

Forum for the Future

**FORUM
FOR THE
FUTURE**

People-Centred Business Models

2025



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WHO WE ARE

Forum for the Future is a leading international sustainability non-profit with offices in London, New York, Singapore and Mumbai.

For nearly 30 years we've been working in partnership with business, governments and civil society to accelerate the shift towards a just and regenerative future in which both people and the planet thrive.

OUR WORK

Three transitions already underway

WITH GENUINELY GAME-CHANGING POTENTIAL TO ADDRESS OUR INTENSIFYING ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CRISES



How we think about, produce, consume and value **food**



How we think about, produce, consume and value **energy**



The purpose of **business** in society and the economy



Responsible
Energy
Initiative

Responsible Energy Initiative

For an ecologically positive
and socially just renewable
energy system



How to get there

Responsible Energy Initiative (REI)



Multistakeholder collaboration working with RE developers, manufacturers, procurers, financiers, policymakers, and civil society.



Catalyses the adoption of business models and value-chains in the RE sector that are just, equitable, rights-respecting and ecologically resilient.



Designs solutions across the entire renewables value chain with active stakeholder collaboration.



Complements and partners with initiatives to scale renewable adoption and accelerate investment.

Our focus on community-ownership and people-centred models

How work came about

- Builds on Forum's long-standing focus on a just and regenerative approach and the intersectionality of social and environmental issues
- Responds to demand for practical tools for responsible business models

Position within Responsible Energy Initiative

- Anchored in REI's goal of responsible, inclusive energy systems.
- Offers a practical lens and structured way for RE actors to understand and identify different models and enabling conditions

How we hope this contributes

Serve as a series of practical resources for developers, financiers, CSOs, and others to:

- a) Recognise enabling conditions and principles for establishing utility scale models
- b) Enables comparison across projects - spotting ambition gaps.
- c) Generates shared language for responsible business.
- d) Inspires through engaging case studies

Community Ownership in Large-Scale Renewable Energy – A Global South Perspective



Objective

Support civil society with **tools, evidence, and networks** to advocate for and **implement community ownership models** while also **providing clear guidance** for policymakers and industry.

Key activities

White Paper: A comprehensive review of community ownership models in **large-scale** renewable energy projects.

Industry brief: Define the enabling conditions for implementing community ownership at scale.

Anthology: A collection of success stories that showcase how communities in the Global South have taken ownership in large-scale renewable energy projects.

An aerial photograph of a wind farm situated on rolling green hills. Numerous white wind turbines are scattered across the landscape, with a prominent road or path winding through the foreground. The scene is captured during sunset or sunrise, with a warm, golden light illuminating the hills and the sky. The overall atmosphere is serene and emphasizes sustainable energy.

A Taxonomy of Community Ownership Models

People-centred business models & community ownership



- **People-centred business models**, a broad categorization of models that place the needs, priorities, and rights of people, particularly workers and communities at the heart of how value is created, delivered, and shared.
- **Community ownership** is a model within this categorisation, where the energy project assets are jointly owned, operated, and controlled by members of a community and the project developers/operators, and enables communities to participate in decision-making

TAXONOMY

Adapted from existing resources (World Bank; BHRRC & Indigenous People's Rights International; Canada's National Benefit Sharing Framework)

Review of 14 models in Sub-Saharan Africa, South America, South and South-East Asia (ongoing)

Ownership	Indigenous & cultural rights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity shares (indigenous, community, municipal, private developer) • Meaningful level of influence (community control, shared control, minority influence (veto), tokenistic) • Governance rights (board seats, veto rights) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FPIC status (achieved, document, partial, absent) • Land rights regime (indigenous title, customary land, contested claims, state or private title) • Cultural protections (cultural heritage agreements, co-management of sites, redress mechanisms)
Benefit sharing	Accountability and justice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial benefits (equity dividends, revenue share, royalties) • Non-financial benefits (local employment + procurement minimums; energy access mechanisms, skills development) • Longevity and management (legally binding, when delivered (prior to construction, post-COD)) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grievance mechanisms (independent/community-led) • Monitoring and transparency (regularity of reporting, mechanisms for reporting) • Enforcement mechanisms

TAXONOMY

Specific project enabling conditions

A. Detailed Governance & legal mechanics

- Legal vehicle details
- Board & committee terms
- Specific veto/consent list
- Exit & transfer mechanics
- Contract catalogue & references
- Dispute resolution

B. Full financial & risk profile

- Capital stack breakdown
- Projected cash flows to community
- Return profile & payment triggers
- Risk allocation matrix
- Capital adequacy / affordability check

C. Implementation & timeline details

- Milestones & triggers
- Allocation timing
- Phasing strategy
- Conditions precedent

Example: Kipeto Wind Farm

Location: Kaijado County, Kenya

Developer: Kipeto Energy PLC

Community: Maasai community (61 landowners)

Ownership: Landowners (5%) share of company

Influence: Tokenistic ownership ("sign of good will"), but extensive consultation pre-development

Financial benefits: 1.4% of annual revenue for each wind turbine on land channelled through a community trust; lease rate paid annually

Grievance mechanism: Based on Maasai practices, it includes community liaison officers and escalation from household to community elders

Environmental protection: co-created biodiversity action plan

Gaps:

- Enforcement mechanisms for grievance
- Governance during the project



Example: Tsitsikamma Community Wind Farm

Location: Kaijado County, Kenya

Developer: Cennergi

Community: AmaMfengu, Tsitsikamma Development Trust

Ownership: Cennergi (75%), TDT (9%), Kruger Int. (16%)

Influence: Minority (consent rights)

Financial benefits: 2.1% quarterly revenue share

Non-financial benefits: Tsitsikamma Wind Farm Trust governance over allocation of funding for socio-economic development and economic development programmes

Gaps:

- How equity was funded and negotiated
- How equity delivers governance/oversight
- Grievance and transparency mechanisms
- Long-term prosperity



Example: Terra Initiative

Location: Colombia

Developer: Greenwood Energy (Libra Energy)

Community: Arhuaco Indigenous People (Confederacion Indigena Tayrona (CIT))

Ownership: Greenwood Energy

Influence: Shared control: veto rights/final approval for each project site

Financial benefits: Environmental fee per kWh,

Non-financial benefits: Land transfer, construction of three indigenous townships, training in operation and maintenance of the solar plants - Terra Initiative Framework Agreement

Gaps:

- Clarity on grievance mechanisms and legal enforceability
- Monitoring and transparency

Community Ownership Models



- The majority of researched utility-scale projects in the Global South (11/14) that claim a form of community ownership do not demonstrate ownership in meaningful way
- Community ownership does not necessarily equate to shares, but rather to meaningful inclusion in decision-making throughout the project's pre-, mid, and post-development phases.
- Prosperity as holistic development should aim to tackle systemic barriers, such as recourse to justice, lack of transparency, and self-determination for financial and non-financial resources.

Gaps/Challenges



- Availability of data online regarding financial models, governance and grievance mechanisms
- Number of operational, community-owned, utility-scale renewable projects in the Global South

Next Steps



- Continued review of models in South and South-East Asia
- In-depth engagement with developers, communities, funders and mediators
- Launch of whitepaper (Feb/March)
- Launch of industry brief and anthology of case studies (May/June)

Get in touch!

We'd love to hear from you

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A wide-angle photograph of a vast solar farm in a desert. Rows of solar panels stretch across the flat, arid ground towards a large, reddish-brown mountain under a clear blue sky. The panels are arranged in neat, parallel lines, and the overall scene conveys a sense of clean energy and sustainable development.

THANK YOU!

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2025