation as defined in Article 2 of Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA; |               |
| (b) corruption within the meaning of <a href="#">section 1</a> (2) of the Public Bodies Corrupt Practices Act 1889 or <a href="#">section 1</a> of the Prevention of Corruption Act 1906; where the offence relates to active corruption;  |               |
| (c) the offence of bribery, where the offence relates to active corruption;  |               |
| (d) bribery within the meaning of section 1 or 6 of the Bribery Act 2010;  |               |
| (e) fraud, where the offence relates to fraud affecting the European Communities' financial interests as defined by Article 1 of the Convention on the protection of the financial interests of the European Communities, within the meaning of:   |               |
| (i) the offence of cheating the Revenue;   |               |
| (ii) the offence of conspiracy to defraud;   |               |
| (iii) fraud or theft within the meaning of the <a href="#">Theft Act 1968</a> , the Theft Act (Northern Ireland) 1969, the Theft Act 1978 or the Theft (Northern Ireland) Order 1978;  |               |
| (iv) fraudulent trading within the meaning of <a href="#">section 458</a> of the Companies Act 1985, article 451 of the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 or section 993 of the Companies Act 2006;  |               |
| (v) fraudulent evasion within the meaning of section 170 of the <a href="#">Customs and Excise Management Act 1979</a> or <a href="#">section 72 of the Value Added Tax Act 1994</a> ;   |               |

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|--|--|
|  |  |
| (vi) an offence in connection with taxation in the European Union within the meaning of section 71 of the Criminal Justice Act 1993;   |  |
| (vii) destroying, defacing or concealing of documents or procuring the execution of a valuable security within the meaning of <a href="#">section 20</a> of the Theft Act 1968 or section 19 of the Theft Act (Northern Ireland) 1969; |  |
| (viii) fraud within the meaning of section 2, 3 or 4 of the Fraud Act 2006; or   |  |
| (ix) making, adapting, supplying or offering to supply articles for use in frauds within the meaning of section 7 of the Fraud Act 2006;   |  |
| (f) money laundering within the meaning of section 340(11) of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002;  |  |
| (g) an offence in connection with the proceeds of criminal conduct within the meaning of section 93A, 93B or 93C of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 or article 45, 46 or 47 of the Proceeds of Crime (Northern Ireland) Order 1996; or   |  |
| (h) an offence in connection with the proceeds of drug trafficking within the meaning of section 49, 50 or 51 of the Drug Trafficking Act 1994; or   |  |
| (i) any other offence within the meaning of Article 45(1) of Directive 2004/18/EC as defined by the national law of any relevant State.  |  |

## Annex D – De-minimis state aid declaration

Please tick the statement that applies to you:

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <p><i>[Insert name of grantee]</i>, and any other undertaking forming a single undertaking with <i>[insert name of grantee]</i> for the purpose of the de-minimis regulation, <b>has not received any de-minimis aid</b> (whether de-minimis aid from or attributable the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change or any other public authority) during the current and two previous fiscal years.</p> |
|  | <p><i>[Insert name of grantee]</i>, and/or any other undertaking forming a single undertaking with <i>[insert name of grantee]</i> for the purpose of the de-minimis regulation, <b>has received de-minimis aid</b> during the current and two previous fiscal years particulars of which are set out in the table below.</p>   |

Please confirm the dates of the fiscal year for the purpose of your business:

\_\_\_\_\_

Particulars of any de-minimis aid during the current or previous two fiscal years:

| Public Authority | Date awarded | Total amount of aid <sup>11</sup> | Description of aid <sup>12</sup> | Recipient <sup>13</sup> | Date(s) received <sup>14</sup> |
|------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
|                  |              |                                   |                                  |                         |                                |
|                  |              |                                   |                                  |                         |                                |
|                  |              |                                   |                                  |                         |                                |
|                  |              |                                   |                                  |                         |                                |
|                  |              |                                   |                                  |                         |                                |

<sup>11</sup> This should be the amount of aid awarded. However, please also inform us if the amount received differed.

<sup>12</sup> Please confirm the nature of the aid (e.g. whether a grant or a loan etc.) and the purpose for which it was awarded (e.g. any project funded by it).

<sup>13</sup> Please confirm the identity of the recipient of the aid if this is a separate entity forming part of a “single undertaking” with you.

<sup>14</sup> Please inform us if the aid was paid by instalments.

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