



PREP

Promotion of Resource
Efficiency Projects

PREP Topic: Sustainable Energy for Poverty Reduction

Background:

Progress in reducing poverty has been made; however, there is still a long road ahead. More than one billion people (one in five in the world) still earn less than one dollar a day; another 1.5 billion live on one to two dollars a day. These facts taken together mean that about 40% of the world's population constitutes a global poverty class, faced with extreme standards of living.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), adopted at an international level in 2000, set a list of human development objectives to be achieved by 2015. Although energy is not addressed directly in the eight MDGs, it is widely accepted that access to clean and affordable energy is a prerequisite to achieving sustainable development and reducing poverty. Energy is only one determinant of poverty and development, but it is a vital one. Energy supports the provision of basic needs (cooking, heating, lighting, etc.) and creates productive activities (manufacturing, industry, commerce, etc.).

The poor pay more money, or spend more time for energy services, than those who are better off. Because efficient devices tend to have higher initial costs, the poor end up with less efficient devices, which consume more energy for a given level of service. Therefore, a direct improvement in energy services would allow the poor to enjoy both short-term and long-term advances in living standards.

Women are referred as the best energy managers. This points towards the drudgery of collection of fuel, carrying the head-loads of fuelwood to cover long distances and burning it inefficiently under unhygienic conditions. Maintaining the consistent supply of fuel for meeting daily energy needs is a time-consuming activity, which also restricts the time to utilise for education and productive activities. Therefore, dissemination of efficient and affordable fuel, particularly in rural areas, shows up the possibility of reducing the burden associated with performing the daily household, tasks and time spent on these activities. It helps in enhancing the income opportunities, the possibility of better health and education facilities for women and children, thereby, supports to fulfil the tasks of the MDGs.

The issue of poverty reduction is implicitly included in many sustainable energy projects and in some of the previous PREP topics as well. With this call, WISIONS is looking for examples of good practice projects dealing explicitly with sustainable energy for poverty reduction and invites the submission of examples of good practice.

Fields of interest include:

- projects that directly improve living conditions for the poor through the provision of energy services
- energy projects that improve informal, small-scale income-generating activities
- projects that support replacing traditional fuels with more efficient ones in poor regions
- energy projects that address gender issues and that improve the economic status of people