

Case Study – Gwynt y Môr Offshore Wind Farm, North Wales

RWE adopted a multi stakeholder partnership approach to developing the Gwynt y Môr Community Fund, which will invest in the region of £19 million over the offshore wind farms lifetime. An advisory group, with members from the public, private, education and training, and voluntary sectors, pooled their expertise and local knowledge to develop the very best structure and delivery mechanism for the fund, building on the feedback from the community consultation on the fund. This partnership approach resulted in a bespoke fund - tailored to address funding gaps and build on successful existing funding practices - thus ensuring maximum impact from these new, flexible funds which have the potential to deliver well beyond their original £19 million investment.

Stage 1 – Engaging the Wider Community

In February 2012 RWE listened to the views of over 1,000 organisations and individuals on the potential priorities, structure and operation of the Gwynt y Môr Community Fund. The consultation focused on what priorities the fund should address, how it should be managed and which communities should benefit.

Stage 2 – The Advisory Group

RWE convened an advisory group of local stakeholders, representing the broad North Wales area to provide advice and expertise to support RWE to take forward the results of the consultation and to develop a fund structure. The group also explored how our funding will work alongside other funding streams and activities to achieve a more joined up approach to funding. Membership of the group included representatives from the Local Authority and Voluntary Sector from each of the three counties (Conwy, Denbighshire and Flintshire) as well as representatives from the Higher Education sector, social enterprise and the business sector. The Advisory Group met at monthly intervals and notes from their meetings were shared on RWE's website to ensure transparency. The area of benefit was finalised and three initial themes agreed.

Stage 3 – Appointing an Independent Fund Administrator

We completed an open procurement process to identify a suitable organisation to manage the fund. This unusual and exciting opportunity received a high level of interest from a range of organisations. The tender opportunity was advertised in the local media, and Gwynt y Môr received 12 expressions of interest and eight full tender submissions. Following a rigorous interview process we appointed a local professional grant maker, Community & Voluntary Support Conwy (CVSC).

Stage 4 – Fund Operation

CVSC employ a full time fund manager who leads the grant making process and supports applicants to the fund. There is a simple application process. CVSC have recruited a panel of local people who live, work or volunteer in the fund area of benefit. This panel make decisions about funding applications and helps shape the future direction of the fund. The panel operate to clear terms of reference and are supported by the fund manager.

“The fund is doing great work and is a great example of a community benefit model”.
Peter Davies, Chairman, Wales Council for Voluntary Action