



Community Solar Garden Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. What is the Nelson Community Solar Garden?

It is a solar array that generates solar electricity located at the Bonnington Generation Station where Nelson Hydro produces hydroelectricity. For those customers that have invested, they receive an annual credit payment in proportion to their investment for the term of the 25-year contract based on the kWh's generated by each solar panel each year on their electric bill. Participation is voluntary and only those who have invested receive the benefits.

2. How do I invest?

The initial investment period is over and the array is fully subscribed. Nelson Hydro does not have any plans to expand the array at this time.

3. Can I give the investment credit as a gift or donation to charity?

Yes. The solar investment credit can be applied to any Nelson Hydro account.

4. How is value of my solar investment credit calculated?

The value of the solar credit is based on the electric rate during the period that the solar energy was generated. This is also determined by how many panels you have invested in and how much solar energy was received for the entire system for that year. This will be measured in kWh (kilowatt hour) of electricity produced. For Example, if a customer invested in 3 solar panels out of a total of 200 then the credit will be for 3/200 of the generation from the entire solar garden, multiplied by the electricity rate and by the kWh's generated.

5. What is the approximate value of the annual solar credit for one panel?

If one panel generated 300 kWh per year at \$0.09/kWh for electricity, it would be \$26.00 credit to the panel owner's electricity bill. This amount will change as the electrical rate changes from year to year.

6. Do I own the panel(s) in the array?

No. It is like a lease. Nelson Hydro owns the system in its entirety.

7. What is the size and dimension of the array?

The 65kW array is approximately 577m² size comprising 248 panels, micro-inverters and a wireless gateway.



8. Is there enough sunshine in Nelson?

Yes. The Kootenays get more sunshine than Germany who leads the solar industry. We tracked the solar irradiance in Nelson before starting the project and compared the simulated energy production estimates based on long term weather data with that of Germany. The pre-project results showed viability.

9. How much energy does each panel generate?

The 248 panels have generated a total of 232,847 kWh since commissioning in June 2017. Due to expected panel degradation, the panel's energy output will be a bit less each year and we are estimating that by the 25th year the panels will only be generating about 55,000 kWh annually.

10. How many kWh's does the average home in Nelson use?

Homes within Nelson use an average of 19,300 kWh annually.

11. What if I move?

If you move within the Nelson Hydro service territory the solar credit can be transferred to your new account for a \$100.00 processing fee/transfer. If you move out of the area and will no longer be a Nelson Hydro Customer you can transfer the credit to an account of your choice. In some cases you may choose to donate this credit to a charity or non-profit organization, or if you own your home you may wish to use it as a selling feature and then transfer it to the new owners account. You can sell the credit to someone of your choice for a price that is agreed upon by you and the buyer.

12. Who pays for the repairs and maintenance, and insurance that is required over the 25-year term?

Nelson Hydro will be responsible for any costs incurred for the 25-year term.

13. What happens after the 25-year contract ends?

The annual payments are discontinued and Nelson Hydro decides whether to keep operating the system or to proceed with decommissioning.

Still have Questions?

Contact Nelson Hydro through our online [Contact Form](#).