

**ENERGIA INTERNATIONAL NETWORK MEETING OF POLICY-MAKERS
AND PRACTITIONERS ON GENDER AND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY**

12-13 DECEMBER 2011, AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS

**SYNTHESIS REPORT OF THE LESSONS LEARNED AND
RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENERGIA ON THE WAY FORWARD**



1. INTRODUCTION

ENERGIA hosted an international policy and practitioners meeting in the Netherlands from 12-13 December 2011. This meeting brought together a diverse range of stakeholders from governments, donor agencies, NGOs/CBOs, academia and the private sector to consider and strategise on the main emerging issues regarding gender and the energy sector.

This international meeting was followed-up by a more detailed action-oriented meeting of the ENERGIA network's national focal points from 14-15 December. This meeting was held at the end of Phase 4 (2007-2011) of the ENERGIA programme to review progress at both national and international levels and to consider the programme priorities and strategic directions for Phase 5 (2012-2015).

2. CHANGING CONTEXT¹

The concept of a gender and energy international network originated from a group of western gender and energy professionals in 1995. The aim of the network from the outset was to ensure that the network was governed by Southerners. Now in 2011, it is rewarding to note that the network is fully "owned" and supported by women and men from developing countries in the Asia and Africa regions. The network has also generated potential women leaders in the energy sector. This is a successful and significant outcome that should not be under-estimated.

For the past 6 years the ENERGIA efforts have focused on supporting projects and activities at the country level which raised awareness about the importance of gender mainstreaming in the energy sector at national and local levels. As a result, many innovative approaches, case studies and business models have emerged from the participating countries and their networks.

However, over the same period of time there have been major changes in the direction and focus of international development cooperation which has its

¹ This report incorporates the final presentation of Dr. Joy Clancy, University of Twente.

influence on the way ENERGIA functions. Donor attitudes to development assistance have changed, in some cases funding has been drastically cut, and there is much more emphasis on private sector investment and trade. There is also much more emphasis on national ownership, national capacity building and an integrated approach to poverty reduction. The energy sector is now dominated by climate change, renewable energy and large-scale electricity access. Technology has also advanced significantly diverting attention somewhat from the human dimension.

The ENERGIA network has also evolved and changed over the years. It now covers 22 developing countries and comprises a very diverse group of stakeholders-NGOs/CSOs, government institutions, donors, electricity utilities, academia, the private sector and dedicated individuals. It has become a “global community” of knowledge and skills in all aspects of the gender/energy sector relationship.

3. LESSONS LEARNED

a. At the international level

- Global processes can be used as important platforms to advocate the gender and energy “cause”. Although the ENERGIA network has generated many innovative approaches to gender mainstreaming in the energy sector, and awareness about the gender/energy/poverty reduction linkage has been raised, there are still many stakeholders in the energy sector, who are not fully convinced of the direct causal relationship. This is mainly due to the lack of large-scale, *evidence-based* studies and information from country level.
- Increased numbers of multilateral and bilateral development agencies are interested in working on gender and energy. In many cases the impact of climate change and the environment is also being linked to energy. However, in terms of programming development assistance, the link between energy and gender is not considered sufficient for development impact and donors prefer a more holistic approach i.e. linking energy provision to food security, water, health, education, employment etc. This holistic approach needs to take into account the energy needs of *both men and women*. “Energy security” is a new theme in this respect.

- Related to the point above, there is also a need to focus more on the *empowerment of women* to be able to have a stronger decision-making role particularly in the energy sector. This applies to all levels-household, national and global.
- Clean cook stoves are back on the development agenda and there are several development agencies and partnerships working on this aspect e.g. SNV, Global Alliance on Cook Stoves, UN Foundation.
- “Oil for Development” (cooperation with NORAD on gender mainstreaming in the oil sector in network member countries) and investing in youth are new emerging areas for the ENERGIA network.

b. At the country level

- There is a realisation that the practitioners that are also members of national ENERGIA networks are now able to articulate their experiences with and advocate for gender and energy projects. As a result, a critical mass of high-quality expertise and knowledge has been built in member countries in Asia and Africa on gender mainstreaming in the energy sector.
- Several innovative approaches are being implemented successfully. Some examples are: village gender focal points, women energy auditors, institutionalising gender in electricity utilities and many others that were presented at the meeting.
- In order to have a successful outcome of a gender mainstreaming intervention several preparatory steps are needed: a clear commitment from senior management and decision-makers to the process; budgetary provision and staff time commitment, appointment of a gender focal point (not as part of human resources), a thorough gender analysis of the context and analysis of the enabling environment, a needs assessment and identification of priorities, training of stakeholders to reach a common understanding of gender mainstreaming and why it is important for the sector, a follow-up mechanism for monitoring and problem-solving.
- There is a significant need for continued capacity building of stakeholders across all levels. Training and exposure are needed in a variety of aspects:

gender mainstreaming methodologies including gender audits and toolkit development, GM training, project formulation, evaluation and accountability, resource mobilisation, international communications and policy-influencing etc.

- In order to influence international processes and policy-making in the energy sector and in climate change, there is a critical need to analyse and “package” the innovative work done at country level into *evidence-based policy briefs*.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE WAY FORWARD FOR ENERGIA

- The ENERGIA network now needs to focus more on advocacy and policy-influencing at the global level. In 2012 the World Energy Summit, the Rio+ conference and a thematic session on “Sustainable Energy for All by 2030” will be ideal opportunities to advocate for gender mainstreaming in the energy sector. It is therefore of critical importance that the ENERGIA network prepare themselves in such a way that their core messages are heard at these international fora (and not be only a “side event”).
- Early action needs to be taken in 2012 to document evidence-based studies and activities that show a clear relationship between the influence of gender mainstreaming and development effectiveness. These should be documented in succinct, comprehensible briefs for decision/policy-makers.
- In carrying out a series of gender mainstreaming activities, network members need to give more attention to the household energy needs of both men and women and ensure that awareness raising and training are targeted to both sexes.
- The network needs to continue capacity building of network members and will need to find more innovative ways of doing this e.g. exposure of network members to international meetings and “piggy backing” on other country-level project activities.
- Recognising the funding constraints in development cooperation, the network members will need to direct greater attention to resource mobilisation. This entails having a comprehensive picture of other donor support to the sector

and building stronger partnerships with government entities, development agencies and the private sector working in-country.

- The network should investigate new thematic areas, namely household energy security, oil for development, food security and energy provision for the urban poor.

In conclusion, this international meeting brought together a wide range of stakeholders not only from the ENERGIA network but also from international development agencies, governments, academia and the private sector. It provided an excellent opportunity for the different stakeholders to share information about their respective organisations and development priorities concerning gender and the energy sector. These set the tone and provided the necessary inputs for follow-up actions by the ENERGIA network members within the context of its 2012-2015 programme.