



Community Energy Projects 2012 Impact Survey – Summary Report

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The Survey

Community Energy Scotland (CES) aims to deliver comprehensive and independent support to communities involved in renewable energy projects. CES assist communities by providing technical advice regarding the installation and maintenance of renewable energy technologies such as pellet burners, wind turbines, and hydro schemes, as well as representing these same communities at policy level. Further to this, CES delivers numerous service contracts such as the Community and Renewable Energy Scheme Loan Fund (CARES), and the Big Lottery's Growing Community Assets Fund (GCA).

In July 2012 an electronic survey was sent out to 195 project groups which had received support from CES in order to:

- Gather information on the social impacts of community owned renewable energy projects
- Report on the performance of the organisation against their core values
- Contribute towards a more long term method of social impact monitoring to be adopted by the organisation.

The Respondents

- The survey was completed by 63 groups (56 facility projects, and 7 revenue generating projects) - a response rate of 32%
- Charities and community committees were the most commonly represented organisations
- The largest number of respondents by area came from the Highland region (15)
- 79% of the projects had been completed
- The most commonly involved types of technology for facility projects were energy efficiency technologies and wood pellet, with large wind schemes the most common for revenue generating projects

The Results

A large amount of information was gathered surrounding the main aims of CES when supporting community renewable energy projects, namely building the confidence, resilience and wealth of communities, and improving their environmental impact. This was done through the collection of data related to facility changes, income, community changes, employment opportunities, training opportunities, community capacity, investment plans etc. Full details can be found in the report available for download.

- 71% of project groups reported an increase in the overall sense of confidence of their community with regards to undertaking tasks such as their energy project
- 73% of facility based project groups indicated that there had been an improvement in the standard of their facility as a direct result of the renewable energy technology used

- 26 groups said that new training opportunities had been created for their communities
- Across all the projects surveyed, 22 permanent paid part and full time positions were created. There was also an increase in the number of voluntary positions and temporary paid positions available within communities

- 73% of facility project groups reported they had made financial savings as a result of their energy project
- 84% of projects employed local businesses, and 57% of developments used locally sourced materials

- 62% of groups reported a decrease in CO2 emissions, with 49% indicating that there had been a reduction in energy use
- 87% of project groups said that there had been an increase in community awareness of the benefits of using renewable energy technology

From The Respondents

“The project was a major one for a small community and is commented on regularly by visitors to the hall. The renewable energy system is of interest to many people and groups, and the feeling of pride within the community has grown.”

“The turbine generates an income through Feed-in and Export tariff. This offsets the running costs of the site and secures the employment of one staff member.”

“The change from using an over-sized, inefficient oil fired heating system that was constantly breaking down, to one that is efficient and maintenance free, is of a huge benefit to the confidence of the committee of volunteers that help to run the hall.”

A copy of the full report is available at www.communityenergyscotland.org.uk