

Close up of a solar panelled rooftop

MOSAIC

2013 Nominet Trust 100 Winner

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CROWD INVESTMENT FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE.

By Mosaic Inc.

Project URL: joinmosaic.com

Project Twitter: [@solarmosaic](https://twitter.com/solarmosaic)

- Community Engagement
- Environment & Sustainability
- Data
- Social Software

Solar power is the root of all energy. When we burn fossil fuels we are simply burning stored forms of solar power. If we could capture solar energy directly and immediately we could use it as it becomes available. Some cities, such as Malmo in Sweden and Freiburg in Germany are leading the way in showing how solar power can be used at scale (in Malmo the panels heat an underground water store which provides heat in the winter).

However, as yet in most cities solar technology has not reached this scale and so traditional fossil fuels are still more economically attractive.

Mosaic, born in 2010 as SolarMosaic, aims to change all that through a crowd-investment programme for solar projects: individuals can invest as little as \$25 in panel arrays large and well placed enough to produce a useful amount of electricity and, hence, a return on their investment. Some investments are offered on a 'zero interest' basis, while others offer returns of 5% or more.

Whatever the option offered, take-up has been striking: after the official public launch of the online platform in January 2013, the first slate of projects sold out in less than 24 hours, with more than 400 investors putting in more than \$300,000. With an announcement in April that Mosaic had approval to launch \$100 million worth of solar investments in California, the company, one of an increasing number of 'B' (social benefit) corporations in the US, is taking full advantage of its current momentum.

The US government has also been supportive, awarding \$2 million to Mosaic as part of their 'SunShot' initiative, a \$29 million fund intended to reduce the cost of solar power by 75% between 2010 and 2020. Perhaps this may be compared to the various forms of federal support lavished on the fossil fuel industry, but it contributes to a healthy context within which an ambitious company such as Mosaic can grow.

Dropping 'Solar' from their name speaks precisely to this ambition: the team is busily planning investments in a range of other forms of renewable energy generation.

Image courtesy of Mosaic

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