

SolShare system designers

Which questions do I need to ask?

When considering using a SolShare for a project, there are some questions that you need to ask to make sure that:

- a) the SolShare is a suitable product for the project, and
- b) you have designed the system in the most suitable and optimal way.

It's also important to tailor your questions for the type of project you're working on, and who you're speaking to, for example:

- A new build project
- A retrofit/brownfield project
- A social housing project
- An apartment or office building with a mix of owner-occupiers and renters
- Apartment/office space owners
- Building managers
- Property developers

We've started a list here with questions to ask, and what to look out for in the answer. You might also want to add to this list as you start to work through more SolShare projects.

Which DNSP area is the building located in?

This one is important because the SolShare can currently be interconnected in many, but not all DNSP areas. Consult the SLD Guidelines document provided later in this course for an up-to-date list.

How many tenants in the building and how many are expecting to access the solar system?

As a solar sharing device, the SolShare is most suitable when used to share solar generation between 6 or more tenants. Also, as a rule of thumb, since each tenant should be allocated an average of between about 1kW-2.5kWp of solar generation, we generally tend to find that projects in high rise buildings with more than about 60 tenants do not have sufficient roofspace to provide this solar generation allocation. Of course, it's important to consider other factors such as shading and existing plant equipment on the roof as well.

How much roofspace is available and suitable for PV panels?

Now, firstly, as a solar installer, you're probably much more qualified to know how to ask this question and what to do with the answer. We're including it here because it related to the previous question, and it's important to note that if there is only room for 10kWp of PV panels on the roof, but this is to be shared among 30 tenants, then each tenant may not get a useful benefit from the solar system. Instead, it may be prudent to discuss an option of only providing solar to 5 or 10 tenants (e.g. premium apartments, larger office spaces, etc.) than to all.

Where are the tenant meters located?

This is important for the purposes of understanding the extent of cabling required for the project. Since each SolShare can have up to 15 outputs, if the SolShare is located physically far away from the tenant meters, there will be a great deal of cabling work that the solar installer needs to do. As such, it's always advisable to find projects with 1 central main switch board (MSB) or several meter panels / distribution boards that service a larger number of tenants (up to 15 would be ideal for single phase tenants and 1 SolShare per meter panel).

Are the tenant loads single phase or 3 phase?

This will affect how many tenants can be connected to each SolShare. For single phase tenants, up to 15 tenants can be connected to each SolShare. For 3 phase tenants, either up to 5 tenants can be connected to each SolShare, or only the dominant phase of each tenant can be connected to each SolShare for up to 15 tenants per SolShare. The process of accurately ascertaining dominant phases has been challenging in some previous installations, so contact Allume for advice on this if you haven't done this before yourself.

What are the typical tenant loads?



Just like with any other solar project, this will help size the solar, and also how many SolShare systems will be needed.

How much solar energy would tenants expect to be receiving?

We're only including this question to set realistic expectations (just like you would on any solar project). If tenants are expecting to offset 100% of their energy bills, then as with any other project, a realistic expectation needs to be set to avoid client disappointment once the SolShare + solar system

Will the landlord, system owner or property developer be charging tenants for solar energy consumed?

Always remember that the SolShare is not NMI pattern approved, so if billing for the kWh of solar is something that will be involved with a project, you'll need to use additional NMI-patent approved meters and a third-party billing platform, such as [Improv](#). The system owner or property developer may instead wish to bill on a subscription of fixed price model (such as \$10/month or something along these lines).

For a strata/owner's corporation project, when is the next AGM and how much support is there now?

This is important to understand timelines, as often, these bodies only meet once per year and the project cannot progress beyond initial planning until approval has been confirmed.