

Inverness College Energy Centre Project

Introduction

Following a period of consultation and planning with partner organisations that included an independent feasibility study, Inverness College have developed a Centre for Micro Renewables and Sustainable Building Design. The Centre has several aims: to provide accredited (BPEC) training in the installation and servicing of micro renewable technologies, undertaking research activity into renewable technologies and income generation through consultancy services, seminars and professional development courses; the emphasis throughout being on practical build and installation skills.



There was previously no such facility anywhere in Scotland able to offer this level of training in the primary skills area of micro renewable installation and aftercare. Results from a limited survey of businesses and individuals with an interest in renewable energy training suggested there was demand for around 80-90 training places – with some extrapolation demand potential was estimated to be much greater and crucially, this was not being met elsewhere. Inverness College has existing training facilities for a wide variety of construction disciplines. The ability to build and expand upon this would increase the College's remit and scope potential for income generation. Moreover, there was also potential for the College to be involved in other areas such as testing and trialing of equipment with a view to potential inclusion in community energy based projects.

Equipment: Various

The training focusses on the following micro-renewable technologies:

- Solar hot water heating
- Ground source heat pumps
- Air source heat pumps
- Photo-voltaic cells
- Wind turbine
- Biomass



Cost and Grant Funding

Total Project cost	£492,616	The remaining funding was obtained through: Highlands and Islands Enterprise: £51,150 Inverness College own funds £310,316
CARES grant ⁱ	£131,150	
CARES grant Percentage	27%	

This project has been funded by the Scottish Government's Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES).

Cost Savings

The cost benefits of the project will be long term. By providing local training and allowing more people to be trained on sustainable energy and building practices it will result in greater competition in the market, helping to drive installation costs down.

Emission Savings

There are no direct carbon benefits associated with this project as the kit is be used for training purposes only. It is expected that this will increase the take up of energy conservation measures, use of renewable and increased sustainable build quality as a result of local training access..

Project Monitoring

Community Energy Scotland continues to work closely with Inverness College in the ongoing development of this valuable project.

Local Impact

The centre has already fulfilled its potential of becoming a valuable addition in the sustainable energy field in the Highlands and Islands and beyond, providing practical skills-based training, as well as striving to promote best practice and a professional approach to renewables as a whole. Student involvement in the construction and development of the project added and augmented their own understanding and ownership of the project.



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ⁱ The project was approved during the period of the Scottish and Community and Householder Renewables Initiative – however, due to the scale and timeline of the project, it was completed during the period of the CARES programme.