

Identify your stakeholders, your iwi and the value of sustainability, equity and resiliency

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Who are your stakeholders?

Community energy projects are initiated by the community and aim to provide local production, delivery, and utilisation of energy while delivering benefits to the community as a whole. These communities can be defined by geographic or cultural factors, and engagement in a community energy project includes both those living in close proximity to the project and others with a specific interest in it, even if they reside further away.

Stakeholders in a community energy project encompass a broader group beyond those who directly benefit from it. They encompass individuals, organisations, and companies involved in various aspects of the project, such as planning, financing, construction, maintenance, and marketing of excess electricity. Stakeholders can include anyone who may be impacted by the project or has a business interest in its outcomes.

Managing relationships with stakeholders is crucial, necessitating well-planned engagements at appropriate stages of the project. It is important to provide clear communication and regular updates to stakeholders, ensuring they have a comprehensive understanding of the project's objectives, deliverables, and expectations.

Developing a stakeholder management plan

A stakeholder management plan is a crucial strategy document that outlines how a project team intends to effectively manage the goals and expectations of key stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle. This plan plays a significant role in ensuring the overall success of the project. Without a well-defined stakeholder management plan, the project's resources, funding, employees, or materials may be negatively impacted. The stakeholder management plan typically includes the following elements:

- **Stakeholders' interests:** This section identifies the interests and expectations of various stakeholders involved in the project.

- **Potential risks and misunderstandings:** It addresses potential risks, conflicts, or misunderstandings that may arise during the project and provides strategies to mitigate them.
- **Key people to be informed:** It identifies the key individuals or groups who should be kept informed about the project's progress and developments during the execution phase.
- **Negative stakeholders and response strategy:** This section acknowledges the presence of negative stakeholders and outlines a well-prepared response to address their concerns or objections.

It is advisable to establish communication and build relationships with stakeholders as early as possible to gain insights into their expectations and establish a foundation of trust.

Utilising online tools¹ can be beneficial in creating and implementing a stakeholder management plan effectively.

Te Ao Māori and Community Energy

In Aotearoa New Zealand, a significant number of Māori communities are actively involved in Community Energy Projects. The Government recognised the importance of renewable energy solutions in improving health outcomes for people in public and Māori housing, leading to the establishment of a \$28 million Māori and Public Housing Renewable Energy Fund² in August 2020. This fund has supported numerous Māori communities in setting up their own Community Energy Projects, with 42 Māori renewable energy projects being supported at the time of writing.

¹ [How to Create a Stakeholder Management Plan](#)

² [Māori and Public Housing Renewable Energy Fund | Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment](#)

The funding allocated to Māori homes is distributed over four years until mid-2024 through multiple funding rounds. Additionally, in May 2022, the government announced a further \$16 million over four years to support small-scale community renewable energy projects. This expansion of the Māori and Public Housing Renewable Energy Fund aims to assist low-income communities or those with limited access to energy.

Then in Budget 2023, the Government added a further \$30 million to expand existing support to community-based renewable energy and resilience projects, helping even more low-income communities, and communities with insecure access to energy.

A partnership approach will be taken to ensure that projects are designed in alignment with the aspirations of the target communities. This approach seeks to enhance the mana of the communities, enabling them to have greater ownership of their energy use in a manner that reflects their values and aspirations. Community energy projects strongly align with Māori values by promoting unity and collective action (Kotahitanga), a sense of duty and respect for the community (Manaakitanga), the creation of shared spaces for social activity (Whanaungatanga), and the minimisation of environmental impact through responsible energy use (Kaitiakitanga).

Identifying your local hapu and iwi as stakeholders

The Te Tiriti o Waitangi or Treaty of Waitangi is the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand. It was signed in 1840 between the British Crown and numerous Māori chiefs, with two versions - one in English and the other in Māori - each containing some variations. The Treaty has a far-reaching impact on various aspects of New Zealand society, including legislation, education, resource management, language, and culture. It is instrumental in shaping the relationship between Māori and non-Māori in the country.

The Treaty of Waitangi is a cornerstone of New Zealand's identity as a bicultural nation, recognising the distinct cultures of Māori and non-Māori. To honour and respect local hapu and iwi, there are practical steps individuals can take:

- Developing awareness of the Treaty and New Zealand's history, including the events and implications surrounding its signing.
- Learning common Te Reo Māori words, the Māori language, as a way to acknowledge and appreciate Māori culture.

- Making an effort to correctly pronounce Māori names and place names, demonstrating respect for Māori language and identity.
- Acquiring knowledge about Māori values, understanding the principles and concepts that underpin Māori society and worldview.
- Familiarising oneself with Tikanga Māori, the customary practices and protocols that guide Māori cultural interactions and engagements.

By engaging in these actions, individuals can demonstrate their respect for Māori culture, contribute to a more inclusive society, and foster meaningful relationships with local hapu and iwi. Embracing the principles of the Te Tiriti o Waitangi and honoring Māori culture strengthens the fabric of New Zealand's bicultural identity.

Māori values

Māori culture encompasses several values that hold significance in daily life, and Tikanga Māori provides the protocols and traditions that guide Māori cultural practices. Here are some key values and related Tikanga:

- **Whanaungatanga:** Emphasises the importance of relationships and extended family groups, where collective well-being takes precedence over individual interests. Whakapapa, or genealogy, plays a crucial role in Māori identity, as it connects individuals to their ancestors and place of origin.
- **Manaakitanga:** Focuses on generosity, hospitality, and the act of making others feel respected, valued, and supported. Marae kawa, the protocols and customs observed on a marae, exemplify the values of Whanaungatanga and Manaakitanga. The Te Ara Encyclopedia of New Zealand³ provides further information on Marae Protocol.
- **Wairuatanga:** Reflects the spiritual dimension present in all aspects of Māori life. Māori worldview acknowledges the existence of both physical and spiritual aspects. Certain things are considered tapu (sacred) and require respect, such as refraining from touching someone's head or sitting on tables.

These values and Tikanga extend beyond cultural gatherings and can also be observed in various contexts, including workplace meetings. For instance, a meeting may commence and conclude with a karakia, introductions to establish connections, and the provision of food as a demonstration of Manaakitanga.

3 [The Te Ara Encyclopedia of New Zealand](#)

What is sustainable energy?

Sustainable energy encompasses two key aspects. Firstly, it involves utilising energy derived from renewable sources such as sunlight, wind, and hydro power. Unlike fossil fuels, these natural sources of energy are considered renewable because they are continuously replenished and not depleted through consumption. This ensures a long-term, ongoing supply of energy.

Secondly, sustainable energy practices aim to minimise or eliminate adverse emissions that harm the environment. By utilising renewable energy sources, the generation of energy produces fewer or no greenhouse gas emissions, leading to reduced carbon footprint and mitigating climate change impacts. This approach ensures the well-being of the planet for future generations.

While geothermal energy is often classified as renewable, it requires careful management to prevent resource depletion. Geothermal power generation can also release some greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, although efforts are being made to capture and reinject these gases back into the reservoirs from which they originated, minimising their environmental impact.



What is energy equity?

Energy equity refers to the fair and just distribution of energy resources, benefits, and burdens among all members of society, regardless of their socioeconomic status, location, or background. It aims to ensure that everyone has access to affordable, reliable, and clean energy services without experiencing disproportionate negative impacts or barriers.

In the context of the clean energy sector, energy equity acknowledges the historical inequalities and exclusionary practices that have marginalised certain communities from participating in decision-making processes and benefiting from clean energy initiatives⁴. It seeks to rectify these disparities by empowering communities to actively engage in and benefit from local energy projects.

Community energy projects play a crucial role in promoting energy equity. By generating and optimising energy locally, these projects can reduce energy costs for targeted households, thereby improving household disposable income and enabling greater access to heating and other essential energy services. This, in turn, enhances community and household well-being. The primary impacts of energy equity include:

- **Energy affordability:** Localised energy generation can lower ongoing costs for consumers, alleviating energy hardship and improving health and well-being.
- **Energy resilience:** Ensuring reliable access to energy for remote communities and supporting their adaptation to climate change effects.
- **Energy sovereignty/self-sufficiency:** Empowering communities, particularly indigenous groups like Māori, to make their own decisions regarding energy generation, distribution, and consumption.
- **Energy literacy:** Increasing awareness and understanding of energy issues, promoting sustainable energy measures, and distributed energy resource (DER) development.
- **New skills and jobs:** Engaging the community in project development, providing training for project maintenance, and creating new career opportunities.

Community energy projects can minimise the costs associated with generation, transmission, and distribution of electricity, by reducing dependence on the grid and promoting local self-generation.

⁴ Fostering Equity Through Community-Led Clean Energy Strategies | ACEE



Energy system resilience

Energy system resilience refers to the ability of an energy system to withstand and recover from disruptions, ensuring the continuity of energy supply to meet the needs of communities, particularly during extreme events or unforeseen circumstances. This resilience is crucial in maintaining essential services, supporting critical infrastructure, and ensuring the well-being of individuals and communities.

The vulnerability of the electric system has become evident through events such as extreme weather, natural disasters, and cyberattacks. These incidents have highlighted the need for new approaches to ensure the resilience of power systems, particularly in the face of long-duration power interruptions caused by low-probability, high-impact events.

Distributed Energy Resources (DERs) play a significant role in enhancing energy system resilience. DERs refer to decentralised energy sources that are located close to the point of consumption, such as solar panels, wind turbines, and energy storage systems. By implementing well-planned DERs, communities can have access to energy

supply through smaller local generation and distribution microgrids, reducing their reliance on centralised infrastructure and enhancing resilience.

Remote communities, which prioritise energy resiliency, can undergo a master-planning process to assess their energy needs and match them with suitable energy generation options. However, it is important to consider the intermittency that comes with renewable generation, as solar and wind resources may not be available at all times. To address this, the integration of battery storage systems may be necessary, although it can add significant expenses to the project. Nonetheless, investing in such measures is worthwhile to ensure greater resilience and reduce dependence on external energy sources.

By embracing distributed generation, energy storage, and microgrid technologies, communities can strengthen their energy system resilience and better withstand disruptions, ensuring a more reliable and secure energy supply in challenging circumstances.



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