A Vermont Case Study: Getting to 80% renewable energy by 2030

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In 2008, the Maverick Lloyd Foundation stepped back from 10 years of philanthropic giving to explore how the foundation could be a more effective driver for change. Despite a significant investment of resources over time, the trustees recognized that their giving strategies were not creating the kind of impact they knew was possible, necessary if the state of Vermont was to address the urgent reality of climate change.

Inspired by the success of RE-AMP, a network of 144 non-profits and foundations working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in eight mid-western states, the foundation began to envision a social change process that could help catalyze large-scale, coordinated action around a bold new vision for Vermont. The result of that early vision is Energy Action Network (EAN)—a powerful network of business, government and non-profit leaders who are aligned around the goal of meeting 90% of Vermont’s 2050 energy needs from renewable energy and increased efficiency.

EAN—like RE-AMP—was founded on two hypotheses. First, that alignment among government, business, and non-profits is necessary if we hope to make rapid, large-scale change on complex issues like climate and energy. Second, that these large-scale challenges are best approached through systems thinking—a set of tools and processes that help diverse interests build a shared understanding of the system they are working to change and the most promising and effective intervention points.

Although EAN has achieved some early victories—most notably influencing the Governor and the Department of Public Service to adopt the goal of 90% renewable energy by 2050—it will be many years before we fully know the impact of EAN’s work. The foundation’s short-term goals of creating greater alignment among diverse sectors and developing a common framework for action on the energy transition are, however, being realized. Even though each issue and set of players brings its own set of challenges and opportunities, the key learnings and stories in the following case study are meant to serve as a guide for others who are interested in system-wide transformation.

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1 For more information about RE-AMP, see http://www.reamp.org
Background
Vermont has a long history of leadership on environmental issues. It took an early role in RGGI (the Northeast Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative), developed the first efficiency utility (Efficiency Vermont), and is the first state in the nation to implement a statewide smart grid. Vermont is also home to nationally recognized clean energy companies, leading researchers, and numerous highly successful and entrepreneurial business leaders. Like many other states, however, Vermont’s ability to make progress on stated climate and energy goals has been slow–stymied by high start-up costs, slow permitting and regulatory processes, lack of alignment among key state leaders, and fierce public disagreement about citing for renewable energy projects and in-state wind generation.

When the trustees of the Maverick Lloyd Foundation first began to explore a different approach to climate and energy funding, they knew that making rapid, large-scale change on these issues would require an unprecedented level of collaboration and coordination. Emboldened by the success of RE-AMP, the foundation decided to explore a systems approach.

**System thinking:** the ability to see things as a whole (or holistically) including the many different types of relationships between the many elements in a complex system.

System thinking or “systems dynamics” or “systems mapping,” as those terms are commonly used today in organizational work, was developed by Professor Jay Forrester and his colleagues at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) more than 40 years ago. This approach...is commonly used by organizations to conceptualize complex systems and solve problems. It is based on the idea that the behavior of all systems follows certain common principles and interdependencies that go far beyond our normal ways of thinking or talking about cause and effect. It is a way of paying attention to the world as if through a wide angle, not a telephoto, lens in order to see how any given action interrelates with other areas of activity. Often unexpected dynamics emerge, suggesting innovative solutions grounded in a deeper understanding of reality.  

The power of a big, audacious goal
In 2009, with the assistance of a consulting team from Growing Edge Partners, the Foundation convened a planning team to explore the need for and possibility of using a systems approach to address climate and energy issues in Vermont. Planning team members represented the non-profit, business and government sectors. During the initial exploration, it became clear that if Vermont was to move forward on climate and energy issues, the conversation needed to move away from short-term planning cycles and into a larger time frame – in other words, shifting the conversation from six or twelve month goals to ten to twenty year goals. The team needed a BHAG—a big, hairy, audacious goal that could serve as a catalyst for action.

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To help the planning team imagine the nature of the shift that might needed, our consulting team developed a behavior over time graph. This clearly illustrated the gap between where the State was headed under “business as usual” and where it needed to be to realize a more aspirational goal (add graphic). This was an “aha” moment as the team began to realize that despite all of their collective hard work, a significant expenditure of resources, and incremental progress on the advancement of renewable energy, no one was meeting their aspirational goals. Business as usual would not lead to sufficiently rapid change in the State’s energy and transportation sectors. The conversation began to focus on the scale of change needed and the level of urgency with which it needed to happen. In the end, the team agreed to a bold and ambitious “north star”—Vermont must be powered by 100% renewable energy by 2030.

The goal served as a rallying point for change. As the heads of the electric, transportation and heating sectors began to talk about what might be possible in their respective sectors, a powerful sense of possibility began to emerge. The ambitiousness of the goal sparked the interest of some of the more skeptical participants. As one participant remarked, “If this train is moving, I want to be on it.”

Understanding the system and how to effectively intervene takes time

Understanding causality in the system is critical to being able to unlock change in the system. In the words of Scott Spann, the systems consultant who worked with RE-AMP, “knowing what pushes on what... and what other things are then affected helps you see where you should intervene in a system and how to have the desired result with a minimum of negative unintended consequences.”

Systems work often requires organizations to adopt an entirely different way of thinking. Many organizational leaders develop expertise in one particular part of the system, but do not recognize how the activity in seemingly disconnected parts of the system can influence—positively or negatively—their work. Similarly, foundations may not achieve their desired impacts because their grant making strategies may fail to understand how the system as a whole works or because they may be intervening in places with less strategic value.

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## Timeline

**2008**  
The Maverick Lloyd Foundation embarks on a strategic planning process and decides to explore a system thinking/system dynamics model as a strategy for change.

**2009**  
The Foundation hires Growing Edge Partners and convenes a planning team comprised of business, government and non-profit leaders. After exploring the need for a systems process and a possible focus for the work, the group agrees to move forward with a preliminary goal of 100% renewable energy in all sectors by 2030. Ten additional stakeholders who represent key perspectives in Vermont’s energy system are identified and invited to participate in EAN’s emerging leadership team.

**2010**  
The leadership team embraces the initial goal of 100% renewable energy by 2030, agrees on a timeline and process for the systems work, and identifies twenty additional stakeholders to participate in the systems mapping.

Growing Edge Partners conducts interviews and develops individual systems maps (figure 2) with each of the stakeholders participating in the process. These individual maps are validated in follow-up interviews and then consolidated to produce a large systems map (figure 3).  

EAN holds its first meeting with members of the planning team, leadership team and stakeholders. Individual systems maps and the consolidated systems map are developed. Participants gain a deep understanding of the perspectives of others in the room and agree on the dynamics underlying the current energy system.

The team agrees on four leverage points and a final goal: 80% renewable energy in all sectors by 2030. Leverage point group meetings are planned for 2011 to develop a strategic action plan that will get Vermont moving on the path to 80% renewable energy by 2030.

**2011**  
Additional experts are identified and recruited for the leverage point team meetings. Conversations about long-term structure begin.

Leverage point groups meet individually and develop 3-5 year action plans. This work culminates in a network-wide meeting where the leverage point groups share plans with all the participating stakeholders and an integrated framework for action is developed.

The State of Vermont releases the 2011 comprehensive energy plan and identifies a state goal of 90% renewable energy by 2050. EAN’s four leverage points are identified as key focus areas.

EAN’s leverage point project teams coalesce and network structure is finalized; additional money is raised to hire staff and support specific projects.

**2012** EAN’s first director is hired; EAN officially launches.
Developing an understanding of system dynamics takes time. This is a constant tension to navigate with leaders who are used to and hungry for action. For EAN participants, it took several thoughtfully facilitated meetings and several iterations of systems maps to reach agreement on what forces were driving the current energy system and where to best intervene to create a different outcome.

Selecting Participants and Perspectives

Once the planning team had agreed on the preliminary goal, the next step was to “get the whole system in the room.” Participants needed to see how the different parts of the system affected each other and how the current system dynamics affected the State’s ability to reach the goal of 100% renewable energy by 2030. As the team talked about what other perspectives needed to be included, the consultants created a map (figure 1) so the team could visualize the key drivers and influences in the system. This helped the team see what additional perspectives they needed to include (these perspectives are boxed in the diagram below). For example, although keeping energy costs affordable was a key component of the 100% renewable energy goal, there was no one in the room representing the low-income community or who could speak to the issues of affordability. Once the team agreed what additional perspectives they needed to understand, they developed a set of criteria to help identify who could best represent that perspective. Ideally, potential participants would be: 1) experts in his/her field; 2) credible with diverse audiences; 3) good team players; and 4) able to bring some social or political capital to the table. In addition, the participant group as a whole needed to represent the political, racial, and geographic diversity of the state.

This exercise (and the map below) helped the planning team members realize that although they had expertise in one area of the system (e.g., land use), they needed to understand how the perspectives and constraints of other parts of the system (e.g., those faced by a bank or venture capitalist) were impacting their work and the system’s behavior.

Mapping the System

By the fall of 2010, the planning team had identified twenty people who had agreed to be interviewed by Growing Edge Partners and participate in the next phase of EAN’s work—mapping the system. The goal of the systems mapping was to learn about the diverse perspectives operating in the system and see how these perspectives fit together to create the current energy system. To support this, Growing Edge Partners led a multi-stage process that began with interviews with each of the stakeholders identified above. These interviews were then translated into individual systems maps that visually depicted each stakeholder’s perspective of the energy system (see figure 2). The maps were validated in follow-up interviews with each participant and then consolidated to form an integrated systems map.
The box below includes an excerpt of the interview with the stakeholder who was selected to represent the affordability perspective. Affordability was particularly important to the team because they knew that the transition to renewable energy could not come “at any cost” and that the needs of low-income Vermonters needed to be considered in the transition. The systems map that follows the narrative illustrates how the various elements in this stakeholder’s story are connected.

**A perspective on affordability**

*(Excerpt from an interview with an expert on poverty and affordability)*

**Stakeholder’s Passion**

How do we support energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy for our poorest citizens and working poor, and support the poor’s independence and their ongoing education and general awareness?

*Alleviating suffering from poverty, especially for those Vermont citizens who earn less than the state-defined “livable wage.”* For two working parents with two children, the annual livable wage is $52,000 per year. Approximately half of those living in Vermont are at or below this level. 20% of a “basic-needs budget” family is spent on energy. A 20% increase in energy costs is equivalent to 1.5 weeks of food.

**Key points and illustration of how they are depicted in this stakeholder’s story**

We have some basic assumptions that are shared by most Vermonters. The poor and working poor deserve livability that gives them access to energy sources that will improve their quality of life and the values that Vermont cherishes: a sense of independence, freedom and mobility. Livability also means they have a right to affordable comfort from enough heat for their homes. Decreasing the percent of the poor’s basic needs budget spent on energy costs increases their livability and the strength of the political mandate for them to have completely subsidized energy efficiency and increases their ability to increase energy efficiency measures in their homes.
Figure 2: Individual stakeholder perspective on affordability as it relates to energy

This map, read from the center, illustrates that the cost of transportation, heating fuel and electricity has a direct effect on the percent of a person’s basic needs budget that is spent on energy. As the percent of the basic needs budget spent on energy goes up, livability for the poorest decreases. Following the arrows to the right, as livability for the poorest decreases, this affects the ability of low-income people to repay renewable energy loans (e.g., paying for weatherization). This impacts a person’s access to renewable energy credits, which influences their ability to pay for renewable energy generation, which influences the amount of renewable energy generation available, which impacts the cost of electricity.

After seeing his perspective represented in a systems map like the one above, one participant commented, “This is the most succinct and accurate articulation of my work that I have ever seen.”

Integrated systems map

Once the individual systems maps were completed, the consultants integrated all of the individual maps into a larger systems map. This map (figure 3) illustrates the connections and feedback loops between the individual perspectives and shows how these combine to create the larger system dynamics.

The map, although complex at first glance, provided an objective, common framework that allowed participants to: 1) visualize the complexity of the system; 2) see how individual roles and perspectives influence the system (people can literally “see” themselves on the map and how they relate to others in the system); 3) understand
how the different parts of the system are connected; and 4) identify key dynamics that influence the system’s behavior.

Participants were broken into four groups and given the opportunity to closely analyze one section of the map at a time. The conversations focused on a few key questions:

• What is the current reality as reflected in this section of the map?
• What is it producing?
• What are the impacts?
• Are there any perspectives that are missing?

Many insights emerged from the conversations, including, “We’re not focused – we’re all moving in different directions without a common goal,” “There is no cross-fertilization among energy sources or types – we all work in our own silos with little understanding of what is happening in other sectors,” “Financing is a huge bottleneck,” “Our regulatory system doesn’t support what we say our values are,” “The system isn’t set up to support innovation,” “Public policy is working at cross-purposes – we can get something financed but can’t get the permits to do it,” “We’re all focusing on different tools to solve problems but until now haven’t had a shared understanding of the what the problems are.”

The map also provided a framework for further discussion about the future health of the system and about the most effective places to intervene.

In the course of analyzing the map and discussing future possibilities, the team revisited the question of the goal. Some of the stakeholders felt that the goal of 100% renewable energy was not realistic -- or appropriate. Some wanted to see fossil fuels as part of the mix, others wanted to include nuclear, and a significant part of the group wanted to make sure neither was included. In the course of the conversations, the planning team (who had originally come up with the goal) agreed that maintaining the broader base of the coalition was more important than strict adherence to the 100% goal. Although some people were tempted to walk away fearing that the group was headed for the “lowest common denominator,” the team ultimately stuck together. As one person acknowledged: “The dynamic here is different. The entire group believes we need to do something urgently and there is no one present who will be satisfied by doing nothing. The stakes are too high to just walk away.” This is a testament to the level of trust and relationships that had been built throughout the process.

The team ultimately agreed to change the goal to 80% renewable energy in all sectors by 2030. There was widespread acknowledgement that the revised goal would keep some of the important players engaged, especially those who were needed to make the energy transition happen.
Once the team agreed on the new goal and on what the systems map was illustrating, the conversation shifted to an exploration of what changes—or shifts—in the system would be needed to reach the goal of 80% renewable energy by 2030. Over the course of a two-day meeting, participants explored a series of questions about the future health of the system. The insights and agreements from these conversations are reflected in the systems map depicted in figure 4.

At the end of two days, there was widespread agreement that highly coordinated, strategic work was needed in four areas:

- **Capital Mobilization**: Developing innovative public and private financing for renewable energy and removing the financing barriers and risk for investors is critical to making the transition to renewable energy;
o **Regulatory and Permitting Reform:** Fair, predictable, timely and efficient permitting and regulatory processes are needed to ensure that all energy projects are treated “equally;”

o **Public Engagement:** Increased community engagement around the transition to renewable energy and developing a common language and message among multiple players in the state is necessary; and

o **Technological Innovation:** Vermont must see the development of new energy technologies as a core competency.

While none of these leverage points was particularly surprising, two key insights emerged from these conversations: 1) The group did not need to be working in ten or twenty areas; strategic work in three for four high leverage areas could catalyze the system’s transformation; and 2) In order to change the system, progress must be made in all four of the high leverage areas simultaneously.

**Moving into action**

The next step was to develop focused, aligned strategies that could move the group into action and enlist more organizations in the effort. Four groups were developed—one for each leverage point—that consisted of planning team members, stakeholders who had participated in the system mapping, and other individuals who had particular expertise in the leverage point area.

During a series of meetings in the spring of 2011, the newly formed leverage point teams identified specific projects that could start immediately and help get the State moving on a path to 80% renewable energy by 2030.

The four groups then came together in a network-wide meeting and agreed upon a limited number of strategic projects that could: 1) help speed the transition to renewable energy; 2) provide maximum leverage and alignment with the system and participant needs; 3) be assessed against agreed-upon outcome measures; and 4) provide the opportunity for private, nonprofit and public entities to work together to achieve both their organizational objectives and the larger energy system transformation.

Some of the specific projects that were prioritized for action in 2012 include:

- Identifying the capital requirements and financing mechanisms needed to help Vermont reach 80% renewable energy by 2030;
- Creating a net-zero energy district in Montpelier;
- Developing an electric infrastructure that enables and promotes electrification of transportation; and
- Developing a common, consistent, clear message about the energy transition.
Reading the map from the right hand side, the health of Vermont’s energy system is measured by its (1) economic health for individuals (Economic QoL) and the collective (Economic activity in Vermont), (2) its Environmental impact, (3) its ability to make energy decisions for itself (Sovereignty), and how well Vermonters are engaged across the state (Democratic engagement). These are key elements that influence VT Values/Quality of Life for Vermont.

These health measures are strongly influenced by (1) a mix of reliable, affordable energy that has a low environmental impact: Reliable affordable energy, (2) the existence of a Flexible, energy-neutral infrastructure to support the mix of energy sources, (3) large-scale capital mobilization (public, private), (4) a broad process of Education, and (5) clear systems that reflect the true cost of all energy sources and systems: Transparency of true cost. These are all supported by a deep Strength of consensus and coalition across Vermont about what Vermonters want and will do, which is deepened as the VT Values/Quality of Life improves.

These health outcomes and broad processes form two core dynamics of (1) reinforcing what Vermonters value, and (2) reinforcing the transition catalysts from an economy based on non-renewable energy to an economy based on other energy sources. The four leverage points depicted in the diagram (EDUC—education; MOB CAP—capital mobilization; INNOV—technological innovation; and REG PERM—regulatory and permitting) will help to catalyze the transition.

Figure 4: Simplified EAN Systems Map and narrative
Design a structure that meets the needs of the project and its participants

From its inception, it was clear that mapping the system and envisioning a sustainable energy future would not be sufficient to ensure an energy transition. The team knew it needed to develop a structure that could support on-going coordination and knowledge sharing, and monitor, track and assess work as it relates to the larger system goal. Additionally, as participants began to understand how critical their on-going connections and relationships were, they realized that they needed to coordinate their work in new and different ways.

“Hearing the fuel dealers talk about the relationships they have with their clients—the homeowners—and how they have keys to their clients’ houses made me realize how much more effective we would be if we worked together. They have strong and deep relationships with the same people we are trying to reach...” An environmental advocate

The following graphic illustrates the initial design of the network and the support function of the EAN staff.

![Figure 5: EAN Network Structure](image)

As the figure above illustrates, although there are four distinct leverage point groups, the structure allows for multiple opportunities for connection and collaboration between the four groups. The EAN staff helps manage the work of each group and supports communication between the groups.

Leverage Point work groups were launched in early 2012 and are now the core of EAN’s work. The groups meet regularly (at least once a quarter) to ensure coordination of
stated activities and measure progress toward goals. These meetings are where new, interested participants join the work of EAN. Additionally, the full network meets two times a year. Network meetings are opportunities for shared learning across leverage point groups, relationship building, and measuring progress toward collective goals. As the system continues to change, these network-wide meetings will also be opportunities for new projects, priorities and collaborations to emerge.

In the network strategy diagram below, EAN has just begun the implementation phase. Network members are engaging in specific projects, participants are connecting on a regular basis to share success, progress and barriers, and the network is developing a dashboard and online network to support the on-going communication and coordination that is critical to EAN’s long-term success.5

There is a fine balance to ensure the “right” amount of structure—enough to support the ongoing coordination of the work, yet not so much the interests of the structure—or host organization—take priority over the shared vision of the team.

Trust and relationship building are critical to success

Systems change requires leaders from many different parts of the system to develop trust, deep relationships and different ways of working together. It also requires a

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fundamental shift in the way that people think about their work—taking off organizational hats and moving past individual egos and power dynamics into a deep exploration and inquiry about change.

Trust building was built into every stage of the EAN process, beginning with the planning team and continuing through the network development. Rather than setting up explicit “trust-building” exercises and naming them as such, the consulting team led the group through a set of activities that brought participants into a different kind of relationship with each other. Once such time was when, prior to the first big convening of our stakeholder group, each member of the planning team was assigned two or three stakeholders (ideally someone who held a different perspective than the planning team member). Each planning team member was responsible for presenting their assigned stakeholder stories and maps in front of the larger group in a way that accurately depicted the stakeholder’s story and perspective, not his or her own interpretation of that person’s story. Not only did the stakeholders whose perspective were being presented feel heard and validated, but also the process helped the entire group move past their individual (and often deeply held) assumptions about each other. The team came to a deep appreciation for the diversity of perspectives in the room and moved into a very meaningful conversation about shared goals and vision for the state.

One key business leader commented at the end of this session: “The level of conversation happening in this room isn’t happening in other places in the State.” Non-profit leaders and business leaders who had traditionally been at odds at the Statehouse joked with each other, “Now I guess we have to keep what happens at the Statehouse at the Statehouse.”

A team of champions is important and necessary to hold the vision and help see the project through

Coordinating diverse stakeholders around systems change is messy and complicated. Having a small team of key stakeholders who believe wholeheartedly in the ideals of the project and who are willing to persevere through the uncertainty and many unexpected challenges that arise along the way helps smooth the way. The challenges come in different ways at different times: the process vs. action dilemma, securing adequate funding, deciding about appropriate structure, managing the needs of your funders and project leaders... If this work was easy, more of us would be doing it.

Early on, as the planning team was being configured, there was significant resistance to the idea of undertaking “another process.” Several key players—including potential funders—were concerned that EAN would end up producing a planning document and no action. Others felt that there was no need to engage in the process: “We already know what the issues are, we just need to move into action.” Funding was another major challenge—although several funders were very excited during initial conversations about the project, when it came time to commit actual funds, most were not interested in funding the process part of the work. When it came to making
decisions about the appropriate structure for EAN, the project, we ran into divergent views that almost stopped the project in its tracks. Had it not been for the perseverance of a small group of key leaders and their commitment to see the project through, these stumbling blocks could have been insurmountable.

Have resources committed up front and funders who are willing to engage in a collaborative governance model

Multi-stakeholder work takes time and resources and leads to results that are not always immediately apparent. Having a diverse and committed set of funders who are willing to fund the process, as well as the projects that come out of the process, is critical to the project’s success. It is also helpful to have funders who are willing to embrace new funding models and work in deep collaborative partnership with each other and with business, government and non-profit leaders.

Several key funders were reluctant to commit funds prior to the completion of EAN’s strategic implementation plan. This was in large part due to “process-weariness”—between 2006 and 2010, there had been at least six large public engagement processes in the state that had been funded by private foundations and that had not lead to significant change—and because many funders want to fund specific projects, not process. For EAN, this meant that there was a significant delay between developing the implementation plan and having the resources on hand to begin work on specific projects. Having resources fully committed up front would have reduced the time delay between stages of the project and may have eliminated some of the concern in the non-profit community about whether or not EAN’s work would lead to increased competition for scarce resources.

Collaborative governance and collective impact models recognize that large-scale and complex issues like climate change require structures that allow diverse groups with varied interests, expertise and resources to find common ground and work together. This is often difficult for funders who are used to driving projects and outcomes and working in traditional grantor/grantee relationships. Systems work requires that participants let go of particular outcomes and work with and as part of the system. This requires giving up some level of control and a high level of trust that the system’s collective intelligence will identify the most strategic places to intervene. This is challenging for many organizations, and in particular for foundations who are used to identifying strategies and then finding organizations that can carry out those strategies.

In addition, because collaborative governance models bring public and private stakeholders together, the governance structures may not look like those in traditional organizations. While a traditional non-profit model with an Executive Director and Board of Directors is recognizable and understandable to the funding community, it may present challenges for a network that is committed to keeping business and government engaged as central partners. As the network develops, it is important to make sure that the structure supporting it is flexible enough to adapt to the continually emerging needs
of the participants and that business and government partners feel as comfortable with the structure as its non-profit partners and funders do.

As Kristi Kimball notes in her article on “Letting Go,” which explores how foundations can be more effective by letting go, “system change requires flexibility and openness to watching how the system responds to an intervention and readjusting the approach. Donella Meadows, author of Limits to Growth, explains: ‘Self-organizing, non-linear feedback systems are inherently unpredictable. They are not controllable...The goal of foreseeing the future exactly and preparing for it perfectly is unrealizable.’ Meadows concludes that dancing with systems, rather than trying to control them, is the best approach.”

EAN’s Current Progress
At the time of this writing, EAN is thriving with over seventy individuals and organizations participating. Two full-time staff oversee the day-to-day work of the network and leverage point projects are currently underway. The State of Vermont, after taking input in 2011 from many of the stakeholders who participated in the systems mapping process, recently adopted a statewide goal of 90% renewable energy by 2050 as part of the State’s Comprehensive Energy Plan. The plan identifies EAN’s leverage points as the four major drivers to a successful transition.

Leverage point projects are well underway. EAN recently completed a capital mobilization study that details the financing needed to undertake the transition to 80% renewable energy, identifies new financing mechanisms, and suggests a series of policy initiatives that will attract investment funds to Vermont. The technological innovation team is hard at work at moving the net zero energy district in Montpelier forward, the communications team has collected information on the various frames and messages about energy in the state and has developed a common message about the energy transition, and the regulatory and permitting work group is developing a plan for the first stages of electrification of the transportation infrastructure.

While it will be many years before we know the outcome of our work, EAN’s short-term goals of creating greater alignment and developing a common framework for action among diverse sectors working on the energy transition are being realized. It is our hope that EAN can be a model for others who are hoping to address the urgent and complex challenges of our time.

Jennifer Berman is the former Executive Director of the Maverick Lloyd Foundation and was the coordinator of EAN from 2009-2012. For more information about EAN’s history and process, please contact Jennifer at 802 233 8829 or jen@nohoavatar.com. Additional information about EAN can be found at www.eanvt.org.

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7 For more information about the Comprehensive Energy Plan, see http://publicservicedept.vermont.gov/publications/energy_plan/2011_plan