Just Transition Fund - End of Pilot Project Report

SECTION A – Project Description

Project Name	NESCAN – Just Transition Communities Project
Funding Awarded in FY 22/23 and Q1 23/24	Pilot phase period: November 2022 –May 2023
Report Completed by	Nicola Twine & Karina Emslie
Designation/Job Title	Project Manager & Project Officer
Date	August 2023

North East Scotland Climate Action Network – Just Transition Communities Project

A partnership project locating communities at the heart of climate action and Just Transition, using collaborative approaches for deliberative democracy, motivating action and bringing about meaningful positive lasting change.

We have implemented the project as planned in the pilot year, achieved and exceeded planned outputs and immediate deliverables and laid excellent foundations in terms of partnerships and future relationships with actors across the North East of Scotland.

AIMS / PURPOSE

Year 1: Researching and Delivering a pilot programme of community-level climate-focused democratic participation.

The main purpose of the Grant (from the JTF) is:

"Delivery of a pilot of community-level climate-focused democratic participation that builds on the experience of previous projects; incorporates emerging good practice from all over the world; can be adapted to reach different communities; and which, in subsequent years, can be implemented across the North-East, Scotland and globally."

The NESCAN Partnership Proposal:

Addressing the question of how communities can be involved in and help to drive the process of designing, creating and delivering a Just Transition.

Working with communities to develop and take forward recommendations and action plans from the climate assemblies and other processes to ensure tangible beneficial outcomes to build trust and encourage climate action within communities.

Bringing together a group of organisations to pilot community climate assemblies and other deliberative processes in the North East of Scotland. These processes will enable communities to explore what a Just Transition means for them.

Placing people at the centre of a just transition and climate action by delivering a series of deliberative climate assemblies and other participatory and deliberative processes in Northeast Scotland.

5 areas of delivery:

1. Review the literature on the impact of innovative place-based deliberative climate assemblies across different national contexts, including opportunities and obstacles for community engagement, as well as the relevant local and national government plans and strategies. (Key NJTOs - 1, 2, 5)

2. Plan and deliver a series of community participatory processes such as assemblies focussing on climate deliberation, in the local authority areas of Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray. (Key NJTOs - 1, 3, 5, 8)

3. Work with stakeholders to connect community deliberative processes to tangible local change, including embedding community climate action and plans within local decision making. (Key NJTOs - 1, 3, 5, 8)

4. Evaluate the outcomes of the community processes and assemblies and document answers to core learning questions relating to them. (Key NJTOs - 1, 2, 8)

5. Share emerging findings during the lifetime of the project, and in a final event for stakeholders. (Key NJTOs - 1, 2, 3, 8)

Linking to Scotland's National JT Outcomes (NJTO)

1.   **Citizens, communities and place:** empowering and invigorating communities and strengthening local economies
2.   **Jobs, skills and education:** equipping people with the skills, education and retraining required; providing access to green, fair and high-value work
3.   **Fair distribution of costs and benefits:** address existing economic and social inequality by sharing the benefits of climate action widely
4.   **Business and economy:** supporting a strong, dynamic and productive economy, making Scotland a great place to do business
5.   **Adaptation and resilience:** identifying risks and planning for long-term resilience against climate risks
6.   **Environmental protection and restoration:** commit to act within our planetary boundaries while protecting and restoring our natural environment
7.   **Decarbonisation and efficiencies:** contribute to resource efficient and sustainable economic approaches
8.   **Further equality and human rights implementation and preventing new inequalities from arising:** for example, addressing fuel poverty and child poverty; furthering wider equality and human rights across protected characteristics

SECTION B – Project Report

This section is designed to capture what key deliverables have been achieved, the benefits for the North East and Moray linked with the project, the lessons learned and potential steps forward.

1. Main Expected Outcomes Report

Please detail below how your project delivered all of its expected outcomes. These are outlined in Section 2.4 of your Grant Award Letter. If your project is multi-year and some objectives will not be reached until future years, please outline how the work carried out this year will support future efforts to reach these objectives. If your project was not able to deliver one or multiple, or only deliver it partially, please detail why.

Section 2.4 of the Grant agreement states that the main expected outcome of the project is:

Delivery of a pilot of community-level climate-focused democratic participation that builds on the experience of previous projects; incorporates emerging good practice from all over the world; can be adapted to reach different communities; and which, in subsequent years, can be implemented across the North-East, Scotland and globally.

Please refer to this section of the "End of Financial Year Project Report".
280423 JTF End of Financial Year Report.pdf (previously submitted).

The project broke down the main expected outcome into 5 key deliverable areas (fuller description on previous page) that we measured outcomes against.

Literature Review: Outcomes
- The completion of 2 novel research studies considering the "Implementation of Community Assembly Outcomes" contributing to the learning and development of the project with practice considerations for supporting assemblies and DDPs to be effective mechanisms to influence policy and decision making.
- Local authorities agreed that to deliver a Just Transition in the Northeast there should be national support and coordination of assemblies, but with strong local authority- involvement. The remit of assemblies should be driven by community members.

Community Participatory Processes: Outcomes
- Torry People's Assembly in May was attended by 150 people exploring the challenges Torry has faced, looking at solutions to provide local people with the power and tools to make changes to improve the environment and wellbeing of their community.
- Ongoing community development project work as a direct result stemming from the initial assembly in Torry includes – community engagement with the ETZ consultation, working with a local architect to develop a retrofit plan for Torry, and exploring community energy schemes – addressing fuel poverty and poor housing conditions.

- Through work with young people, schools and teaching staff, Climate Action Plans for 3 school catchments were produced and a Climate Change Conference was attended by 60 young people.
- Community Assemblies were held for 3 priority neighbourhood areas (Tillydrone, Seaton and Linksfield, Woodside) resulting in "Hopes for Action" illustrations and plans now being used to further engage community members with community projects and solutions.
- Go Deep game supported the inclusion and involvement of marginalised voices in our ESOL communities and ex fishing communities, building an interest for further assembly and deliberative democratic processes to support the development of place, wellbeing and Just Transition with communities (especially disadvantaged) at the heart.
- Communities in Moray are energised and mobilised by the skills and opportunities that the project has enabled tsi Moray to bring to the people (over 700) through a series of Climate Cafes, sustainably priorities mapping game, and local transformational toolkit.
- Community groups are being supported to identify their hopes for action - for projects and priorities for their community.
- The immediate impact of the community assemblies and other DDPs for community participants was an increased climate literacy and awareness, and learning positive ways of communicating about climate change and the transition that enables them to speak about this with their networks. This empowered community members to speak at the Knowledge Exchange Event on 31st May 2023 at the University of Aberdeen about their communities and the impact of the assemblies.

Work with Stakeholders: Outcomes
- Deliberative Democratic Processes (DDPs) such as assemblies and associated action plans are a conduit for information to flow into local decision making and are assisting with Local Authority planning and resourcing.
- Partnerships have grown and developed with all 3 LAs and specific departments. NESCAN Hub, tsi Moray and AFW are now all part of sustainability steering groups, community planning groups and working alongside council colleagues on LOIPs.
- Initial outcomes for NESCAN and our partners include development of relationships with community members and organisations and learning gained from their experience and insights about their communities - what they value and what they want to change and improve.
- The project brings a climate and transition perspective to communities, helping them identify the need and potential benefits for and from the transition to net zero.
- The action plan/ community ideas outputs from DDPs are being fed into and developed by local authority partnerships and services to compliment and add value to other plans such as Priority Neighbourhood Partnership/ Locality Plans.
- Strategic actions plans are being developed in partnership, where small amounts of investment can have transformative impacts for people locally, and community projects and solutions are supported to apply for JT Participatory Budgeting money and other available funding.

Evaluation and Learning: Outcomes
- Development of the project Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) strategy, implemented across partners to support learning and reporting on outcomes.
- Working with values and principles to achieve a balance between accountability and learning, whilst analysing and recording what has changed and any impacts.

Sharing Findings: Outcomes
- A well-attended end of pilot event was hosted at the University of Aberdeen on 31st May 2023 to discuss the emerging practice and learning of the project so far. Research, discoveries, practice tools and resources were shared with 146 diverse participants from civil society, community and policy sectors.

2. Milestones Report

Please detail below how your project delivered all the milestones set out in Section 2.5 of your Grant Award Letter. Please link every milestone with the Just Transition Outcomes you have included in your Expression of Interest and tell us how these Outcomes were reached. If your project is multi-year and some milestones will not be reached until a later stage, please outline how far you are to reaching these targets (i.e. if you have committed to create 10 green jobs by 2024, how many have been created as of today). If your project was unable to reach one or multiple milestones, please detail why.

Milestones from Table 1 Schedule 1 (amendment agreed 11/5/2023)

Milestone	National JT Outcome	Achievement / Delivery
NESCAN - Multiple engagement events and discussions with key Stakeholders	1. Citizens, Communities and Place.	ACHIEVED In-person conversations and engagement events in communities reaching at least 240 people. 5 multi-agency meetings with delivery partners and statutory partners and stakeholders. 10 Post assembly community events 20 online meeting with community members and organisations.
NESCAN – run 3 community assemblies	1. Citizens, Communities and Place. 5. Adaptation and	ACHIEVED From Jan-March we planned and delivered 7 assembly sessions looking at key aspects of climate action and then compiling priority needs into the start of action plans for each area.

	resilience. 8. Further equality and human rights.	Ongoing work and capacity building taking place to develop and implement the community action plans.
NESCAN – Reports to community and key stakeholders	3. Fair distribution of costs and benefits.	ACHIEVED Communities involved with the processes were involved on reporting and feeding back at the project **Knowledge Exchange Event: North East Communities for Just Transition** on 31st May 2023. NESCAN Hub Board Reports generated bi-monthly. Scot Gov JT Fund Reports – monthly, quarterly, end of financial year, etc. Project development, findings and opportunities for learning shared with members, communities and partners across the region. Social media, newsletters, website articles, emails and invitations used to keep communities and stakeholders involved e.g. https://www.nescan.org/community-assemblies
Open Source – 8 engagement events	1. Citizens, Communities and Place.	ACHIEVED Engagement with people in very diverse contexts in Torry (pubs, care homes, golf club, on the pavement, etc.) to have 1-1 and small group conversations. We engaged with 60+ people, mostly through our 'Engaged Listening' process. Contact with individuals and organisations by email and initiated online conversations, engaging with a further 20+ local organisations and interviewing about 12. Engaged with ETZ (Energy Transition Zone) at one of their public consultation meetings and set up 1-1 meetings with members of their team to try and better understand their position and role locally. Public information session attended by 40 local people (including 2 councillors and an MSP) resulting with 20 signups for a local Steering Meeting (SM) for the assembly. 6 community meeting engagement events to design a people's assembly together.

Open Source – working towards a large people's assembly	1. Citizens, Communities and Place. 5. Adaptation and resilience. 8. Further equality and human rights.	ACHIEVED Together with local people, Open Source, initiated, developed, and facilitated a community-led assembly in Torry at the end of May. This was attended by a range community members and stakeholders and attracted 150 participants. Ongoing community development project work as a direct result stemming from the initial assembly in Torry.
Tsi Moray – Recruitment of staff to deliver project	4. Jobs, skills and education.	ACHIEVED 2 part-time community development officers recruited and delivering for this project.
Tsi Moray – 12 engagements	1. Citizens, Communities and Place.	ACHIEVED Online outreach engagements – 2 information events attracting 18 participants. 21 in-person outreach meetings with community groups and projects. 16 outreach meetings with statutory partners and stakeholders.
Tsi Moray – begin 1 Local Transformational Toolkit / Municipalities in Transition	1. Citizens, Communities and Place. 8. Further equality and human rights.	ACHIEVED Process started with a Moray community and stakeholders, with commitments for involvement from key actors confirmed.
Tsi Moray – deliver 1 GEN and 1 CNC process	1. Citizens, Communities and Place. 5. Adaptation and resilience. 8. Further equality and human rights.	ACHIEVED Delivery throughout Moray and Aberdeenshire. 6 Climate Cafes/ Visioning delivered as part of the CNC process. 4 Global Ecovillage Map of Regeneration Sessions.
UoA – JTL – Recruitment of Research Assistants	2. Jobs, skills and education.	ACHIEVED 2 research assistants recruited to undertake research.
UoA – JTL – Literature review and research-based interviews with key stakeholders	2. Jobs, skills and education.	ACHIEVED A global review was designed and carried out examining 14 case studies from local to national and international scales highlighting best practice and novelty. Final report submitted in June 2023.

		Decision and policy maker survey to assess the impacts of outputs from deliberative democratic processes on climate action. The report and findings from 74 responses was delivered at the knowledge exchange event at the end of May.
UoA – JTL – Co-ordination of end of pilot conference	1. Citizens, Communities and Place. 2. Jobs, skills and education. 8. Further equality and human rights.	ACHIEVED Knowledge Exchange Event delivered at the University on May 31st, attended by 146 diverse participants. Included 3 hosted panel discussions and 8 themed breakout sessions to share practice and discuss result and findings.
Go Deep – Initial outreach and collaboration meetings	1. Citizens, Communities and Place.	ACHIEVED Outreach events and relationship building in Fittie took place to develop a 4-day programme of community activities around the Go Deep game, in partnership with local residents and community associations and groups. A further 60 people in other communities including New Scots participants – engaged with the Go Deep team and activities at other events.
Go Deep – 1 Go Deep community game	1. Citizens, Communities and Place. 5. Adaptation and resilience. 8. Further equality and human rights.	ACHIEVED Go Deep delivered a community game in Fittie (Foot Dee) in Aberdeen involving 25 adults and young people to explore community needs and solutions, whilst building relationships and capacity for change.
Forum Theatre – Training for facilitators	2. Jobs, skills and education.	ACHIEVED Facilitators (8) from two local theatre companies trained in the Forum Theatre techniques.
Forum Theatre – 2 workshops	1. Citizens, Communities and Place.	ACHIEVED 2 Workshops on inclusion and community engagement delivered to partners and NESCAN members using Forum Theatre techniques.
AFW – meet HTs and lead staff in 2 Academy catchment areas and agree plans	1. Citizens, Communities and Place. 2. Jobs, skills and	ACHIEVED MDEC have engaged with schools in the two identified areas (Torry and St Machar) and further afield.

		education.	

AFW – professional learning sessions with staff	2. Jobs, skills and education.	ACHIEVED Provided initial professional learning to 86 Aberdeen City and to 70 Moray 'Newly Qualified Teachers.
AFW – work with at least 2 classes in each primary	2. Jobs, skills and education. 8. Further equality and human rights.	ACHIEVED Developed a range of learning resources to support climate literacy for four primary schools in the St Machar catchment area.
AFW – work with at least 4 secondary classes	2. Jobs, skills and education. 8. Further equality and human rights.	ACHIEVED Development of Climate Action Plan group in St Machar (25 pupils) -Climate action group in Lochside (25 pupils) -Eco Group in St Machar (25 pupils) -Rights group in Lochside (14 pupils). Developed Climate Action Plans with 3 schools: Lochside, St Machar and Woodside Held a Climate COP based on the model UN which was open to all NE schools and was picked up by 10 including (Lossiemouth, Gordon Schools, Inverurie, Kemnay, Portlethen, Bridge of Don, Bucksburn, Robert Gordons, ISA and Albyn)
AFW – collate and feedback	3. Fair distribution of costs and benefits.	ACHIEVED Delivery of reports on findings and recommendations, based on activities was produced and delivered as part of the project's Knowledge Exchange Event at the end of May.
Project Co-ordination – Project Partnership Planning Meetings	3. Fair distribution of costs and benefits.	ACHIEVED Partnership development meetings to support collaboration, planning, delivery and shared learning have taken place each month with strong attendance from all partners (mixture of online and in-person).
Project Co-ordination – Develop Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Strategy.	2. Jobs, skills and education. 3. Fair distribution of costs and benefits.	ACHIEVED Project MEL strategy developed – along with associated training, guidance and documentation. This has informed our learning, identification of outcomes and impacts, gathering of evidence and information, and supporting partner reporting against milestones and objectives.
Project Co-ordination –	2. Jobs, skills	ACHIEVED

Inception and Development workshops	and education. 3. Fair distribution of costs and benefits.	2 day project inception development workshops took place in January attended by all partners in-person.
Project Co-ordination - MEL, collating, reporting, accountability	3. Fair distribution of costs and benefits.	ACHIEVED MEL and reporting strategy implemented with all partners submitting monthly information to the project officer for collating and reporting back to Scot Gov.
Training and Development – Facilitation Training in DDPs	1. Citizens, communities and place. 2. Jobs, skills and education. 8. Further equality and human rights.	ACHIEVED Envirolution delivered community assembly and engagement coaching and methodology to NESCAN community development officers. Open Source provided facilitation training in DDPs and community assemblies to NESCAN Hub and partners. Municipalities in Transition/Kunelab delivered Local Transformational Toolkit Training for 8 sessions to project partners.
Training and Development – Equalities and Diversity Training leading to action plan/strategy	1. Citizens, communities and place. 2. Jobs, skills and education. 8. Further equality and human rights.	ACHIEVED Consultant Talat Yaqoob delivered Equalities and Diversity training to project partners. We are building on this to implement a partnership strategy ensuring diverse representation and inclusion in DDPs and project outcomes.

In addition, the following targets as mentioned in 2.5:

Indicator	Quantitative Result	Output/Outcome Narrative
Participatory Processes • 7 community assembly sessions with 3 neighbourhood communities (Tillydrone, Woodside, Seaton and Linksfield) • 1 community assembly weekend in Torry.	30	As a deliberative process, the community assembly model requires a lot of time and thoughtful engagement to build relationships and trust and understanding with community members, to support them to reach the stage of feeling that it is safe and worthwhile to discuss and debate local issues collectively, and to establish a

		shared hope and vision for solutions and action. Once a DDP has taken place, it is important to have a mapped route of action and next steps prepared, with resources in place to continue building community capacity to see these through, coupled with financial resources to turn plans into tangible actions and results.
• 8 community engagement, discussion and planning events to co design a Torry Assembly. • 6 Climate Cafes & Visioning • 4 Global Ecovillage mapping • 1 Municipalities in Transition (LTT) • 3 Go Deep facilitated events		
Total number of participants engaged with and delivered to	1209 community members	The project delivery partners who have been established and operating for longest in the region (tsi Moray and AFW/MDEC) had the greatest success in terms of numbers involved. This is likely down to a known and trusted reputation and that necessary relationships with communities and stakeholders already existed before the project. Moving forward, this would indicate that other delivery partners will be able to build on their successes, relationships and results from the pilot year, to maximise on engagement in the rest of the project
Geographical areas/communities/settlements covered	3 Local Authority Regions 12 Settlements	Community Assemblies in the pilot year took place in Aberdeen, with other DDPs taking place in Aberdeenshire and Moray.
Young People Engaged	486	Although there were some young people involved throughout all of the DDPs, the expertise and involvement of AFW/MDEC on the project has been invaluable with regards to supporting and engaging young people with climate literacy and planning for the future of a just transition.
Projects Developed	10	This relates to the number of new projects/methods developed to deliver the first year (and subsequent years) of the project, and also the resulting outputs from DDPs which are already taking shape as community projects.

Action Plans Developed	7	These are the results of engagements through community assemblies and other DDPs. The project delivery partners continue to work with these communities to realise and support outputs from these action plans to progress.

2. Green Jobs

Please detail below how your project has impacted and will impact green jobs in the region, be it through directly creating them or enabling third parties to generate new green job opportunities. Please do specify if no green jobs were supported or created through this project.

Context: The NESCAN Just Transition Communities Project is not tasked with the aim of making an economic contribution in terms of potential jobs for those formerly employed in oil and gas. A handful of positions have been created in line with project plans, but they are for those who already had relevant skills in community engagement and climate literacy. Through our engagements with communities and local authorities, the project has identified the need for more positions in the North East communities for "Community Learning and Development" practitioners to support and build the capacity of communities to be meaningfully at the heart of a just transition.

In Year 1:
2 Full-time positions in NESCAN Hub were created to deliver this project, and to ensure the transfer of knowledge and skills in Community Climate Literacy and Community Engagement, Development and Action around Climate Change.

UoA – JTL: 2 Research Posts

Tsi Moray: FTE 1 new post created to deliver community engagement and deliberative democratic processes around climate change and climate action.
A range of sessional and freelance work delivered to support the project to meet it's objectives during year 1.

Moving forward into years 2 and 3, further green jobs within community practice and education sectors will be required within this project as we roll out more community deliberative democratic processes to engage targeted communities who stand most to benefit from a Just Transition that considers and responds to the needs of local people, communities and priorities.

Community champions and leaders will be offered opportunities to train and develop as part of this project, to facilitate new and emerging practice to support local action that improves the wellbeing of people and places. We hope that there will also be the opportunity to offer paid work to local people to deliver towards the project outcomes.

3. Finance unlocked through funding

Please detail below how much additional funding has been unlocked through Scottish Government funding for your project. This could be additional funding your organisation has put in to deliver the project, or third parties coming in to support the delivery alongside Scottish Government funding.

Both NESCAN Hub and tsi Moray are contributing additional organisational resources to enable the project to deliver. For NESCAN this has equated to approx. £25k of additional resources (in year one with similar expected in year 2) in predominantly staff time to support community development, financial procedures, communication strategy, governance, admin, etc.

Through developing our working partnership with Aberdeen City Council through opportunities such as this Just Transition Communities Project and the Just Transition Participatory Budgeting project, we have been offered the opportunity to release and manage approximately £40k of funding for community projects in the city to develop biodiversity and enhance green local places for communities to benefit from and further supporting community climate action efforts.

Open Source's Grassroots to Global project has received additional funding which has also been supporting the development of Community Climate Assembly work and tools and resources for the project and further afield. Having been a successful contributor to this project has meant that OS has had evidence of their achievements and impacts to attract and raise other significant funds to support their work also.

Communities that we have been working alongside in Aberdeen City and Shire have had access to the NESCAN seed-funding which during the pilot phase of the project offered up to £1000 each to support the start up of new community initiatives associated with climate action. 6 community projects in Aberdeen City accessed and gained seed funding as a direct result of being part of the assembly process and subsequently became members of NESCAN.

As we continue to work with communities who have been through DDPs to support a just transition, we anticipate the further unlocking of other funds and resources (external to the JTF) while we continue to work strengthening their capacities and resources for meaningful community development and action.

4. Community Benefits and Regional Impacts

Please do tell us about any positive regional impacts on communities that resulted from your project, even if it was not initially captured in your Expression of Interest and milestones and that resulted from your work this financial year.

- **Renewed Community Empowerment and Momentum.**
  There were many people hovering on the edge of the assemblies who were interested but unengaged. Follow up community development work from the DDPs gives an opportunity to spread the impact within the wider community. Community members are now starting to drive the process – asking how they can keep the momentum created by the assemblies and other DDPs going, and how other community members can find out about the outcomes and plans and become involved.

  tsi Moray observed this effect from their deliveries supporting community members to become more positively engaged through the project:
  "Participants shared the need for congregating together, celebrating in person to increase community 'glue' of shared relationships, partnerships and fun, often contrasting this human need with the pressures of screen time, shopping online or not taking the time to spend in local shops and attend local groups. This is especially important to counteract desperation, anxiety and feeling hopeless in the face of runaway climate change. Our processes bring people together, promote effective climate action and need to stay cooperative – and fun!"

- **Increased capacity and confidence of community members to talk about, raise awareness of and take action on climate change and participation in a regional just transition.**
  An immediate impact of the community assemblies and other DDPs for community participants was an increased climate literacy and awareness, and learning positive ways of communicating about climate change and the transition that enables them to speak about this with their networks. This empowered community members to speak at the Knowledge Exchange Event at the University about their communities and the impact of the assemblies.

  "It gave me quite a feeling of fulfilment, gave me confidence, gave me as a person quite a good vibe and positive feelings and seemed to uplift me. Since the assembly, I have done things that I've never done before. Like speaking at the university; I spoke off the cuff, I put my own feelings and what other people are feeling into words."
  Torry Assembly Participant

- **Strengthened partnership and relationships within communities, between groups and with volunteers to bring about action.**
  In Torry, relations between the community organisers of the assembly and the revived Community Council are flourishing. Locals have reported positive engagement with local Councillors. The community are engaging with the ETZ consultation, working with a local architect (who is a member of NESCAN) to develop a retrofit plan for Torry, and exploring community energy schemes – addressing fuel

poverty and poor housing conditions.

The community growing and gardening association FRESH in Seaton are currently in talks with 3 other gardens to do some promotions and work together days - Earth and Worms, Tullos and Cultivate Aberdeen. They have been awarded some money from RHS to run events and advertising to increase numbers. In terms of volunteer numbers, as a result of the engagements through DDPs they have had a better year than last year, attracting 20 regular volunteers and a further 10 sporadic volunteers.

There have been connections made between communities engaged through DDPs, with them talking to each other to develop relations and support each other on development of projects and plans.

- **Increased awareness and drive from local authority services and partners to address community needs relating to climate change and a Just Transition.**
  Local authority officers and teams have come forward and made contact with NESCAN Hub and tsi Moray about partnering on the project for its next phase, having learnt about the work that has been happening and identifying places and communities that they would like to include in DDPs on the basis of engagement and appetite in these local areas for positive change and benefits from a just transition.

  Identified communities include Inverurie as there is a new climate action group that has strong participation, alongside the local authority area officer and community planning team initiating a place based review of the town and want the project to be part of it. Also, Banff in north Aberdeenshire, which has several areas falling within SIMD, are keen to explore shared community energy schemes as one area to address fuel poverty and cost of living crisis, and the LA regeneration team and community planning partnership have requested NESCAN JTCP involvement around DDPs and community engagement. There is also some interest in helping support community planning in the Marr Area in Aberdeenshire too, alongside Cairngorm National Park and Aberdeenshire Council.

- **The reach and influence of this project is benefitted by the collaboration of partners and stakeholders towards a common goal, and the engagement and call to action across many communities.**
  This is a unique and original community focused project, covering a large geographical area comprising 3 Local Authorities and a large reach with communities, places and people (all being monitored with participation and demographics being recorded and reported on). The ripple effect as word spreads through communication and outreach continues to increase the demand of other communities in the region wanting to play their part in a just transition and combating climate change. Capacity and interest is building with regards to the power and influence a Regional Assembly model could develop by bringing all of the voices and community needs together from across the project and individual DDPs happening in the region.

5. Obstacles

What were the main obstacles that you experienced with the project? How did you overcome them and how did they affect project delivery?

OBSTACLE: **Time-frame - Logistics and Planning.** Time and local knowledge for ensuring "buy-in" and accessing the most appropriate facilities and spaces, organisations and stakeholders. Narrow time-frame meant that much of the key delivery and engagement had to happen during the winter period which is not ideal in North East Scotland when you're trying to get people out to events and meetings.

SOLUTION/ACTION: Community Development officers visited as many locations, groups and meetings in the three communities (Seaton/Linksfield, Woodside, Tillydrone) prior to the start of the assemblies, and likewise this also occurred in Torry in the build up to their assembly. Other community delivery providers Go Deep and tsi Moray also practiced in similar ways.

AFFECT ON DELIVERY: Engagement and lead-in time was shorter than ideal for many of the DDPs due to the timescale of grant agreement being finalised and then time-frame for completion. Specifically, this was recognised as affecting the Community Assemblies scheduled for the St Machar catchment area for 3 communities in Aberdeen which required to be completed between January and March as per milestone forecast. Learning from this is being built in to future delivery planning, to ensure that engagement time and mechanisms for relationship building are identified, resourced and factored in as essential to gaining the most out of community DDPs. The ability to hold community assemblies earlier in the financial year is dependant, however, on the funding offer letter being in place within the first quarter.

OBSTACLE: **Barriers to accessing young people**. Schools need long lead-in times and need us to work to their routines and structures. It is also not easy to approach young people outside of school settings, more of a difficulty since universal community based youth work has been in decline.

SOLUTION/ACTION: The project is very fortunate to have AFW/MDEC as a lead delivery partner in the region who already have a well-regarded reputation and relationship within the education sector and school community. Because of this, they are able to capitalise on their knowledge and relationships with schools to find ways to engage.

AFFECT ON DELIVERY: We miss out on opportunities to develop more effectively with schools to fit into their curriculum planning for the year ahead if funding letters are not in place before the summer holidays.

OBSTACLE: **Public Scepticism and lack of belief that "something will happen".**
Community distrust of local authorities, governments and power-wielding institutions, coupled with consultation fatigue.

SOLUTION/ACTION: Relationship building and trust building within communities. In person outreach engagements, by skilled community development workers who are able to facilitate conversations and movement towards community-led action.

AFFECT ON DELIVERY: This process takes time. Especially in communities that have suffered from unjust transitions in the past, and whose community needs and interests have not been listened to and acted upon, mostly because the influence of business and economic interests have trumped community places and spaces - removing amenities

from community use and wellbeing. We are working in some disadvantaged communities from a starting point where they are feeling disempowered and apathetic. The project requires time spent building relevant DDPs in partnership with the community that gives them hope and belief in different and better outcomes than their past experiences. In consideration of this "time" component, and effect on delivery is the stopping and starting of delivery, and challenges with planning linked to current funding decisions and imposed timescales not conducive to this sort of work.

OBSTACLE: **Linking assembly outputs to policy / decision makers for response and action.**
SOLUTION/ACTION: The University of Aberdeen's Just Transition Lab is conducting research into this, producing findings and recommendations to support emerging community practice around DDPs and engagement in local climate action and community identified needs and actions towards a just transition in the region. The research papers and reports will be shared throughout the academic world, and the project will develop the ways to engage with decision making institutions to discuss and share the findings to enable a greater support and response to DDPs which will be to the benefit of LAs, Scot Gov, and influential business communities.
AFFECT ON DELIVERY: Research and guidance coming directly from the UoA Just Transition Lab has a positive effect on the development of this project and is supporting how it develops in order to discover the ways to most effectively link up DDP and assembly outputs into decision making processes.

OBSTACLE: **Research Ethics Requirements**. The resource and time required is significant, with requirements from both local authorities, political institutions and academic institutions to navigate.
SOLUTION/ACTION: Following and demonstrating due process, building confidence and relationships with gatekeepers and institutions who contributed to the research.
AFFECT ON DELIVERY: Accessing elected officials was difficult as each organisation has its own processes to engage with staff and elected officials. , Initial reluctance of local authorities to engage in the survey. Both caused delay and potentially affected the sample size of the survey.

6. Lessons Learned

Please detail below the main lessons learned from the project and how these have impacted your organisation.

Important lessons have emerged from comparing and contrasting what has worked well (or less so) in the different project partners' approaches.

- **Critical importance of sustained outreach into the communities** – engaging with individuals as well as organisations and service providers (both voluntary and statutory). The essence is building human relationships that can help get people beyond an initial scepticism of the idea of an Assembly because of previous

experience with government consultation processes which are perceived as not generating useful change. Where there is a prior presence and relationships in the communities it enables work to start more quickly, though there are also advantages to being a fresh face with no prior engagement in some of the previous struggles that have divided some communities as well as united them.

- **Genuine Engagement** Outreach is the first step in building and sustaining positive relationships between the organisers and community members which enable people to genuinely engage with each other and with sometimes challenging material – like the extent of the climate crisis. Sustained and extensive outreach is necessary for successful community engagement and community assemblies.

- **Importance of starting where people are in their own thinking.** Even though we may want to talk about the climate crisis, people generally have other more pressing issues like housing or livelihoods etc. We have to start with what is important to people and only then widen the discussion to include a just transition. Knowledge of different approaches and picking the most appropriate approach enables communities to make choices, in the course of the engagement, which reflect their diverse interests and priorities (including young people). Community participation in the choice of question discussed is important, creates authenticity and ensures better buy in from communities. Without this, there is a risk of slipping into the format of some government or private sector consultation processes which are seen as extractive and without obvious benefit to the community.

- **Logistics/Accessibility:** Various project partners reported that logistical factors can contribute to or detract from people's engagement impacting the delivery for the project. For instance:
  - **Time** of year: Hard to get people to attend meetings on winter evenings, have enthusiasm from schools for outside work during the winter terms. One of our partners reported:
    "Schools plan for next school year in term 4. In the pilot we struggled to get in because by November it was not in the plans for the schools. If we were to have a chance of success next session we really needed to be in schools now. Because we have missed this 'window of opportunity' we will again struggle to get in after summer."
  - **Location**: use of schools as community meeting spaces can be a challenge for some potential participants – though in some locations it is the only suitable available space.
  - **Provision of food:** not only because meetings often cover mealtimes, but also because it compensates people for their time - the time and cost of preparing food at home can now be spent in community matters. Eating together is also part of relationship building and generating an overall sense of informality and goodwill.

- **Barriers to accessing young people - Timing -** it is not easy to approach youngsters outside of schools and getting into schools is often not easy. Schools need long lead in times and need us to work to their routines and structures. Relationships matter here and again the fact we have not been able to be in their planning with them this term is going to be a major setback when we pick things up in August.

- **Belief something will happen** - if we marginalise, overlook or fail to deliver for young people/ any section of the community we will turn them off from future

deliberative processes. In order to have people engage and continue to engage in a deliberative democratic process they need to believe that it will actually make a difference. They need to feel that what they say will be listened to and acted upon, or if it cannot be done then at least someone will explain why. If there is no actual change and their ideas are not taken up by decision makers, they will disengage. There is a community capacity issue and a need for support from organisations like NESCAN and project partners to help the community take forward their ideas and create some early and easy 'wins' to show the value of the process and work with local authorities to ensure community wishes are acted upon.

- **Linking assembly outputs** - One of the key messages from the survey carried out by Aberdeen University demonstrates that there is a lack of awareness of what the role of climate assemblies can be in the broader policy and civil society process. While assemblies were seen as important tools, there was much more work to do in terms of linking assembly outputs into the policy process, increasing the awareness and legitimacy of assemblies in the broader community, and finding the mechanisms by which assemblies can action and deliver their outcomes to improve local sustainability and climate action. This will inform our future work in the project.

- **MEL** – It is difficult to capture internal change in individuals and communities. Much of the change being wrought by community assemblies, whether by participants or those reached by the publicity or action plans, is subtle and in relation to people's increased knowledge and appetite for change, which is not something you can generally capture. It easier to track the concrete projects and actions that arise out of community plans created from DPPs. We are further developing our MEL plan and related processes and paperwork to enable us to capture, as much as possible, wider changes that arise from having the Project.

- **Part of a continued process** - a key learning point is that a DDP cannot be a one-off event. A one-off event produces a report that sits in an avalanche of reports. Communities tell us that they are "consultation fatigued". Repeated consultations which do not result in clear and real benefits and improvements are part of the problem and lead to disengagement. DDPs need to be part of a continuing process of support and engagement and lead to actual results and meaningful change.

- **Storytelling** - it appears that taking an empathic, listening approach can help bring around internal change. In the pilot, for example, the youngsters we worked with valued the opportunity to speak about what mattered to them, in ways which suited them. They liked having their stories heard and recorded. They were hopeful that having their views publicised might lead to something happening. We learned that collecting stories of change is important and that noting and celebrating small changes for a person are important to retaining their engagement. The use of interactive 'games' can produce new ways of thinking and enable a more equalities driven mind set. For example, while running a Go deep game in Fittie, it was noted that people learned how to "be at ease in the presence of difference" reframing their mental frameworks to redefine their community in line with new ways of thinking.

7. JTF Process Feedback

Please detail below what aspects of the JTF funding process worked, from the initial application to the payment of grants, which ones didn't, and what could be done to improve the process from your perspective.

Positives – the JTF staff team were and are helpful and approachable and do their best to help with any queries in the limited time they have available. After being approached with how some aspects of the process were burdensome they did revise the process to reduce some of the burden i.e. moving from monthly to quarterly reporting.

What did not work and how to improve the process

The time taken from initial discussions to sign off offer letter was very long. We did not get the offer letter signed until mid November, leading to very little time to actually deliver any outcomes before end of the financial year. This led to the pilot scheme having to be delivered over two financial years and a knock on effect on the gaining of a year 2 funding offer letter, which is still to be signed off.

The amount of information asked for resulted in the use of a considerable amount of NESCAN Hub staff time, with more and more information being asked for. The time taken both in calendar length and also in staff time could be dramatically reduced by providing very clear precise written instructions laying out exactly what information was needed at the start of the process with examples of what was meant, together with an explanatory meeting. The continued back and forth asking for information and clarification about what was actually needed added considerable time and stress to the process. The setting of a timeline, with dates and times for Scot Gov and NESCAN meetings, and factoring in the approvals needed within Scot Gov would also enable us to all appropriately plan workloads and ensure availability of diaries and aid the swift creation of an offer letter.

The monthly financial reporting and gaining of funds lead to a huge amount of staff time being dedicated to financial reporting and a delay in funds being available to pay partners and other suppliers. This issue has now been resolved by quarterly reporting.

The time between issuing a schedule 2 request for funding and receiving the funds in the bank account could be up to 2 weeks, which created a situation around the end of year that resulted in a NESCAN Hub director having to loan the organisation money to ensure that services were incurred and paid for in the 22/23 financial year. It is suggested that there should be a number of people in the JTF department that can authorise funding payment to expedite such payments and that staff liaise with Finance to ensure swift payment of funds.

8. Changes in milestones and outcomes

If your project is multi-year, please tell us if you have planned a change in milestones or covered Just Transition Outcomes resulting from the work you carried out this Financial Year, and why.

Please see section 2 of this report "Milestones" – which demonstrates our delivery and achievements against identified Just Transition Outcomes.

As this is a developing project – based on research and emerging practice, we have updated our project output milestones as per the table below. Each output indicator relates directly to Scotland's National JT Outcomes (NJT) and also the identified project outcomes – Just Transition Communities Project (JTCP).

Project outcomes (JTCP) are:
1. A Just Transition results in more equal, prosperous, connected, happier and resilient communities in the North East and beyond.
2. Innovative participatory and deliberative processes drive decision-making, ensuring that community values and preferences inform policy, planning and decision-making.
3. Children & young people are actively engaged in climate deliberative processes with active participation and ownership - helping to address climate anxiety, developing new solutions and skills.
4. Communities are engaged and empowered in the Just Transition by being at the centre of activity that creates green skills, jobs and builds community wealth.
5. Deliberative democratic processes improve understanding of the climate crisis and increasing climate literacy within communities, leading to action.
6. Innovative best practice models for participatory deliberative democracy are scalable across the North East and more broadly in Scotland and can be used to support decision-making for just transitions.
7. Skilled and knowledgeable Regional Hubs for Community Climate Action are able to support local people and communities, other Hubs, local authorities, partners and stakeholders - to set up and run assemblies and deliberative democratic processes.

Milestones and Outputs for years 2 and 3 of the project are indicated here:

Output & Products	Output Indicator	Key JTCP Outcome	Key NJT Outcome
Climate Assemblies and Deliberative Democratic Processes	Regional Assembly (being developed in year 2)	2, 3, 5, 6	1, 3, 5
	Community Assemblies in Aberdeenshire – 3.	1, 2, 3, 5	1, 3, 5, 6
	Local Transformational Toolkit (MiT) – 1 in Moray	1, 2, 3, 5	1, 3, 5, 6
	Go Deep Games – 6.	1, 2, 4, 6	1, 3, 8
	CNC events - 20	1, 2, 5, 6	1, 5, 6, 8
	GEN events - 8	1, 2, 5, 6	1, 5, 6, 8
	Forum Theatre Workshops – 10-12	2, 3, 5	1, 3, 5

	DDPs with schools in 3 local authorities, leading to climate action plans – 12 school areas	2, 3, 4, 5, 6	1, 2, 3
	Community Assemblies – up to 2	1, 2, 3, 5	1, 3, 5, 6
	Online Climate Assembly	1, 2, 3, 5	1, 3, 5, 6
	Local Transformational Toolkit (MiT) – 2 in North East	1, 2, 3, 5	1, 3, 5, 6
	Other processes – GEN, CNC, Go Deep, Forum Theatre – as and when required.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	1, 3, 5, 6, 8
Community Climate Action Toolkit	Open resources available in online toolkit – 5+	4, 5, 6, 7	1, 2, 3
	Community Learning & Development opportunities in climate action and DDPs – 4+	4, 5, 6, 7	1, 2, 3
	Open resources available in online toolkit – 5+	4, 5, 6, 7	1, 2, 3
	Community Learning & Development opportunities in climate action and DDPs – 4+	4, 5, 6, 7	1, 2, 3
	Children's Rights and Climate Action Toolkit	1, 3, 5, 6	2, 3, 8
Published Research / Recommendations	Report on policy pathways for deliberative community outputs.	1, 2	2, 4, 8
	Documentary – Community Voices and reimagining the culture of the North East.	1, 2, 4, 5	1, 2, 3, 4, 8
	Report on the social analysis of community voice and democracy.	2, 5	1, 2, 8
	Review on gamification for climate literacy with potential development of gaming product.	3, 5	2, 4, 8
	Knowledge Exchange Events each year.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	1, 2, 3, 8
Strengthened & Empowered Communities	Engagement with 20 geographic communities.	1, 4, 5	1, 3, 8
	Engagement with 3+ thematic communities.	1, 4, 5	1, 3, 8
	Community Action Plans – 8.	1, 2, 4, 5	1, 3, 8
	Training and Development opportunities in Leadership and Facilitation – 4 training for approx. 20 community members	1, 4, 6, 7	1, 2, 3, 8
	Engagement with 10 schools.	1, 3, 4, 5	1, 3, 8
	Sessional Job Opportunities – created for local facilitators – 5+	1, 4, 6, 7	1, 2, 3, 8
	Sessional Job Opportunities – created for local facilitators – 5+	1, 4, 6, 7	1, 2, 3, 8
	Engagement with communities (geographic, marginalised, young people/schools) – 20+	1, 3, 4, 5	1, 3, 8
Additionality:	MEL strategy – monitoring the impacting of participatory democratic processes.	1, 5, 6, 7	3
Project and Practices – Learning, Development and	Establish measurement indicators that reflect the project contributions towards research and practice development and produce evidence of progress and meaningful change	1, 5, 7	2, 4

Connections.	Development of a Steering Board, to include community, local authority and other stakeholder representatives	4, 6, 7	1, 3, 4, 8
	JTCP Website developed and live	5, 6	2, 4
	Communications Strategy	5, 6, 7	1, 3, 8
	Diversity and Inclusion Strategy	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 3, 8
year 2 deliverable			
year 3 deliverable			
during years 2 & 3			

Annex A – Expenditure Report

Please provide a detailed breakdown of the actual expenditure compared to the planned expenditure detailed in your Grant Award Letter.

Agreed Grant Funding for NESCAN – Just Transition Communities Pilot Project	£386,152
Expenditure to Date for the Pilot Project	**£332,747.51 (£214,055.83 in Y1 22/23 and 118,691.68 in Y2 23/24)**
Reporting Period:	**Nov 22 to May 23**

A	B	C	D	E	F
Budget Line	**Total Agreed in Grant Letter for Y1-Y2**	**Formal Claims for Reporting Period**	**Actual Expenditure against claims for Reporting Period**	**Explanation for Variance**	**Balance Column C-D**
1- AFW/MDEC Budget	33260.54	33260.54	32928.8		331.74
2- Go Deep Budget	16880	16880	16360.45		519.55
3- Just Transition Lab Budget	91596.2	91595.75	91372.62		223.13
4- NESCAN HUB Budget	110720.33	69820.6	58639.88		11180.72
5- Open Source Budget	77625	77625	77375		250
6- tsiMORAY Budget	56070	56070	56070.76		-0.76
Grand Total	**386,152.07**	345,251.89	332,747.51		12,504.38

If your project is multi-year, please provide below your planned monthly or quarterly claim profile for next financial year.

Month/Quarter	Planned Expenditure
TOTAL	**£**0

Annex B – Just Transition Outcomes

Citizens, communities and place: support affected regions by empowering and invigorating communities and strengthening local economies;

Jobs, skills and education: equip people with the skills, education and retraining required to support retention and creation of access to green, fair and high-value work;

Fair distribution of costs and benefits: address existing economic and social inequality by sharing the benefits of climate action widely, while ensuring that the costs are distributed on the basis of ability to pay;

Business and Economy: support a strong, dynamic and productive economy which creates wealth and high quality employment across Scotland, upholds the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and continues to make Scotland a great place to do business;

Adaptation and resilience: identify key risks from climate change and set out actions to build resilience to these risks, ensuring our economy is flexible, adaptable and responsive to the changing climate;

Environmental protection and restoration: commit to act within our planetary boundaries while protecting and restoring our natural environment;

Decarbonisation and efficiencies: contribute to resource efficient and sustainable economic approaches that actively encourage decarbonisation, support low-carbon investment and infrastructure, and avoid carbon 'lock-in';

Further equality and human rights implementation and preventing new inequalities from arising: address fuel poverty and child poverty in a manner consistent with Scotland's statutory targets on each, while furthering wider equality and human rights across all protected characteristics.