

Frequently Asked Questions

Is it ok to share the YouTube link on our Facebook page?

Yes, it's perfectly fine to share our links on your Facebook page to help spread knowledge and engage the community.

Are Meitheals normally across multiple estates or within the same estates within a community for this potential scheme?

Meitheals can be organised within the same estate or across multiple estates in a community. We have seen successful ones in a rural setting and island settings as well as urban areas. The goal is to bundle demand to negotiate better terms with suppliers.

Can there be challenges with quotes from providers if houses are spread across a village for instance rather than within a single estate?

This is dependent on each individual contractor. From experience in rural communities, it wasn't a barrier to getting quotations.

Stage 1 - community brief - do you provide a presenter- we don't have sufficient expertise?

If your community lacks the expertise to present, your SEC mentor can help facilitate this session or provide resources through the Solar Meitheal Toolkit.

Does the SEC apply for the grant for the householder?

Typically, individual householders apply for the SEAI grant, but the SEC can assist in the process if they want to.

Is this a group buying process to make the cost lower?

The goal is to bundle demand to negotiate better terms with suppliers. Which can leverage bulk purchasing to negotiate lower prices, depending on the contractor.

Does the SEC have to organise a survey of the houses? How do we know what to quote for?

Organising a survey can help ensure accurate quotes. It's not mandatory, but it's beneficial. Suppliers can also be invited to survey as part of their quote preparation.

Is there any financial support from SEAI for SECs to host a Solar Meitheal event?

Currently, SEAI does not specifically fund the hosting of Solar Meitheal events, but they do provide support and resources to SECs through Mentors and an EMP grant.

Are there good panels and less good panels - how can we tell the difference?

All products should be on the [SEAI Triple E register](#) - this provides a minimum threshold for quality. Look for panels with high efficiency, reputable brands, and robust warranties. Reviews, certifications, and product lifespan are also key indicators of quality. Each product should come with a performance warranty, so you can compare these.

Will the slides be sent out to us?

Yes, please see the attached PDF to this email.

What kind of discounts do contractors give?

Discounts can vary widely from community to community and different contractors.

The page with grant sizes seemed odd, 800/kWp up tp 2 = €1600 ; 250/kWp 2 -4 = €1000. Did I miss something?

These are typical grant amounts where the grant per kWp decreases as system size increases. It's designed to encourage optimal system sizing.

€800/kWp for the first 2 kWp = €1,600.

€250/kWp for the next 2 kWp = €500.

Total for a 4 kWp = €2,100

Is there a maximum distance between the houses that might be involved in a SEC?

There's no set maximum distance, but practical considerations like installer travel could affect feasibility and cost, depending on the contractor.

Did the contractors communicate with the SEC or directly with the householders.

It's usually recommended that the SEC coordinates initial communications for consistency, but direct interaction between householders and contractors is common, especially for detailed site-specific discussions. We have seen SECs hand over the communication when the contracts get signed by the household.

At Cloughjordan SEC we are also interested in putting solar on a local GAA building but concerned about the size involving needing a connection agreement with ESB networks. What is the maximum size of solar which can be installed without getting special permission from ESB networks?

The maximum installation size without needing a special connection agreement typically depends on the local grid's capacity and regulations. Consulting with ESB Networks directly would provide the most accurate guidance.

Can we use Spanish + UK panels given their lower cost relative to Irish supply?

If you need guidance on using solar panels from outside Ireland, it will typically depend on the panels meeting local standards, certifications, and warranty conditions that can be serviced in Ireland. This ensures that while you might benefit from lower upfront costs, you won't face long-term disadvantages in terms of support and warranty claims.

All products should be on the [SEAI Triple E register](#) - this provides a minimum threshold for quality.

Can all SEC groups tell a new SEC which contractors they used? And their experiences?

Due to GDPR reasons we are unable to share contact details. We have a list of SECs that have hosted a Solar Meitheal on our [Solar Meitheal blog](#), you might find their contact details online or use the SEC Facebook group to ask the SECs.

Since the new loans are being taken up by financial institutions, perhaps it would be good to have some of those along to the events should homeowners require low interest loans for initial installations.

That's a great point. Local Credit Unions tend to be open to attending community events.

Hi Adam, would you mind sharing the 3 on your short list

Due to GDPR reasons we are unable to share Adam's contact details. You might find their contact details online or use the [SEC Facebook](#) group to find him.

Sorry, I'm late. Is there an example of a suburban Solar Meitheal? Is it a different experience?

Greystones and Delgany SEC are a suburban example. There is also a list of other SECs that have hosted a [Solar Meitheal on our blog](#). There are other examples from Santry to Arklow. These can vary significantly based on community engagement, number of participants, and urban planning regulations.

Is a list of existing SEC groups available to new SEC groups (with their contact details) - so we could contact them to find good contractors.

Due to GDPR reasons we are unable to share contact details. We have a list of SECs that have hosted a Solar Meitheal on our [Solar Meitheal blog](#), you might find their contact details online or use the SEC Facebook group to ask the SECs.

Have any of the SECs who are presenting coordinated solar on a community building?

Yes, several SECs have coordinated solar installations on community buildings, often facilitated by grants and community funding.

Mulranny, applied for LEADER funding to install solar PV with a battery on their tourist office as an example to the community.

Glenmalure, have plans in Wicklow to install solar panels on a local community building which is central to their community activities.

Can solar PV be put on a flat roof of a garden room 20m2?

Solar PV can sometimes be installed on flat roofs, with specific mounting systems to maintain optimal angles for sun exposure. A Solar PV company will be able to better advise on the suitability of the roof structure.

How are the cost savings leveraged and what cost reduction (%) can be expected relative to the number of commitments?

Greystones & Delgany SEC, estimated that they have achieved cost savings of around 7-10% compared to what it would have cost if homeowners went alone to purchase solar installations.

From your experience is battery storage (say 5 kwh) successful. My own experience is that it can be difficult to have the system manufacturer (China) organising the night time cheaper rate charging of the battery and timing of discharging. A battery storage does help to smooth out the benefit of solar pv during the day.

Battery storage success varies. Issues with integration (like charging and discharging timings) can be addressed by choosing reputable systems with local support.

Battery or no battery?

It's an option. You need to decide if it is right for how you use electricity. There is guidance in the Solar Meitheal toolkit on making this decision.

Hi Avril, we intend to do six houses on Sherkin island in W Cork. If you had to guess, what percentage "island premium" did ye pay? What was the average per house? Thanks

Getting contractors to come to the island for just one house would be difficult to make happen, indicating that Meitheals are essential for such locations. While they didn't necessarily receive a huge discount on the installation costs, grouping installations together was crucial to even get service providers to consider coming to the island.

There are additional costs such as freight and accommodation for workers, which are shared among the homeowners, thereby reducing individual costs indirectly.

Is there any initiative for Renters to get their landlords to retrofit?

SEAI offers various grants and support schemes that landlords can access for this purpose. One prominent program is the National Home Retrofit Scheme, which includes opportunities for landlords to upgrade their rental properties to achieve better energy efficiency ratings.

Additionally, the government has discussed and proposed measures specifically targeting rental properties to ensure they meet minimum energy efficiency standards. Under these regulations, landlords are encouraged to retrofit their properties to not only improve energy efficiency but also enhance the living conditions for tenants, aligning with broader national goals for carbon reduction and sustainable living.

If you're a tenant interested in getting your landlord to consider retrofitting, it might be beneficial to direct them to the SEAI's resources or the specific programs available for rental properties.

Something goes wrong with an installation, can the SEC be blamed?

Generally, the SEC would not be held liable for installation issues unless they performed the installation themselves. It's crucial to ensure contractors are insured and certified.

What was the average size of installed system and did they have storage batteries includes?

We can't provide individual homeowner details. The Solar PV grant designed to encourage optimal system sizing. These are typical grant amounts where the grant per kWp decreases as system size increases.

€800/kWp for the first 2 kWp = €1,600.

€250/kWp for the next 2 kWp = €500.
Total for a 4 kWp = €2,100

Interested to know how H&S was considered before tendering and while the works were ongoing. There is a tendency for a lot of contractors as a cheaper alternative not to use scaffolding or fall protection- how was this managed?

Ensuring contractors use appropriate safety measures like scaffolding is vital. Homeowners should stipulate H&S standards in their contracts and oversee compliance.

When is the Insulation Meitheal going to be ready?

Currently in development, timing will be confirmed, and SECs will be notified.