2030

CORCA DHUIBHNE
DINGLE PENINSULA

Dingle Peninsula 2030 and the Diffusion of Sustainability

December 2021

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Introduction

A wide range of sustainability and decarbonisation initiatives have emerged from the Corca Dhuibhne/ Dingle Peninsula 2030 collaboration, which can support the energy transition, leading to the emergence of both active energy citizenship and an active energy community on the Dingle Peninsula.

Diffusion can be viewed as a process through which an innovation can be communicated using certain mediums or channels over time to members of a social group or system. The diffusion of sustainability, whereby initiatives, projects or actions which support the creation of a vibrant economy and high quality of life, whilst respecting natural resources and the environment are cumulatively developed or adopted.

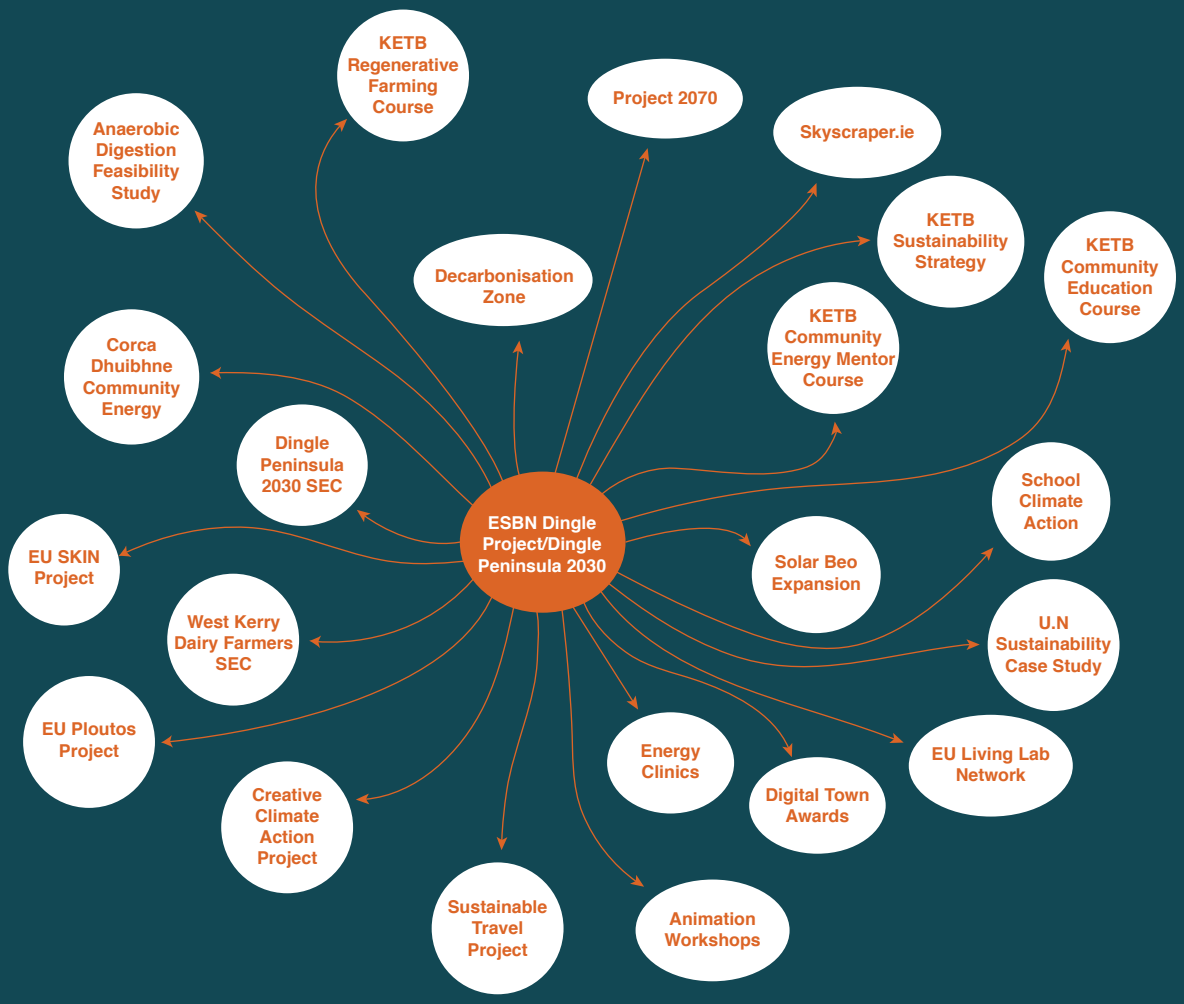
The importance of community-level actions and initiatives for the delivery of climate action and sustainability more broadly has been acknowledged within policy (DECC, 2019). Through the initiation and establishment of both the ESB Networks Dingle Project and Corca Dhuibhne/ Dingle Peninsula 2030, the potential for diffusion throughout the community, to other communities, and to nationally led initiatives can be acknowledged as a mechanism through which to assist in the delivery of the socio-technical transition to a low-carbon society.

Method

Throughout the three year trial period, MaREI's research team has regularly attended events and meetings to build a profile of different diffusions of sustainability that have occurred throughout the timeframe. These have been graphed into an illustration and outlined with relation to energy-related diffusions and wider diffusions to outline the influence of the Dingle Project beyond the immediate impact of the Ambassador programme and the EV trial.

Insights

The core diffusions emanating from the Dingle Project and Corca Dhuibhne/ Dingle Peninsula 2030 related specifically to energy are outlined here. A graph has been developed which highlights both the diffusions related directly to energy and also the wider diffusions. These wider diffusions have an impact on building local capacity for climate action and energy citizenship, the communication of the project to national and international audiences, and the inclusion of diverse actors in conversations on energy and sustainability.



Corca Dhuibhne Community Energy: In its initial stages, this group has been formed to work on different energy-related initiatives on the peninsula for community benefit. Members within this group are very active in aligned initiatives across the peninsula. They are all linked by a common interest in community-owned energy.

Decarbonisation Zone: The Dingle Peninsula has been selected as a decarbonisation zone by Kerry County Council. A decarbonisation zone is defined as a spatial area where different climate mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity measures are identified to address local low carbon energy, greenhouse gas emissions and climate needs to contribute to national climate action targets, as outlined through the Climate Action Plan (2019). Monitoring progress is central to the approach with a need to build community decision making into the approach and highlight impact.

Dingle Peninsula SEC: The creation of the Dingle Peninsula Sustainable Energy Community (SEC), through the SEAI SEC network, has facilitated the creation of an Energy Master Plan for the peninsula which provides a foundation for future energy projects in the region by outlining current energy use. Within the register of opportunities, pathways for decarbonisation were outlined concerning residential, transport, services and industry.

KETB Community Energy Mentor Course: As part of Corca Dhuibhne/ Dingle Peninsula 2030, a Community Energy Mentor Course was established and administered on the peninsula through the Kerry Education and Training Board (Kerry ETB), training 12 local people as energy mentors. SEAI, MaREI, Sacred Heart University (SHU), Kerry Sustainable Energy Co-op and ESB Networks all contributed to material throughout the course. One Ambassador and one of the Ambassadors' family members took part in the course.

Participants in the Community Energy Mentor programme.

Energy Clinics: Facilitated through the Dingle Hub, and following on from the KETB Community Energy Mentor Course, 'Energy Clinics' were held where residents of the peninsula could drop in to get advice with relation to several different technological solutions to decarbonisation such as solar panels and retrofits.

Solar Beo Expansion: Through tendering for the installation of solar panels on the peninsula, as part of ESB Networks involvement in the IERC "Storenet Project", Solar Beo was established to provide clean energy upgrades and retrofits to buildings in Kerry, Cork and Limerick. Since then the company has installed over 150 solar PV systems in Munster and provided businesses and farms with energy upgrades to commit to a clean, reduced carbon, sustainable future in their industry. The Dingle Project has played a pivotal role in Solar Beo's establishment which responds to the need for local contractors as outlined by participants in the Ambassador Programme outlined previously.

Sustainable Travel Project: A steering group has been developed by Corca Dhuibhne/ Dingle Peninsula 2030 Local Link Kerry, and representatives from the Dept. of Transport to investigate several initiatives related to the decarbonisation of transport on the peninsula. Initiatives under investigation include; new bus services on the Dingle peninsula, transitioning to low carbon emission buses, integrated online booking system and real-time passenger information systems for public transport, commuter buses from Dingle to and from Tralee (the largest town in the County), and the construction of an EV parking and charging scheme.

West Kerry Dairy Farmers SEC: Initiated and led by an ESB Networks Ambassador & Community Energy Mentors, the West Kerry Dairy Farm SEC has been established to investigate options for decarbonisation of up to 100 dairy farms across the peninsula. A second community energy mentor is the secretary of this group. Solar generation and heat recovery are included in early ideas been explored by the group through the SEAI energy master plan format.

Dún an Óir Residents Association: The residents association with 55 members consisting of holiday homeowners is aiming to come together to explore the potential of working together on energy efficiency upgrades.

Learnings

- Energy citizenship can be facilitated through collaborative engagement between national organisations and groups within the community, leading to active energy communities.
- A wide range of energy-related initiatives, beyond the initial remit of the Dingle Project, have emerged on the peninsula.
- Working collaboratively with communities represents a favourable opportunity to enable the diffusion of sustainability, increasing local capacity to meet decarbonisation targets.
- National organisations should be encouraged and supported to work in collaboration with other groups within the local community to increase local capacity to develop decarbonisation initiatives and pathways
- A national communication campaign should be implemented to outline the need for decarbonisation measures at the individual and local levels, supported by financial supports to make such measures feasible.

The Dingle Peninsula 2030 co-ordinating group would like to acknowledge and thank all the people who have so generously given their time and support, both on the Dingle Peninsula and further afield.

This series of learning briefs is co-funded by MaREI, the SFI Centre for Energy, Climate and Marine, the Dingle Creativity and Innovation Hub (Mol Teic), ESB Networks and North East West Kerry Development (NEWKD).

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