



The goals of Phase 1 are to identify the attributes of your community's future energy system and establish your transition team.

In other words, Phase 1 will establish the benefits and drivers—such as affordability and resilience—needed to motivate stakeholders and lay the groundwork for project planning, development, and execution in Phases 2, 3, and 4.

To accomplish this, the leadership team will structure the transition's governing body, engage community stakeholders, and develop a vision that reflects the shared understanding of the community. In Phase 2, the vision will frame analysis to determine specific pathways to realize this future state.

Phase 1 describes how to:

- ☐ 1.1 Develop a governing framework
 - ☐ 1.2 Draft a vision statement
 - ☐ 1.3 Set a transition timeline
 - ☐ 1.4 Engage community stakeholders
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1.1 Develop a Governing Framework

The Phase 1 leadership team is responsible for convening stakeholders from around the community and gathering their input for the vision. A team comprising three to six energy sector leaders with representation from government, utilities, the private sector, and community representation should be structured and empowered to make the necessary decisions to execute the vision.

1.1.1 Develop a Charter

A charter may help the leadership team guide the transition efficiently and minimize misunderstandings. The charter should establish the team's organizational structure or governing framework and its operational guidelines; set expectations for interactions, roles, and responsibilities; and describe how the team will make decisions. It should also define the process for finding new members and replacing outgoing ones.

1.1.2 Consider a Stakeholder Advisory Board

A stakeholder advisory board can serve a coordinating role for many members of the community with similar interests. During Phase 1, the chair of the advisory board can sit on the leadership team and channel input from the business community and the public.

The stakeholder advisory board can continue to operate in later phases as well, with rotating membership to ensure that different stakeholder groups provide input to the process. Because of its constituencies, the stakeholder advisory board can also be a stabilizing force when there is a change in government administration or utility management.

1.1.3 Appoint Communications Leads

Transparency is critical to garnering and maintaining community buy-in and support for the energy transition. Appoint one or two communications leads who will coordinate and speak with the media, develop high-level key messages, and create and disseminate outreach and educational materials.

1.2 Draft a Vision Statement

Recruit the communications lead(s) to draft a vision statement that describes defining characteristics of the future energy system and reflects the input the decision makers provided during Phase 0. A vision is aspirational; it describes the desired future state of the community, including the beneficial impacts of the energy transition. The focus now should be qualitative; quantitative elements come later, in Phase 2.

Sample Vision Statement

A resilient energy system that prioritizes local renewable resources over imported fossil fuels to deliver affordable, reliable energy and support an equitable clean energy economy.

1.3 Set a Transition Timeline

The leadership team should develop a general timeline for Phases 2 and 3 to help stakeholders manage their participation and expectations. The timeline should be realistic but reaffirm the commitment to make a concerted effort to realize the vision and transition to a resilient energy system.

Illustrative Timeline

Month	0	3	6	9	12	15	18	21	24
Phase 0	Document Commitment								
Phase 1		Refine Vision							
Phase 2				Develop Action Plans					
Phase 3							Prepare Projects		

1.4 Engage Community Stakeholders

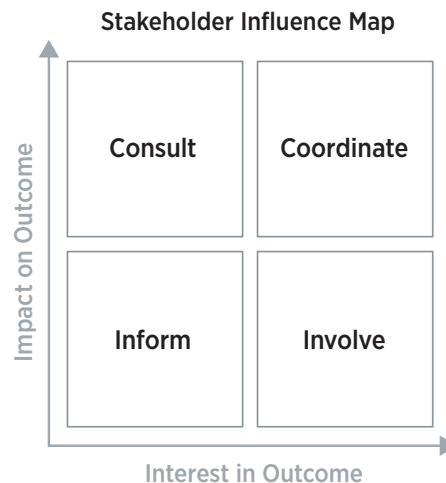
With a draft vision and a timeline, it is time to engage a broader set of stakeholders to generate buy-in and support for the vision.

1.4.1 Identify and Map Stakeholders

The leadership team should build on the stakeholder list from Phase 0 to develop a more complete roster during Phase 1. This process should help clarify the level and type of engagement stakeholders require based on their impact on and interest in the outcome under consideration.

A simple matrix can map stakeholders to appropriate type of engagement, such as:

- **Inform.** Keep the stakeholder apprised of developments and progress.
- **Involve.** Invite the stakeholder to participate in certain activities, such as meetings or outreach that touch on the stakeholder's interest in the outcome.
- **Consult.** Regularly and actively seek support for and feedback on how best to achieve upcoming goals.
- **Coordinate.** Establish an ongoing relationship regarding all aspects of the transition, ranging from day-to-day operations to timing significant milestones.



The Stakeholder Influence Map can enable the leadership team to evaluate the stakeholder “landscape” more easily within the entire community, individual sectors, or for specific issues.

1.4.2 Refine and Finalize the Vision Statement

Project success or failure may hinge on whether the various interests of stakeholders align with the vision. Therefore, it is recommended to solicit and incorporate input from a diverse group of community stakeholders—including those who may oppose the project.

Achieving consensus on a vision is a challenging but worthwhile endeavor. Consider engaging a professional facilitator to lead a vision-setting exercise. Ultimately, the community must take ownership of the transition, so it is important that stakeholders recognize their fundamental role in shaping and realizing the vision.

1.4.3 Initiate a Communications Plan

In conjunction with establishing the vision, the leadership team should initiate a strategic communications plan to keep the community informed of progress toward realizing the vision. Clear, transparent, consistent communications about the transition help prevent misunderstandings, build momentum toward a successful outcome, and even maintain morale among participants by recognizing their contributions.

The communications plan can begin with early milestones such as finalizing the vision statement, defining key audiences, surveying the communications landscape, assessing risks and opportunities, and establishing key messages. In later stages, the communications team can establish communications goals and develop strategies and tactics for achieving them.

1.5 Tools and Resources

Worksheets and Templates

Stakeholder Influence Map

Categorize engagement by interests and impact

Transition Timeline

Set time frames for Phases 1–3

Hawaii Develops Framework for Achieving Its Bold Clean Energy Vision

Launched in 2008, the Hawaii Clean Energy Initiative (HCEI) adopted the most aggressive energy transition vision in the United States, targeting 70% clean energy by 2030. In Phase 1, HCEI established a governing framework, engaging diverse stakeholders and setting up focused working groups. This structure helped set clear expectations, define roles and responsibilities, and enable stakeholders representing various sectors and interests to participate.

What common energy transition challenge or need did the project solve or address?

HCEI needed to establish an inclusive, multi-sectoral governing body to map out a strategy for achieving 70% clean energy by 2030.

Why is this a common challenge for communities pursuing resilient energy transitions?

A primary barrier to advancing an energy transition is lack of community buy-in. Engaging a diverse set of stakeholders from the outset is foundational to success.

How did the community address this challenge or need?

The HCEI leadership team engaged a diverse set of stakeholders to establish a steering committee and four working groups charged with assessing pathways to 70% in four energy sectors.

What key decisions were integral to this project?

- An HCEI steering committee was formed to coordinate interactions between the four working groups and to ensure that they formulated a comprehensive strategy.
- The working groups were composed of a variety of stakeholders, including federal and local governments, not-for-profit organizations, private sector companies, trade associations, and academic organizations.
- The working groups assumed responsibility for assessing pathways in four energy sectors: electricity (generation and delivery), end-use efficiency, transportation, and fuels.



One boat, many paddles—More than 100 community members and national experts formed working groups that pulled together in pursuit of Hawaii's visionary clean energy goal. *Photo from iStock 4695470003*

"We need every Hawaii citizen to be personally energy aware and feel responsible for contributing in some way to solving our energy problems. Many of the best contributions are low or no cost, involving changes in behavior and attitudes."

—Ray Starling, Program Director, Hawaii Energy

Who decided on this course of action and why?

The Hawaii Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, with the input from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), established HCEI's original governing framework.

What key takeaways or lessons learned might benefit other communities?

- Engage a variety of stakeholders from federal and local government agencies, nonprofit organizations, businesses, trade associations, and academic institutions.
- Identify key sectors of the energy economy and engage stakeholders in each sector.
- Organize stakeholders into working groups representing the various sectors and diverse perspectives.
- Task working groups with developing strategic pathways to sector goals.
- Form a steering committee to coordinate interactions among the working groups.

HCEI's process is a useful example for others to follow because it engaged a wide variety of key stakeholders from the beginning. Involving the public in the planning and decision-making process by establishing focused working groups laid the foundation to make informed decisions about the path to success. With multifaceted analysis, HCEI provided the necessary information to help increase the state's economic and energy security, demonstrate innovations, and develop the workforce of the future.

U.S. Virgin Islands Prioritizes Inclusiveness To Ensure Community Ownership of Clean Energy Vision

During a June 2010 workshop, the U.S. Virgin Islands' (USVI) leadership team and steering committee engaged a group of public and private stakeholders with varying levels of technical expertise, perspectives, and agendas to refine the territory's clean energy vision, discuss pathways for achieving it, and secure community buy-in.

What common energy transition challenge or need did the project solve or address?

With inclusiveness and transparency as guiding principles, the USVI sought to engage a diverse yet balanced and effective group of community stakeholders in an inaugural workshop to establish working groups and a community-driven vision.



More than 60 USVI stakeholders participated in establishing the territory's vision and formed working groups to advance it. *Photo from Aldeth Lewin, Virgin Islands Daily News*

Why is this a common challenge for communities pursuing resilient energy transitions?

Bringing together people with disparate perspectives and agendas—social, political, and economic—to shape a common vision is always an uphill climb. However, inclusiveness allows for civil discourse that is critical to long-term success.

How did the community address this challenge or need?

Steering committee members invited 100 public and private stakeholders to attend the workshop, participate in a vision-setting exercise, and form working groups focused on five strategic areas.

What key decisions were integral to this project?

- The leadership team elected to involve detractors in the early planning stages.
- To encourage open dialogue, the team opted to close discussion to the media.
- To demonstrate transparency, the team held a press conference immediately following the meeting to communicate highlights.

Who decided on this course of action and why?

The USVI leadership team recognized that facilitating open dialogue would help stakeholders understand the project opportunities and barriers from the leadership team's perspective while giving the leadership team insight into the barriers and opportunities from the community's perspective.

What key takeaways or lessons learned might benefit other communities?

- Engage a diverse set of stakeholders—including potential opponents.
- Tap steering committee member communications staffs to help get the right people in the room.
- Rely on the community energy champion to rally support and participation.
- Close the workshop to the media to foster open discussion, but hold a press conference afterward.
- Embrace inclusivity and transparency from the outset to secure critical community buy-in.

By engaging a diverse set of public and private stakeholders in Phase 1, the USVI leadership team established transparency and inclusiveness as guiding principles. This gave project proponents a chance to understand and assess barriers to project success, address opposing views, assuage objections through reasoned arguments backed by hard data, achieve consensus on the clean energy vision, and secure community ownership.

Resources

Draft a Vision Statement

Dialogue and Deliberation Resource Center—Collections of articles, guides, techniques, and infographics on organizing ongoing conversations to facilitate a shared understanding of change.

Guide to Community Energy Strategic Planning—A step-by-step approach to developing a Community Energy Strategic Plan. Step 3 offers valuable tools, tips, and examples for developing a focused energy vision; Steps 1 and 2 are also highly applicable to Phase 1.

Engage Community Stakeholders

Climate Extremes Communications Guidebook—Guidance for local governments on communicating about weather and climate extremes in the context of climate change.

Energy Literacy: Essential Principles for Energy Education—An interdisciplinary approach to teaching and learning about energy, focusing on areas of energy understanding that are essential for all citizens “K-Gray.”

Engaging Stakeholders—Guidance on engaging internal and external stakeholders in energy resilience planning. Geared toward institutions, the process and strategies are applicable and scalable to jurisdictions of various sizes.

Low-Emission Development Strategies: Technical, Institutional and Policy Lessons—An Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development and International Energy Association guide examining the technical, institutional, and policy challenges associated with preparing national climate change strategies; Step 4.2 offers institutional insights and lessons related to Phase 1.