

US Transition Initiative criteria – response from *Your Community*

Date: April 22, 2009

1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to help you prepare the groundwork for a successful transition initiative.

We're finding that the most unobtrusive way of influencing the development of initiatives and hubs is by setting a few criteria that ensure each group/initiative is heading in the right direction with the right kind of mindset and with the right intentions. These criteria have been developed in conjunction with other transition initiatives and by observing what's worked, and what hasn't.

In essence, these criteria will tell you how ready your community is to embark on this journey to a lower energy future. Take a look at this list and make an honest appraisal of where you are on these points. If there are any gaps, it should give you something to focus on while you build the initial energy and contacts around this initiative.

We've introduced this formal approach to registering Transition Initiatives for several key reasons:

- Our trustees and funders want to make sure that while we actively nurture embryonic projects, we only promote to "official" status those communities we feel are ready to move into the awareness raising stage. This status confers additional levels of support that are currently under development.
- In order to establish coordinated programs we need a formally established category of Transition Initiatives that we're fully confident can support and deliver against such program.
- We've seen at least one community stall because they didn't have the right mindset or a suitable group of people, and didn't really understand what they were letting themselves in for.
- The distinct roles of "Local Transition Initiative", "Local Transition Hub" and "Temporary Initiating Hub" are very different and need to be discussed at the outset (see below).

This form contains:

- an initial checklist
- two sections for you to tell us about your initial core team, your community and your initiative
- a section for you to respond to the list of criteria for becoming an official transition initiative

2. Checklist

	Point
1	Have a careful read of the Transition Initiatives Primer. Up-to-date US version is here: www.transitionus.org
2	Review the criteria (see section 5 below). They're designed to gauge a group or community's readiness (in our opinions) to embark on this kind of initiative. If there are some things that you need to put in place before you get back to us, that's fine.
3	Respond to "Readiness criteria". When you're ready, fill in this form and email it back to us, cc'ing in the rest of your core group – that acts as an implicit approval by the rest of your core group regarding the content of your response. Once we've reviewed it, we'll let you know when you're "official".

3. About your community

Please complete the sections coloured yellow.

	Point	Response	
1	What's the population of your community?	Approximately 4000 town of Hohenwald, 12,000 Lewis County	
2	How would you describe your community?	<input type="checkbox"/> City <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Town	<input type="checkbox"/> Village <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rural Other:

4. About your initiative and your team

	Point	Response
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1	Where did you first hear about Transition Initiatives?	I, Jennifer found out about Transition Towns in 2005. I was given literature on the Kinsale project and Totnes. I also heard a bit second-hand from a few people who travelled to these towns.		
2	What will you call your Transition Initiative? (full title please)	Our group is called: Sonnenschein Green Initiative Our transition will be called: Transition Town Hohenwald, Lewis County		
3	Do you need a wiki site or are you developing your own?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Preferred name for wiki space: eg http://transitionnetwork.org/exeter	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	http://transitionnetwork.org/hohenwald_tn	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	If you have your own website, tell us here - we'll link to it	www.sonnenscheingreentn.org (website up this week); www.financialpermaculture.org (current blog); www.transitiontownhohenwald.org (new blog)
4	What form will your initiative take? (tick just one)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Local Transition Initiative Hohenwald is the only town in our County – so we'd like to include the County name in our initiative.	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Local Coordinating Hub (discuss beforehand with Transition US)	Description of "catchment" area
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Temporary Initiating Hub (discuss beforehand with Transition US)	List of communities in "catchment" area
	Who will be the primary contact?	name	Jennifer Daukscha-English	
		email	Jennifer@financialpermaculture.com	
		phone	888-878-2434 x 5	
		address	P.O. Box 451, Hohenwald, TN 38462	
6	How many people do you have right now potentially wanting to work with you on this initiative?	core team	Core Team: Jennifer English, Connie Sharp, Debbie Landers, Mark Graves, Jerry Risner, Greg Landua, Becky Newbold and Patrick Gibbs + 11 working group leaders and another 15 who are active on a weekly basis in working groups.	
		community at large (eg on emailing list)	50 engaged monthly, plus local contact list of 275 more	
7	Please write a brief snippet about some of the (between 4 and 8) core members of the team including how long each has lived in your community	name	brief bio	number of years in community
		Jennifer D. English, Steering Committee	Permaculture Instructor, Director Financial Permaculture Institute, Editor Green Living Journal, Gaia University Advisor, Director Greener Tennessee and Chair Summit for a Sustainable Tennessee	7 years
		Connie Sharp, Steering Committee	Real-estate Broker, Board of Director of Chamber of Commerce, Board on Museum, City Planning Commission, City Board of Appeals, County Equalization Board, Running for County Mayor	50+ years
		Debbie Landers Steering Committee	Director of local school, President Elect of Chamber of Commerce, Board of local Arts Council, Tourism Committee	40+ years
		Mark Graves	President Chamber of Commerce, City Recorder, County Commissioner, Groups liaison with local government	30+ years
		Becky Newbold	Former Chamber President, Current Chamber Recorder, Editor Local News Paper, Tourism Committee. Chair for Green Business Awards.	25 years
		Jerry Risner	Executive Director Drug Treatment Center, TN Association for Drug and Alcohol Treatment Director of the Year. Chair local Building and Housing Committee.	20+ years

		Albert Bates	Co-founder Global Ecovillage Network, Co-founder Ecovillage Network of Americas, Founder Global Village Institute and Ecovillage Training Center on the Farm.	30+ years
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5. Criteria – (these develop over time in response to feedback from Transition Initiatives)

	Criteria	Response
1	An understanding of peak oil and climate change as primary drivers and the intention of writing them into your constitution or governing documents	Albert Bates has written Climate in Crises and Post Petroleum Survival Guide and Cook Book . Albert and others have been speaking on both subjects at local events since 2006. We will not put climate change as our driving force because we are a small town and there are a lot of people who absolutely do not believe in climate change here.
2	A group of 4-5 people willing to step into leadership roles (not just the boundless enthusiasm of a single person)	We already have 17 people in leadership roles.
3	At least two people from the core team willing to attend a two day Transition Training course	1 person has attended the training. Albert has been to Totnes. I and another plan to get trained. We're good friends with several trainers and are discussing doing a training here in our town in Autumn of 2009.
4	A potentially strong connection to local government	The County, City and Chamber all signed a Transition Proclamation .
5	An understanding of peak oil, climate change and the 12 steps of Transition (see Primer) across the entire core team	Yes, everyone on core team is well informed. Some have difference of opinion on climate change.
6	A commitment to ask for help from Transition US and other Transitioning communities if/when needed	Yes.
7	A commitment to keep your website updated	Yes.
8	A commitment to write up something for the Transition US newsletter and blog (the world will be watching...)	Yes. We write articles often, do interviews about our town and have several blogs already. Check out www.financialpermaculture.org for our blogs and go to www.financialpermaculture.com to view our documentary about our work.
9	A commitment to network with other TTs	Yes.
10	A commitment, once you're into the Transition, for one of the group to give a presentation to at least two other communities (in the vicinity) that is considering embarking on this journey (a "here's what we did in our community" talk)	Yes.
11	A commitment to work cooperatively with neighbouring Transition Initiatives	Yes.
12	Minimal conflicts of interests in the core team	Yes.
13	A commitment to work with Transition US	Yes.
14	A commitment to strive for inclusivity across your entire initiative. We're aware that we need to strengthen this point in response to concerns about	Yes.

	extreme political groups becoming involved in transition initiatives. One way of doing this is for your core group to explicitly state their support the UN Declaration of Human Rights (General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948).	
15	<p>A recognition that although your entire county or district may need to go through transition, the first place for you to start is in your local community. It may be that eventually the number of transitioning communities in your area warrant some central group to help provide local support, but this will emerge over time, rather than be imposed. (We've seen several instances of people rushing off to transition their entire county/region rather than their local community, and it doesn't work very well.)</p> <p>In exceptional situations where a "Local Coordinating Hub" or "Temporary Initiating Hub" needs to be set up, that hub will have certain responsibilities. These are developing over time – see the Primer for current details.</p> <p>Further criteria apply to initiating/coordinating hubs – these can be discussed person to person.</p>	<p>Yes, though we want to be called Transition Town Hohenwald, Lewis County - because our County is small – 12,000 people with no other town.</p> <p>I do want to talk to someone about a regional Transition Effort. 12 non-profits have been collaborating in our state since 2007 on 'transition' type efforts. We've also a very active bioregional initiative here. We're about to take some big steps to get counties to sign onto an agenda and we're hosting the 10th continental bioregional congress. Anyway, at some point soon I'd like to talk about coordinating hubs for our region.</p>
16	We recommend that one person (preferably more) on the core team should have attended a permaculture design course... it really does seem to make a difference	We have 7 certified Permaculture Instructors and have 10 more people being trained this summer.

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