

SWOT analysis

A SWOT gives an overview of the **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities** and **Threats**.

It helps to focus on the important positive aspects and opportunities for improvement and adaptation. It points out the internal strengths of the current initiative, that can be further strengthened and exploited. It points to external opportunities that can help the initiative to proceed. Internal weaknesses and external threats are also important to be aware of. These weaknesses are not absolute, they can be regarded as challenges that are to be addressed. As for the threats that come from the external environment (e.g. regulation), these need to be acknowledged, and may be a reason to adapt plans (or to adapt the timing of plans).

The SWOT table is best treated as a living document that can be adapted over time as the situation changes and the initiative progresses.

The table includes examples (from a backcasting trajectory with a Belgian energy initiative) to show the sort of issues that are relevant – these can be deleted so that you can fill it in for your own situation.

TOOL

SWOT analysis

INTERNAL

strengths	weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ A diverse group of smart and capable participants that together form a strong basis for a community initiative❑ An interesting and strong vision and aim: making the future energy system understandable for everyone❑ A strong network with diverse expertise❑ Established personal connections with local schools❑ Insights in important questions that have to be asked now in order to avoid limitations of opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Worries about how to maintain a strong supportive basis (volunteers, ambassadors)❑ Limited financial means to hire external expertise❑ Difficulties to professionalise the organization, due to limited financial means

TOOL

SWOT analysis

EXTERNAL

opportunities	threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Interest of local schools in participation<input type="checkbox"/> Next to the schools, the local youth movement is approached as well and in time, the approach can be broadened to include high schools<input type="checkbox"/> There are strong neighbourhood associations to align with<input type="checkbox"/> Changes in subsidy schemes will make self-consumption of self-generated renewable energy more attractive<input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities to connect with another cVPP project – join forces<input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities to join in an EU-or national level subsidy trajectory to get part of the costs financed; to get support in engaging the community; to get technical support<input type="checkbox"/> Inspiring examples elsewhere<input type="checkbox"/> EU policy that explicitly names ‘citizen energy communities’ and ‘renewable energy communities’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Timing of the community engagement is difficult due to Covid-19<input type="checkbox"/> Recent policy changes will affect the business case for solar panels<input type="checkbox"/> Changes in subsidy schemes<input type="checkbox"/> Low gas price<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of clarity in policy which makes project planning difficult