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# Support to Local Governance

To foster the development process of the country through the promotion of rural energy systems, REDP has put efforts to not only create institutions but also to develop capacities at all three levels. REDP's effort on establishment of an elaborate institutional arrangement for rural energy development has already paid-off as decentralized energy planning process is being practiced in the programme districts.

One of the main objectives of REDP is to support for the institutionalization of rural energy development. In this regard, REDP aims to support the government through policy inputs based on the feedback from the implementation of programme activities. Similarly, it supports the local level through capacity building for planning and managing rural energy development activities.

## **Institutional Arrangement**

For the first time, a sectoral agency has been created within the umbrella of the DDC with REDP support. In the context of recently approved Decentralization Act, District Development Committee: Rural Energy Development Section (DDC:REDS) has set an example of the institutional arrangement that can be emulated by other sectors too. DDC:REDS is the authoritative body of the DDC on energy and is responsible for plan-

ning, information dissemination, providing technical support and creating linkages with district level government, non-government and private sector organizations. As an energy technology promotion center, DDC: REDS is also responsible for sensitizing and orienting people's representatives and the general public on different aspects of rural energy systems development.

Networking of government line agencies concerned with energy development has been created at the districts level as District Energy Committee (DEC) to provide linkages among different actors in the energy field in the district. Established under the chairmanship of DDC chairpersons with representation of all relevant line agencies and private sector, it also acts as a sectoral unit within the DDC and supports preparation of Annual Plans and Programmes related to the energy sector in the district. This elaborate networking at the district level has most importantly supported mobilization of resources available with different or-

*Photo above : Community members participating in a mass meeting in Suri VDC, Dolkha*

ganizations to supplement REDP supported activities at the grassroots. District level government offices such as, District Forest Office, District Soil Conservation Office, District Cottage Industry Development Offices, etc. have provided training and technical assistance to the communities. Similarly, Agricultural Development Bank (ADB/N) has supported micro hydro projects by providing loans and channeling subsidy to the communities. More than 15 million rupees have already been mobilized from ADB/N and the government for implementation of 25 micro hydro schemes in ten REDP districts.

For mobilizing financial resources for the development of energy sector at the district level, District Energy Fund (DEF) has been established in all ten districts. The fund comprises of DDC's financial contribution, donors' assistance, grants, returns from investment in rural energy projects and so on. So far, the DDC of ten programme districts have contributed more than Rs. 4 million to DEF for implementation of micro hydro demonstration schemes.

District Energy Network (DENET), a networking among the ten DDCs has been established for the promotion and coordination of rural energy development activities in the programme districts. DENET focuses primarily on information exchange and sharing of experiences among the DDCs on rural energy development initiatives. The DDC chairpersons meet regularly, share successes and failures and devise consolidated approaches and strategies. DENET is also envisaged to



*Formation of MHFG in Lulang VDC, Myagdi*

be affiliated with Association of District Development Committees. In future, DENET not only to provide support to other districts to formulate rural energy development plans and programmes but also as a lobbying institution for the promotion of rural energy systems in the country.

In line with its objective of enhancing the capability of the non-governmental and private sector at the district level to undertake activities related to rural energy development, REDP supports the establishment of a Support Organization (SO) and Rural Energy Service Centers in all districts. Local NGO or individuals were supported to evolve into a SO in each district. SO personnel were trained on mobilizing communities for rural energy development in particular and community development in general. The SO deputes one community mobilizer to each REDP programme VDC. Likewise, local workshops or entrepreneurs were supported to establish Rural Energy Service Center (RESC) to provide technical backstopping to micro hydro and other rural energy systems within the district. It is envisaged that these organizations will play vital role in the development of rural energy in the districts in the years to come by providing energy related services to the communities and individuals.

After the establishment of DDC:REDS, energy has also been considered for the first time as an important infrastructure by the local authorities for the overall development. Most notably, in all districts, DDC has embraced the programme wholeheartedly and taken up ownership of the dis-



*A meeting of District Energy Committee, Kavrepalanchok*



*Members of DENET along with the Energy Globe Award 2000*

district level activities. All ten DDC have provided financial support to micro hydro demonstration schemes in their respective districts. Besides initiating the activity level coordination with donors, promoters, government line agencies and other stakeholders, REDP has been successful in creating congenial atmosphere for rural energy development in all the programme districts.

### **Decentralized Energy Planning**

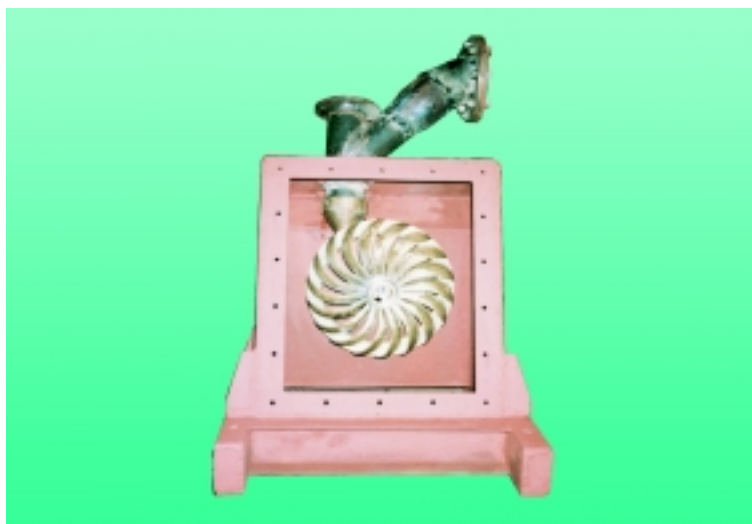
The Decentralized Energy Planning Process adopted by the DDCs and VDCs with REDP's support begins right from the settlement level. The rural communities are educated and encouraged to identify their energy needs, assess energy potentials of their villages, select feasible technology from various alternatives available and make arrangement of financial and other resources required. The identified projects are submitted to the VDC through the respective wards. The VDC screens all the applications and prioritizes the projects and allocates its own financial resources as much as possible. All those projects are then forwarded to the Illaka level Planning Workshop, where again the projects are scrutinized and prioritized and forwarded to DEC for higher level planning. At the Illaka level, the resources and programmes of government line agencies and the proposals from the VDCs are matched as much as possible.

The prioritized projects forwarded by all the Illaka level Planning Workshops of the district is compiled and prioritized by District Energy Committee (DEC). In the DEC, the programme of government line agencies related to energy again are matched

with the proposals received from the grass-roots. DEC prepares the draft of the Annual Energy Plan and Programme and submits it to the District Council through DDC. Once the draft programme is approved by the District Council, it becomes the Annual Energy Plan and Programme of the district and is forwarded to National Planning Commission for further resource mobilization and inclusion in the national plan and programme.

To foster the development process of the country through the promotion of rural energy systems, REDP has put efforts to not only create institutions but also to develop capacities at all three levels. The results of the institution building at all levels have shown positive direction. Dr. Binayak Bhadra, a prominent energy expert, believes that REDP's role in the establishment of institutions at different levels, from community to national levels, in different form is note worthy, as it is rightly focussing on the institutional gap in the energy sector.

REDP's effort on establishment of an elaborate institutional arrangement for rural energy development has already paid-off as decentralized energy planning process is being practiced in the programme districts. In the present context of decentralization and local participation in development activities, REDP's efforts has supported the national agenda for enhanced involvement of local elected bodies in planning and managing development projects by the establishment of a sectoral agency within the DDC and successful adoption and implementation of decentralized energy planning process.



*A glimpse of the meeting of Tripartite Review Committee*