

# Building a Co-op

There are more than 2,000 electric cooperatives worldwide. Since 1962, NRECA International has helped establish more than 250 co-ops and local utilities, providing power access to more than 220 million people. The processes and needs in establishing a co-op differ in each country and for each utility, but experts have identified five critical steps in creating an electric cooperative that will last.



## 1. Gauge interest

- Advocates talk with community members to gauge interest in creating an electric co-op.
- Assess community's characteristics and energy needs.
- Hold a general meeting for community to learn about the electric co-op model.
- Community votes on whether to proceed.

## 2. Steering committee

- Committee formed to oversee co-op development and contact government agencies.
- Create feasibility study on long-term technical and financial viability of a co-op.
- Write business plan.
- Second general meeting to share progress.



## 3. Awareness campaign

- Encourage community members to serve on the board.
- Cultivate understanding of ownership and democratic member control.
- Hold general assembly to approve articles of incorporation and elect board.



## 4. Build-out

- Secure license to operate as an electric utility.
- Obtain permits to build power infrastructure.
- Capitalization plan to build and operate co-op.
- Board of directors hires a general manager.
- Purchase infrastructure, equipment.
- Hire team to manage construction and begin commercial operations.
- Training for board, operations and customer service crews.

.....New construction

Inverter

Diesel generator

Battery storage

Solar array

## 5. Keep the lights on

- Work with government and development agencies to secure long-term commitments.
- Build a sense of ownership among community members.
- Work to meet high standards for reliability, safety and customer satisfaction.



Co-op HQ