

Community Sustainable Energy Programme

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can apply?

Not-for-profit community based organisations. This includes:

- community groups with a governing document;
- registered charities and trusts;
- parish councils; schools and colleges;
- companies that have a charitable purpose and a community focus (eg. companies limited by guarantee, social enterprises, community interest companies, where any surpluses are mainly reinvested for community benefit);
- mutual societies;
- church based and other faith organisations.

All applicants must provide proof of not-for-profit status. If you are a school, a letter from a head teacher on school headed paper confirming this would suffice.

(An applicant will only be able to receive/apply for a grant if it is not an undertaking within the meaning of the rules on State Aid laid down under the EC treaty).

With reference to State Aid, how can I determine whether my organisation is an undertaking?

Please refer to examples on the CSEP website under the [State Aid](#) section.

What areas of the country are covered?

Projects must be based in England to qualify for funding.

Can applicants put in multiple applications?

Yes - applicants can submit more than one application, but applications for capital grants are assessed on a competitive basis and the Selection Panel will not allocate more than £50K per applicant.

How much funding is available?

A total fund of £8 million is available for the installation of microgeneration technologies and energy efficiency measures. £1 million is available for project development grants. Individual awards are subject to the limits detailed below.

How does the application process work? Can I apply online?

Applications may be submitted either online or by post. We do not accept faxed or emailed applications. Online applications are preferred, as they reduce administration costs and can be processed more quickly.

All applications must include a paper copy of the Declaration section (see Section 4 for project development grants and Section 6 for capital) with original signatures. Photocopies are not accepted.

What is the eligibility criteria for receiving a grant?

The application will be assessed against criteria specified in the [Guidance Notes](#) (see Section 2.3 for project development grants and Section 3.3 for capital grants).

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Can I apply for a grant retrospectively?

No, applications can only be made where the installation has yet to take place and the application is assessed to meet all of the scheme criteria.

What other supporting documents need to be supplied with the completed application form?

Capital Grants:

- 1) Section 3: Project Concept and Design on CD-ROM/Floppy Disk/via email/uploaded with on-line application **plus** a brief summary of the 16 criteria listed in Section 3, using no more than 150 words per criteria should be completed online in the boxes provided or sent with a hard copy application in a Microsoft Word document.
- 2) Copies of quotations from certificated installers for all proposed measures and microgeneration technologies on CD-ROM/Floppy Disk or as paper copies. These should match with the information stated in the relevant Section 4.2-4.8.
- 3) The relevant forms for Sections 4.2-4.8,
- 4) Proof of not-for-profit status (eg governing document, set of rules, memorandum and articles of association) on CD-ROM/Floppy Disk or as a paper copy,
- 5) Three consecutive pages of original bank or building society statements, (this must be no more than three months old)
- 6) Most recent set of accounts (not required for parish councils or schools),
- 7) Equal Opportunities Policy on CD-ROM/Floppy Disk or as a paper copy,
- 8) Environmental Policy on CD-ROM/Floppy Disk or as a paper copy,
- 9) Details of any applications or letters of commitment from potential funders,
- 10) Signed hard copy of Section 6 Checklist and Declaration (this must be received by the deadline date to ensure your application is viewed at the next appropriate Panel meeting).

Please ensure any drawings, site plans, schematics etc that are referred to in Section 3 Project Concept and Design are sent electronically.

Project Development Grants:

- 1) Copy of an estimate from a CSEP Registered consultant on their company headed paper,
- 2) Proof of not-for-profit status (eg governing document, set of rules, memorandum and articles of association) on CD-ROM/Floppy Disk or as a paper copy,
- 3) Most recent set of accounts (not required for parish councils or schools),
- 4) Three consecutive pages of an original bank or building society statement, (this must be no more than three months old)
- 5) Signed hard copy of Section 4 Checklist and Declaration.

Can I send in supporting documentation at a later date?

For a capital application to be considered 'full' and therefore eligible to be assessed, all documentation should be sent by 5pm on the application deadline date unless previously agreed with the helpline team. For project development applications all documentation should be included with the application but there are no deadlines to meet as applications are viewed on an ongoing basis.



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I am finding the Project Concept and Design difficult to complete, are all the criteria necessary?

Yes all of the criteria should be completed. The project concept and design is your opportunity to sell your project to the Panel. As CSEP is a competitive programme you need to make your project stand out. As the programme title indicates "Community Involvement" is a major aspect that is considered by the Panel. You need to show that you have consulted with the local community on your project. You should also consider the importance of the Establishing Need section. In this you should address the local, social and economic need. Describe who needs your project and how your project will make a difference to the people involved.

The public profile and promotion is also important as we need to know your project is raising awareness in the local community. Energy efficiency is also vital as these measures should be in place before or funded with your microgeneration installation. Your options appraisal should show an integrated approach.

Showing that you have addressed all of the project concept and design criteria fully will strengthen your application and your chances of receiving funding.

Why do I have to submit two documents for the Project Concept and Design?

The main project concept and design document is used to assess your project. It should include as much detail against each of the 16 criteria as possible including, drawings, photographs, schematics and should be submitted electronically as the technical assessment process is carried out online. The brief summary document can be either completed as part of the online form or sent in hard copy Word format. This document is used as a snapshot of your project as part of our internal assessment process.

I can't provide all the information required on the Compliance Checklist, what should I do?

For an application to meet the minimum grant eligibility criteria all of the items on the checklist should be ticked (unless an agreed exception) and if applicable, evidence provided. For example, if you tick "I have enclosed details of all applications and any letters of commitment from potential funders", we would expect to receive evidence of this such as offer letters or acknowledgement emails or evidence of availability of own funds. If this is not provided the application does not meet the minimum eligibility criteria. Also if your organisation does not have its own equal opportunities or environmental policy but adheres to that of the local authority or parent organisation, we would need something in writing from a senior staff member confirming this.

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What can the grant be used for?

Project Development Grants are available for up to £5,000 or 75% of the study cost, whichever is lower. Studies should address key issues such as technical and financial viability, legal and planning issues and access to other sources of funding. Studies must be carried out by one of the businesses listed on the [Register of Consultants](#).

Capital Grants are available for up to £50,000 or 50 per cent of the project cost (whichever is lower) for installing microgeneration technologies and energy efficiency measures. Microgeneration technologies must be chosen from the list of certificated products and installed by certified installers – details of which can be found at www.microgenerationcertification.org. Further details on eligible costs for each technology can be found in Appendix 3 of the [Guidance Notes](#). If you are applying for the full amount of £50,000 or close to this please ensure you submit a thorough and detailed application, in particular Section 3 Project Concept & Design.

What are the conditions of the grant being given?

Terms and Conditions for Project Development and Capital Grants can be found in the downloads section at www.communitysustainable.org.uk

What technologies are covered by the CSEP grant scheme?

- Solar photovoltaics – solar photovoltaic (PV) systems use energy from the sun to convert solar radiation into electricity, which can be used directly to run appliances and lighting, sold to the national grid, or stored in batteries in off-grid locations.
- Solar thermal hot water – solar panels or “collectors”, are typically fitted on to or integrated in to the roof of a building. They use the sun’s energy to heat water, or a heat-transfer fluid, which passes through the panel. The fluid is fed to a heat store to provide part of the hot water demand for the building.
- Wind turbines – wind turbines harness energy from the wind to produce electricity. The most common design is of three blades mounted on a horizontal axis, which is free to rotate in the wind on a tall tower or mast. The blades drive a generator either directly or via a gearbox to produce electricity.
- Heat pumps – a heat pump can be used efficiently for space and water heating. Heat pumps take heat energy from a source such as the ground, a body of water (eg. river, lake or well) or simply the outside air and transfer it to the building. The heat is upgraded by using a pump and compressor which removes heat from one side of the circuit and ejects it to the other side. Heat pumps require electricity for their operation and users may consider buying this through a green tariff scheme, which promotes the use of renewable energy resources by power generators.
- Automated wood-pellet stoves and wood fuelled boilers – unlike other renewable energy sources, wood burning systems emit carbon dioxide. However, as the wood fuel is cultivated, it absorbs the same amount of carbon dioxide as is released when burnt so does not add to the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Wood-pellet stoves can be used to heat hot water, a single room or an entire building. Wood-fuelled boilers should comprise the main heating system of the building and can be run on logs, wood chips or wood pellets.

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- Micro-hydro turbines – hydro-power systems use a turbine to convert the energy stored in water flowing downhill into electricity. Useful power may be produced from even a small stream, however, the hydro-power source should be relatively close to where the power is needed or to a suitable grid connection. Hydro systems can be grid-connected or form part of an off-grid system.

How many technologies can I apply for?

There is no limit to the amount of technologies to be applied for but we will not fund more than the maximum grant of £50K per applicant.

Can I apply for energy efficiency measures only?

No, energy efficiency measures will only be funded in conjunction with a microgeneration technology installation.

What energy efficiency measures are covered by the CSEP grant scheme?

The following energy efficiency measures can be funded in conjunction with a microgeneration technology installation:

- Cavity wall insulation – un-insulated cavity walls, where present, can account for a third of all heat losses from a traditional building. Cavity wall insulation is therefore one of the most cost-effective energy efficiency measures to implement. The insulation material is injected into the cavity between the inner and outer brickwork that makes up the external wall of the building. An installer will do this from the outside. There are a variety of different insulating materials, but they all work in the same way – by combining with the captive air, the insulation acts as a barrier to heat loss.
- Loft insulation – un-insulated loft spaces, where present, can account for a quarter of all heat losses from a building. Installing 250-270mm (10 inches) of loft insulation can significantly reduce this loss at relatively low cost. Properly trained installers should carry out loft insulation, so that members of your group do not have to access the roof space and put their safety at risk.

Competent installers should ensure that a high standard is achieved by insulating across the top of the ceiling joists as well as between them, to avoid cold-bridging; pipes and tanks must be insulated to avoid freezing. It is also important to make sure there is enough ventilation to avoid condensation in the loft and that electrical wiring and fittings are safe.

For more details on installers and the types of materials used for both cavity wall and loft insulation see: www.nationalinsulationassociation.org.uk

- Heating controls – heating and hot water use may account for over 80 per cent of the energy consumption in a building. The installation of a minimum standard of controls, where no controls have existed before, can reduce fuel consumption and CO₂ emissions by up to 20 per cent. Reducing the average temperature in a building by 1°C can reduce fuel consumption by up to 10 per cent and reducing the heating “on” time by two hours, a day may reduce consumption by up to 6 per cent. See www.heatingcontrols.org.uk for details of available controls.

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- Lighting controls – lighting may make up as much as 40 per cent of a building's electricity consumption, particularly if other energy efficiency measures are already in place. Installing and using daylight-linked controls can reduce this by 20 to 25 per cent.

A wide range of controls are available, including occupancy sensors, photocell controllers, dimming and light level controls, lighting management systems and simple time switches. These provide significant energy and cost savings whilst being simple to install.

Eligible controls only include those listed on www.eca.gov.uk. For more details of installers, see also www.esta.org.uk.

Can I apply for a grant for a new building or does it have to be an existing building?
Grants are available for existing buildings, new buildings or a mixture of both.

Do I need planning permission?

This is dependent upon individual circumstances. Contact your local planning officer for advice.

Do I need match funding?

The maximum Project Development Grant available is £5,000 or 75% of the total study cost, whichever is the lower. The maximum Capital Grant available is £50,000 or 50 per cent of the total project cost, whichever is the lower. Any further funding required must be sourced by the applicant. This can be from your own reserves, other grants, loans or any combination of these. Diverse sources of match funding and evidence of applicants own fund raising will strengthen an application.

What sources are available to provide match funding?

Match funding from other Changing Spaces Lottery funds is not permitted however, any other Lottery funding is acceptable. Some additional funding sources include:

- Funding may be available from Phase 2 of the Low Carbon Buildings Programme. Please check their website for further information and eligibility: www.lowcarbonbuildingsphase2.org.uk
- The Charity Bank www.charitybank.org;
- The Co-operative Bank www.co-operativebank.co.uk;
- Triodos Bank www.triodos.co.uk.
- Public funding from local authorities.

What can the grant NOT be used for?

Recoverable VAT.

If your organisation is not VAT registered we will be able to cover VAT costs within your budget. However, if your organisation is VAT registered, you can only apply to us for the cost of non-recoverable VAT. We will consider any applications for non-recoverable VAT costs and include the agreed amount in the grant, where appropriate. If you later find that the costs of your project increase because you have made an error about whether you can recover VAT, we will not increase our grant to cover this. If we agree to fund the cost of VAT, which you then recover, you will be liable to repay the proportion of it that relates to our grant. We cannot provide VAT advice so we recommend you contact your local HM Revenue and Customs office or a VAT expert to find out how much VAT you can recover on the costs of your project.

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If I want to claim VAT where do I show this on the form? You should show your costs including VAT in Section 5. All other parts of the form should show costs excluding VAT. It would be helpful if you could provide a cover letter confirming that you are eligible to claim VAT.

How long will the grant offer be valid for?

Projects funded by a Project Development grant must be completed within 6 months from the date of our grant offer letter and Capital grant projects, within 12 months.

When is the grant paid?

Project Development Grants must be claimed within six months of the date of the grant offer letter. Grants will be paid within 20 days of receiving your final grant claim, original invoice from your appointed registered consultant and a copy of the project development report.

Capital grants will be paid in two payments. Ninety five per cent will be paid within 20 working days of receipt of your grant claim and all requested documentation from you. This should be within 12 months of the date of the offer letter. The remaining five per cent will be paid 6-12 months after your project has completed when we receive your completed project evaluation report.

Who can install the system?

For the supply and installation of microgeneration technologies, you must use one of the "Certificated Installers" registered with the government's Microgeneration Certification Scheme. For further information and contact details of certificated installers serving your region, please refer to www.microgenerationcertification.org.

You are strongly advised to seek at least two quotations from different suppliers for each of your proposed microgeneration technologies and energy efficiency measures, although you need only submit copies of your favoured quotations with your application.

What products can I install?

Certificated installers may only specify certificated products, the list of which is also managed by the Microgeneration Certification scheme and included on the website www.microgenerationcertification.org.

These products have undergone a comprehensive registration procedure requiring compliance with strict criteria and current testing standards. Any products exceeding the definition of microgeneration as per section 82 of the Energy Act 2004 must be listed on the Enhanced Capital Allowance (ECA) Scheme (www.eca.gov.uk). The Energy Act 2004 defines microgeneration as the production of heat and/or electricity from a low carbon source and specifies maximum size limits of 50kW electricity and 45kW thermal.

If I receive a grant offer, do I have to remain with the installer or consultant who provided the original quotation?

No. You may change your preferred installer or consultant, provided that the project design and costs are not increased and provided that your new installer or consultant are certificated / registered with CSEP, as required by our terms and conditions of grant offer.



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I have a programme related question – who can I ask this?

For initial enquiries please contact the BSS helpline on 08453 671671 or email us at info@communitysustainable.org.uk. For queries once an application has been submitted please contact our enquiry line on 08458 630025.

What are the benchmark values £/tonne CO₂ for CSEP?

Please see the benchmarks page on the website www.communitysustainable.org.uk

I am organising an event and would like a speaker to give a presentation on CSEP.

Unfortunately we do not have sufficient resources to attend all of the meetings we are invited to. However, event organisers can download a PowerPoint presentation that gives general information about CSEP. The presentation can be downloaded from the website www.communitysustainable.org.uk

How long must the microgeneration system operate once installed?

It is a condition of the grant offer that the technology will remain installed and in use at the property and will not be modified or relocated in such a way as may adversely affect its performance, for a period of at least five years following payment of the grant. The applicant will be responsible for assuring this condition is met.

I am a householder, can I apply for a grant?

Householders are not eligible for funding under CSEP. Funding may be available from the Low Carbon Buildings Programme Phase 1 <http://www.lowcarbonbuildings.org.uk/>

I have tried to upload documents with my online form but keep getting an error message, what can I do? The maximum size of document that can be uploaded is 2MB. If your document is bigger than this it will not upload. Please split the document into sections that are smaller than 2MB and then upload. Please ensure you clearly label the documents with what they are. Do not send documents larger than 2MB on your CD or floppy disk as we will not be able to upload them onto the system either.

Will decisions be made on a geographical basis?

Decisions will be made on the merits of each individual application submitted. However, we do hope to achieve a wide spread of projects throughout England. To date we have mainly received applications from the Eastern, South East and South West regions, so applications would be encouraged from the other regions to help us achieve this and these would be prioritised in the decision process.

My organisation does not have an environmental policy or equal opportunities policy, am I still eligible to apply?

No. These documents are required to meet minimum eligibility requirements. If you are in the process of creating these policies you can submit draft documents but we would need to see final agreed versions before any funding was paid to you.

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I am applying on behalf of a school, is there any specific guidance to help me?

Schools have to provide the same documentation as other organisations with the exception of accounts. However, the following should be noted:

- i) Proof of Not for Profit Status – A letter from the head teacher confirming the school's not-for-profit status should be provided on school headed paper.
- ii) Environmental Policy and Equal Opportunities Policy – We would expect the school to have their own policies. If these are not in place and the school adheres to the policy in place at the local authority, we will need copies of the local authority policy and a letter from the head teacher confirming this.
- iii) Bank Statements – if the school does not have its own bank account and cannot provide statements we would require a letter from the local authority that manages the school's finances indicating that any funding granted would be ring fenced for the school.

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