



Responsible Energy Initiative India

Vision and principles for a responsible renewable energy system in India



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Vision of a responsible renewable energy system in India

As actors in a responsible energy system, we embrace the power of nature to create, renew and restore. We understand that humans are a fundamental part of nature, hence, we must ensure we operate in harmony and within planetary boundaries across our value chains. We believe that being responsible means respecting the human rights and dignity of all, holding to principles of justice and equity, and supporting people to thrive.

We drive a just energy transition in a way that enables deep positive transformation, enabling flourishing and resilient communities and society. Our work is inclusive, rights-respecting and participatory, and aims to centre dignity and wellbeing of individuals and communities at every step.

The way we work inherently tackles the climate emergency and the biodiversity crisis, as we have reconfigured from extractive to restorative and circular systems. We enable the capacity of social, institutional and environmental systems to adapt to future challenges and opportunities.

We are collaborative, passionate, confident and transparent, and respect the rich and diverse cultures we are part of. We ensure fairness, resilience and vitality across generations and geographies. As a sector we see our scope of responsibility and our potential for positive influence goes beyond our direct operations. We look beyond profit and growth in our definition of value, seeking to leave a holistic positive legacy.

Principle

We actively promote universal labour, land and human rights

We respect, uphold and promote the human rights of individuals and communities who are impacted by decisions across the renewable energy value chain. Importantly, this means aligning to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights across the renewable energy value chain. We will enhance the renewable energy sector's transformative potential to tackle the root causes of injustice and structural inequality extant in the current energy system by building a system based upon climate justice and energy equity. We commit to avoiding activities that may contribute to or cause human rights infringements. Where possible and appropriate, we will enable access to remedy where there is evidence of infringements.

This may manifest through respecting legal rights, cultural beliefs and traditions, understanding differential impacts on vulnerable groups and communities, and power dynamics, learning from past mistakes and other pioneering sectors and considering each person as a 'rights-holder' rather than a 'stakeholder'.

Principle

**We protect, restore
and nurture resilient,
thriving ecological
systems**

We recognise that the source of renewable energy is nature itself, and thus recognise that we are dependent on its health. Throughout the value chain, we conserve and restore ecological systems and biodiversity. We have deep capability in understanding and assessing impacts and potential consequences holistically and over time. We embrace innovations and business models that recognise the value of ecosystem services, and encourage other sectors to do the same.

This may manifest through understanding local biodiversity, traditions, and knowledge, building circular products and manufacturing systems, designing for longevity and adaptation, developing and implementing landscape-level strategies encompassing local and indigenous knowledge to support broader biodiversity and ecological health.

Principle

We are committed to participatory governance principles

With ethics and integrity, we embrace and practice the principles of participatory governance. We commit to have open, accountable and inclusive engagements with the communities we work with, and consider the principle of free, prior and informed consent to be a bare minimum where indigenous peoples are affected. We will intentionally create the means by which women, local peoples, youth, as well as marginalised communities can participate in collaborative decision-making where our operations and choices (current and future) affect them and their communities.

This may manifest through valuing the power of cooperatives, practicing transparency and accountability as part of our values and creating a culture of active sharing to enable a truly fair and inclusive sector. We do this across the value chain including investment, manufacturing, commissioning, procurement, operation and decommissioning with all the stakeholders involved including businesses, civil society, government, regulators, think tanks and communities.

Principle

We believe that resilient communities and an inclusive workforce are key to our success

We create opportunities for everyone, particularly marginalised groups, and take action that addresses power and access imbalances. Our intention is to actively break through patterns of exclusion and create a culture of sharing to enable a truly fair and inclusive renewable energy system. We steward a just transition by building adaptive capacity in communities and our workforce, creating avenues for sustainable livelihoods, and ensuring value is fairly distributed across our value chains and stakeholders.

This may manifest through building trust with communities through inclusive conversations, recognising the agency of each rights-holder, contributing to creating energy justice for all, providing incentives for professional development and encouraging our supply chain partners to do the same. Adaptive capacity of communities and workforce may be built through promoting universal healthcare and education, participatory decision making in local area development, disaster prevention and management. Equitable distribution of value may manifest through shared-ownership structures (for risks, investments and benefits, such as with cooperatives, women-led federations) and creating business contracts (particularly in case of MSMEs) in a way that shares risks and benefits fairly.

Initiative participants



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About the Responsible Energy Initiative

The Responsible Energy Initiative is a multi-year programme working to ensure renewable energy in Asia achieves its full potential and creates value in a way that is ecologically safe, rights-respecting and socially just. The India inquiry is being run by Forum for the Future, TERI, WRI India with expert support from Landesa, Business and Human Rights Resource Centre and WWF-India. Find out more about the initiative and discover insights from our active inquiry at our [Medium page](#).

The initiative has been supported by S&P Global Foundation, UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) in India, MacArthur Foundation and Stichting SED Fund.

If you wish to learn more about the initiative and get involved, reach out to Saksham Nijhawan at S.Nijhawan@forumforthefuture.org