



## Community characteristics & orientation

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### Instructions

Research the community you are most interested in exploring using links from the UN Sustainable Goals website (<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>) and others. In your exhaustive research, answer the following.

Community characteristics		
Community life-cycle (current state)		
Where is your community in its life-cycle?	What you need to focus on:	Special needs
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Just forming</b> Need basic tools to connect, but not sure from there	Research and/or discuss the potential of some basic tools with members, explore what ideas it might give them, and see what they might bring in with them.	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Self-designing</b> Information stage, but with a strong sense of what it wants to accomplish	Contribute ideas to the design. Analyze systematically the implications of their community design for technology, infrastructure, and technology skills.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Growing &amp; restless</b> Ready to add new functionality to its tool configuration	Try to make this a community reflection and self-design event. Does their restlessness suggest a major change, such as a transition to a new platform?	There is a lot of information about and tools for solar technology already out there, such as solar calculators (solar hours, wattage, panel quantity, etc.), forums, and websites, but new platforms would assist members to make better use of current information and connect with others.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Stable and adapting</b> Just needing some new tools	How much disruption will the community tolerate? How will the new tools be integrated into or affect existing practices?	
Constitution		
Diversity: How diverse is the community?		
Topic	Your notes	



What are the different types of members and what are their levels of participation?	<p>Experts – Those who design/install solar panels (companies, engineers, technicians, etc.) and can answer more involved, sophisticated questions. High level of participation.</p> <p>Activists – Those knowledgeable in the importance of solar energy especially as it pertains to the environment, and who support and promote solar as a renewable energy source. High level of participation.</p> <p>Consumers – Those who own solar, can share user experience, and are a part of the solar community. Medium level of participation (member dependent).</p> <p>Lurkers/newcomers – Those interested in solar but do not have much knowledge or experience with it. They want to learn more about it. Low level of participation.</p>
How spread apart is it in terms of location and time zones?	Solar can be accessed anywhere in the world, so it is spread across every country and every time zone. However, economically, it may be more accessible in some countries more than others
What language(s) do members speak?	Members can speak any language
What other cultural or other diversity aspects may affect your technology choices?	Generational, or age, diversity may affect the technology of choice because those interested in solar could be young adults, older generations, or anywhere in between looking for the same thing out of the community. However, different generations have very different skill levels and knowledge of technology.

**Openness:** How connected to the outside world is your community?

Topic		Your notes
How much do you want to control the boundaries of your community? Does your community need	<input type="checkbox"/> To be private/secure <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open boundaries <input type="checkbox"/> Both private & public spaces	The community should be able to actively participate, share, and learn together about others experiences with solar electricity. Many of the benefits will be generated from the openness and honesty of the community members. This community can have open boundaries because there are no confidentiality concerns or security issues in sharing this type of information or knowledge.
How does your community need to interact with other communities? Do you need common tools for sharing and learning with them?		There doesn't necessarily need to be common tools for sharing and learning with other communities. Although there could be some benefits, solar is a relatively isolated community that can function and accomplish goals without interacting much with other communities.

**Technology aspirations**

**Technology savvy, tolerance, & constraints:** What are your community's technology interests and skills and patience thereof? What are the constraints imposed by technology factors?

Topic	Your notes
How interested is your community in technology?	This community should be fairly interested in technology because solar is an advancing technology in and of itself.
What is their capacity for learning new tools?	The capacity for learning new tools may vary depending on age and region.
What is the range of skills? If their interests and/or skills are	Like in many communities, there's a varying range of skills and interests. I think the technology used needs to be simple enough to accommodate individuals with lower



diverse, could it cause conflict or distraction?	technology skill levels but also advanced enough that members can get and share the knowledge they need from the community.
How tolerant are members of the adoption of a wide variety of tools?	I think this community should have a few basic and simple tools, that provide meaningful results. This would be of greater value than a large quantity of tools that could become confusing to members.
How many technological boundaries are they willing to cross, e.g. sign in to more than one web-based tool, learn to use new tools, or give up old favorites? This helps you understand what level of integration you need.	Members would want to find all useful information and interact with other community members all within one platform. There already exists many individual tools to support this community, however, tools are not all in one place.
What are your members' technology constraints (e.g., bandwidth, operating systems, etc.)?	This community's technology shouldn't require much bandwidth and should be able to operate on a variety of operating systems to maximize community engagement and support.
How much time are members able to be online and from where (office, home, field)? Some people have limited online time, or are able to be online only in specific locations. Others are always on. Very diverse situations can affect participation	Members should be able to be online anytime, anywhere as this community can engage from across the world. This would allow for maximum member participation.

## Community orientation

**Relevance to community:** Use the range from 0 (no relevance) to 5 (high relevance) to determine what matters most to the community. Look at these from the perspectives of the different types of members (under "constitution"). Also discuss the "value-added" to each member group

0	1	2	3	4	5	Orientations	Variants	Key activities/your notes
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Meetings</b> Many communities place a great emphasis on regular meetings where members engage in shared activities for a specific time. Meetings, and the visible participation of members, assert the community's existence	<input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-face/blended <input type="checkbox"/> Online synchronous <input type="checkbox"/> Online asynchronous	Members don't necessarily have to have any sort of formal or informal meeting to assert community existence. Meetings might be too restrictive with the amount of people that could be in this community and the varying levels of learning and knowledge sharing members want to get out of the community.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Open-ended conversation</b> Some communities maintain ongoing conversations as their	<input type="checkbox"/> Single-stream discussions	It is important for members to learn with each other and to share their experiences with



						<p>primary vehicles for learning. Open-ended conversations are common when a community is co-located and people keep the conversation going as they “bump” into each other.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Multi-topic conversations <input type="checkbox"/> Distributed conversations	<p>each other. Although information can be found from suppliers and installers, this information is very promotional and biases, so it might be beneficial for members to hear the unbiased experience from everyday users like themselves. Many members can contribute to conversations if they so wish but can also just observe other’s experiences. Open ended-ness allows for members to engage with each other across multiple locates and varying schedules.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Projects</b></p> <p>In some communities’ members want to focus on particular topics, go deep, and collaborate on projects to solve problems or produce useful artifacts. Learning is not just a matter of sharing knowledge or discussing issues. Members need to do things together in order to develop their practice. Projects usually involve a subgroup within the community</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Practice groups <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project teams <input type="checkbox"/> Instruction	<p>To some degree projects can be a part of the solar community. Installing solar panels, whether it be individually, through an organization, or a mission group, projects can help members connect to other members within their community. This can be particularly important in regions where other sources of electricity aren’t available. However, this community can be very large that this orientation may not be the best orientation to support community needs.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Content</b></p> <p>Some communities are primarily interested in creating, sharing, and providing access to documents, tools, and other content. Valuable and well-organized content is a useful resource for members</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Library <input type="checkbox"/> Structured self-publish <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open self-publish <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Content integration	<p>Solar can be relatively unfamiliar to people, so the key focus for members, or those joining the community, is to share knowledge and experience with one another. It would also be useful if this content could be compared to other sources of electricity and to members with similar lifestyles and consumption habits.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Access to expertise</b></p> <p>Some communities create value by providing focused and timely access to expertise in the community’s domain, whether internally or externally.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Questions & requests <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Access to experts	<p>Access to experts is obviously important for those interested in investing in solar energy, however, this can be very time consuming, especially for newcomers/lurkers who are just</p>



						Communities with this orientation focus on answering questions, fulfilling requests for advice, or engaging in collaborative, just-in-time problem solving	<input type="checkbox"/> Shared problem solving <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge validation <input type="checkbox"/> Apprenticeship & mentoring	part of the community to learn for the time being. In addition, members don't have to have advanced knowledge as that might not be as beneficial as experience knowledge. Expert advice might also be biased as it could be coming from sales personnel.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Relationships</b> Some communities focus on relationship building among members as the basis for both ongoing learning and being available to each other. This orientation emphasizes the interpersonal aspect of learning together. Communities with this orientation place a high value on knowing each other personally, emphasizing networking, trust building, and mutual discovery	<input type="checkbox"/> Connecting <input type="checkbox"/> Knowing about people <input type="checkbox"/> Interacting informally	Members of the solar community don't necessarily have to form meaningful relationships with each other to support their needs within the community. Although interacting with one another is important, its more from a knowledge perspective than for interpersonal connection and support.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Individual participation</b> Learning together happens in the context of a group, but it is realized in the experience of individuals. People bring different backgrounds, communication styles, and aspirations to their participation in a community. People have different levels of commitment, they take on different roles, and they use tools differently	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Levels of participation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Personalization <input type="checkbox"/> Individual development <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-membership	The community needs to support various levels of participation. Some members will share their experience while others are there to learn from other member's experience. The community needs to support both types of participants. Members experiences within the community will also be enhanced if they can have a personalized experience as solar can be very personalized to member's lifestyles, location, and financial situations. Each member experience will be different.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Community cultivation</b> Some communities are happy with loose self-organization and unplanned evolution, while others thrive on attention to community cultivation. They have a need to reflect on the effectiveness and health of the community to make things better, joined with a willingness to work on it	<input type="checkbox"/> Democratic governance <input type="checkbox"/> Strong core group <input type="checkbox"/> Internal coordination <input type="checkbox"/> External facilitation	I don't think community cultivation is very important in the solar community. There does not have to be well-planned activities or a need to track participation in order for the community to be successful and fulfill their goals.



<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Service context</b> In some cases, serving a specific context becomes central to the community's identity and the ways it operates. They may live inside an organization, whose charter their practice needs to serve. They may have a mission to provide learning resources to the world or to recruit members widely. Or they may seek interactions with other communities whose domain complements their own	<input type="checkbox"/> Organization as context <input type="checkbox"/> Cross-organizational <input type="checkbox"/> Other related communities <input type="checkbox"/> Public mission	This orientation wouldn't best support the community because its not just supporting an idea, its supporting a concrete matter. There also is not much cross over between this community and others. There are other renewable energy communities that have similar needs, however, they may not need to interact with these communities to fulfil their own community needs
<b>Scratchpad (other interesting insights, questions/answers, etc.)</b>								
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