



Greenstar Corporation

solar-powered ecommerce

Criteria for Selection of Digital Culture Sites

[en español:](#)

This document provides a high-level summary of the initial criteria that Greenstar uses in selecting sites for digital culture projects, in which the company makes a long-term investment in the recording, professional production, documentation, marketing and education about traditional world cultures.

The company's investments focus on music, artwork, photography and storytelling.

First, please refer to these documents, to give you an idea of what we mean by "digital culture", with some samples of two existing programs, in Jamaica and Palestine:

[Sweatshops and Butterflies:](#)

Cultural Ecology on the Edge

a survey of key ideas, issues and resources behind Greenstar

the principles behind the digital culture idea

<http://www.greenstar.org/digital-culture/>

the program in action, in the [Middle East](#), [Jamaica](#), [Ghana](#) and [India](#)
complementary sample MP3 music, recording in
our pilot installation in [Al-Kaabneh, Parvatapur, Swift River and Patriensah](#)
a complete music CD product, produced and documented by Greenstar
<http://www.e-greenstar.com/PKMusic/>
a complete original artwork product from Greenstar,
including free samples of village artwork
<http://www.e-greenstar.com/PK-artwork/>
how the music program affects a community
<http://www.e-greenstar.com/worldmusic.htm>

Following are some of the attributes Greenstar looks for in a village digital culture site. This is not a checklist but rather a guide to our thinking about where to invest. If you have a site in mind, please let us know how it relates to these criteria.

1. The village should be off-the-grid, with no central electricity and no or limited phone service. We prefer to invest where need is great but others will not invest.
2. The village should have strong participation, vision, leadership, motivation for improved economic, social, educational and health conditions and a willingness to inclusively embrace the collective decision making process necessary for community growth. A Greenstar investment is not a Greenstar project, it is a village project in which Greenstar participates. The more real energy we see from the village, the more we know our investment is in the people, not ourselves.
3. The village should have strong and unique traditional culture, arts, music, language, with commercial potential as music, artwork, storytelling, photography products, etc. We assume every

remote village has these assets, though they may not realize it. Some are more ready for market than others but we need to know as much about the culture as possible. The products that are created offer an immediate cash flow to the rural community. The village members must understand, and accept, the essential role licensing art plays in the Greenstar model. The products will always be the property of the people. Greenstar respects decisions to withhold sacred and other essential images from the market.

4. There should be a secure, fixed central site in the village for equipment, eg. school, clinic, community center.

5. There should be a local population within walking distance: minimum 500 to maximum 5000 people.

6. There should be local government support, good communications with relevant officials, alignment with regional/national development priorities, NGO and UN activities, and a reasonable regulatory environment.

7. There should be reasonably sound telecomm, banking, legal and political systems in the host country. These must be open to regulatory reform, competition, and innovation. Enforceable contracts are essential.

8. There should be good diplomatic and security relations with the US.

9. There should be qualified, motivated research, operations, education, music and artwork resources and consultants to be expert country project managers. It is also important to be able to identify a team in the village that can provide day to day management and support.

10. There should be local sources of high-quality solar and related electrical equipment including manufacturers' distributors, field service and parts depots for inverters, wiring, module mounting, battery chargers, acid-gel batteries; preferred suppliers in order are ASE Americas, Astropower, BP Solarex, Siemens.

11. There should be availability of high-speed wired or wireless Internet connections and ISP service, with an idea of existing cost. Each Greenstar center will ultimately receive a two-way

high-speed satellite connection, if local wired or wireless solutions are not available. In such a case, we also evaluate the availability of commercial C-band and Ku-band satellite footprints covering the village. It is desirable if the host telecommunications authority is willing to partner in innovative experiments, including VoIP and village-based ISP businesses.

12. Greenstar prefers to work in locations where there are at least two viable candidates for evaluation.

As it requires a sizeable investment to prepare a Greenstar project in a new country, it is very desirable to evaluate the possibilities of establishing multiple village partnerships if a pilot is successful. A cluster of Greenstar sites may well allow the emergence of a network effect where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

If a multiple village project is possible, and well-justified by experience in the pilot project, Greenstar evaluates the advantages of establishing an in-country subsidiary to be in charge of all Greenstar projects in the host country. Typically Greenstar will subscribe for a 49% interest in its subsidiaries.

Other desirable qualities include a clinic within 25-50 miles, which could provide local support for international telemedicine projects. It would also be a plus if there were a computer users group or club in the region, which could provide volunteers for local support and education.

We initially travel to a site, spend several days in the potential village, meet and talk with local leaders both formally and informally, and meet all sectors of the community. During this time we engage in a "Future Building" process to identify and align the hopes, aspirations and key agendas of all of the stakeholders. The result of this process is a written document that describes the nature of the relationships and obligations between all of the parties in the proposed Greenstar partnership. Also, during this first visit, Greenstar representatives are required to meet with the local artists, evaluate their willingness to participate in international marketing, and to have first-hand experience with their art works. If at all possible, samples will be videotaped

and scanned for further evaluation.

For more information on "Future Building", see <http://www.greenstar.org/future-building.htm>

Then, together with local consultants and appropriate government representatives, we apply these criteria and confirm selection of a village.

Since Greenstar is making an investment -- not a donation, not a grant, not a loan or credit, but a real investment on behalf of people who expect to see a reasonable profit over a space of years -- our criteria are both easier in some ways, and harder in other ways, than most "aid" programs. Investment means that Greenstar could lose the entire sum of finance and resources put forward if a village site doesn't work out for ecommerce. So we are both cautious and aggressive in making decisions.

We hope this helps you understand how Greenstar works. A useful general index to all resources on Greenstar's sites is available at <http://www.greenstar.org/introduction.htm>

You may contact Greenstar regarding the conception and execution of the digital culture program through Michael North (mjnorth@e-greenstar.com)

An Adobe Acrobat version of this document, for clear printing, is available for download at:

<http://www.e-greenstar.com/site-selection/site-selection.pdf>