Information for owners of nominated community buildings or community resilience sites

Overview of the Community Resilience Programme

The Community Resilience Programme (CRP) aims to enhance the emergency preparedness and energy resilience of targeted community buildings (Community Resilience or 'CR sites') that are used by the community in the event of a severe weather event or other emergency or disaster.

Administered by EECA (the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority) the programme funds the installation of solar PV and battery systems at selected sites. These systems aim to improve the energy resilience of the sites during emergencies, electricity grid outages, and day-to-day use – ensuring they can still operate as safe hubs for their communities.

The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority

EECA (the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority) is a government agency whose work encourages, promotes, and supports energy efficiency, energy conservation, and the use of renewable sources of energy. EECA works across emerging and innovative technology, smart systems and future fuels to support households, industry and Aotearoa New Zealand.

For more information about EECA, visit our website at eeca.govt.nz.

How the EECA funding works

EECA provides funding to Regional Partners, and they then implement the Community Resilience Programme in their area by on-funding site owners/nominated community buildings. If your site has been nominated, the FAQs below explain what the programme involves, what support is available and what you need to know as a building owner/manager.

Frequently asked questions

1. Why was your building chosen as a potential site? Your community building was nominated by the local council, Civil Defence, Te Puni Kōkiri, an iwi organisation or a community organisation as a site that is available for use in civil disasters/emergencies.

2. What does EECA want to achieve? EECA's intention is that the solar PV and battery system that CRP funds will give your site improved energy resilience during emergencies, electricity grid outages, and day-to-day use. If your site is used in a Civil Defence event, we want your community to know that there is a place they can go to get power for their phones, where refrigerators are storing food and medicines safely, where lights are on at night, and where food can be cooked and eaten.

3. Does the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 (CDEM Act) still apply? EECA is not changing the provisions of the CDEM Act or any civil defence arrangements (if any) that you have in place for your site with the Council/ Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) group.

4. How much co-funding is needed? The Regional Partner is contracted to secure co-funding. The amount of co-funding required per site is determined by the Regional Partner.

5. What sort of solar PV and battery system is being offered? It's going to be bigger than the typical type of system that gets put on houses: more like a solar PV system and battery that goes on commercial or industrial buildings. EECA will fund the purchase of this type of system. Typically, we are expecting:
    - At least 10kW of solar panels (that will be 20 panels) but up to 30kW of panels. (A PV system on a house will usually be between 3 to 5kW.)
    - Battery storage of between 10kWh and 30kWh.

   The size of the system is determined by how much roof space you have, the type of roof and the type of electrical systems your building has.

6. How much does this type of system cost? It will likely cost between $50,000 and $100,000 in total. The cost depends on the size of the solar PV and battery system.

7. What is covered in the grant? The grant is from the Regional Partner to the site owner. The grant covers most of the cost of:
    - Design of the solar PV and battery system, by the supplier of the solar PV system.
    - Payment of distributed generation interconnect fees to the local electricity distribution.
    - Supply and installation of the solar PV and battery system on your site.
    - Modification of the electrical mains system in your site so it is capable of having a solar PV and battery system installed.

- Site inspection by an electrical inspector to make sure that the installation has been done correctly.
- Installation of a new electricity meter so power can be put back into the grid.
- Training by the supplier of the solar PV system on how to operate the system when you lose power from the grid.

8. What is not covered by the grant? The EECA CRP grant only covers the solar PV and battery system and its installation.

9. Do solar PV panels need to go on the roof? EECA prefers that the solar PV panels go on the roof of the community building. If there is enough space on the ground, then it could go on a mounted frame. EECA will not provide additional funds for design and construction of this frame – these costs will need to be met within the total amount of your grant, or sourced elsewhere.

10. What sort of roof is needed? The ideal roof is a new steel north facing roof. If you don't have this, don't worry – it can sometimes be worked around. Ideally the roof is not too steep and can be safely accessed for installation and maintenance.

11. Where does the battery go? Typically, the battery is outside, by the building.

12. What happens if trees or buildings shade the roof? Shading of solar PV panels dramatically reduces the amount of electricity the system produces. We need to find locations where shading does not occur.

13. Do we need to make an application? EECA is making a grant to selected Regional Partners. You do not need to make an application. You may need to supply the Regional Partner with some information so a site suitability assessment can be made. This is a four-stage process.

    - Stage 1: Your site gets nominated.
    - Stage 2: The Regional Partner collects information about your site.
    - Stage 3: EECA does a review and checks that everything meets our criteria.
    - Stage 4: The Regional Partner gets back in touch with you to advise you whether your site has been selected for funding.

14. Are there any contracts to be entered into? There will be a CRP grant funding agreement between EECA and the Regional Partner. Your organisation (the building owner) and the Regional Partner will also need to enter into an agreement that lays out what the grant is for, who receives the grant and how much the grant will be for. The obligation is then on your organisation (unless arranged for by the Regional Partner) to contract with the solar PV and battery system installer to get the system installed, commissioned, and operating.

15. Control of your site
    The provisions of a CRP grant funding agreement do not give control of your site to any other party such as EECA, the Council, Civil Defence Emergency Management groups, or other organisation; or force you to use your site for civil defence purposes.

16. What will the funding agreement between us as the CR site/building owner, and the Regional Partner look like? The Regional Partner will supply you with a copy of a grant funding agreement. You may wish to get your lawyer to look at this document.

17. Does it matter if we are GST registered or not? The Regional Partner will advise as to this matter.

18. When will we get paid the grant? The Regional Partner will work with you on this matter.

19. What information will the Regional Partner need to pay us the grant? EECA has certain requirements in order to pay the Regional Partner, as does the Regional Partner themselves in order to on-fund the CR site/building owner.

    These include:
    - Installer quotes.
    - A copy of the installer's invoice.
    - An invoice from you for the same amount.
    - A bank account to pay the grant money into.

20. Will I need to provide a report? The Regional Partner will be required to report to EECA and as such they may need information from you.

21. Will I have to pay the grant back? The Regional Partner will advise you on this matter, but in general, if the grant is used for the purposes of installing the solar PV and battery system on your building then you do not need to pay the grant back. If you fail to meet any agreed obligations, you may need to pay the grant money back.

22. Can we move the solar PV and battery system on to another building later on? This is a grant for the benefit of the community. Please contact EECA should you wish to move the system.

23. What is not included in the grant? The grant is from a renewable energy fund. Accordingly, it has to be used for renewable energy systems and not for diesel or petrol generators, nor for satellite communications systems. The fund can also not be used for general building maintenance and repair (such as fixing the roof.)

24. Who will organise the process? The Regional Partner will advise.

25. Who will install the solar PV system and battery? We want you to use an experienced and qualified installation company. These installers should be:
    - A member of a trade organisation like SEANZ or Master Electricians.
    - Experienced in larger systems (not just residential systems).
    - Have a good professional reputation.

    The Regional Partner may advise on the procurement process.

26. Will the installer charge for doing a quote? Generally this is not the case. Please contact your Regional Partner if you have any questions about any part of the installation process.

27. How long will the installation take? Once you (or the Regional Partner if they are owning the procurement process) accept the installer's quote and pay the deposit, an indicative installation timeframe is 3 months from quote acceptance to the system being available the installer to complete your job. We estimate that on site installation should be completed in a week, but it could be longer if the weather is bad (wet or windy). The installation of a new meter may take a bit longer to occur.

28. Who will own the solar PV system and battery? Discuss this with your Regional Partner.

29. How long will it last?
    - The solar PV system will last at least 30 years. This is what the typical manufacturer warranty is.
    - The battery system will probably last about 15 years.
    - The invertor will last about 15 to 20 years.

30. What sort of maintenance has to be done? Panels need to be washed occasionally (about twice a year). Your installer will tell you what is required.

31. What happens to the electricity generated and how much will the solar and battery system save us?

    This will vary from system to system and site to site (the installer quote should give you a system output estimate). The solar PV will generate electricity and if the site is using electricity, it will use the solar electricity first (saving you money). If the site isn't using electricity the system will store it in the battery. Once the battery is full, it will export the electricity to the grid. You can get paid a small amount for the electricity you export. You will need to check with your electricity retailer as to what this payment amount is. It is generally less than what you pay for electricity, so it is more economic to self-consume the solar

electricity generated than export it.

32. What happens if our site/building is selected but do not want to get a grant, or our site is unable to have a solar PV and battery system installed? We thank you for considering the opportunity and look forward to being able to engage with you at another time. There are no costs that you face by deciding that you do not want to accept a CRP grant for a solar PV and battery system.

33. What are EECA's expectations?
    - EECA expects that the building owners allow, or continues to allow the building to be used as a civil defence or welfare centre or equivalent purposes, both in a formal or informal capacity, during emergency events over at least the next 10 years.
    - You, or your Regional Partner, may need to engage with EECA and its evaluation researchers if they contact you (potentially until 6/2027) so your system can be considered for the evaluation, and the researcher can access data about how the system is operating.