

Centre for Rural Technology - Nepal

Promoting Women-led Enterprises for Energy Access and Local Production

Background and context

Nepal is divided into seventy-five districts and three physiographic areas namely: mountain, hill and Terai. Eighteen districts spread over hill and terai physiographic areas of the country have been identified as the project districts: Chitwan, Parsa, Bara, Rautahat, Sarlahi, Mahottari, Dhanusha, Kailali, Banke, and Nawalparasi are from Terai region. Similarly, Dhading, Kavre, Sindhuli, Khotang, Udayapur, Gulmi, Palpa, and Parbat districts are selected from hilly region (Refer to Annex I for map with project districts).

Summarising the background situation of the targeted districts, on an average 70 % and 11 % of the total households have been found using firewood and cow dung as their primary cooking fuel. In terms of source of lighting, on an average only 64% of the households have been found access to national grid while 21% dependent on kerosene. On an average the population of the women is found to be 51% of the total population. However, in terms of fixed assets and finance access, on an average 30% of the women population own neither house nor land and only 4% have access to finance (Multipurpose and Saving & Credit cooperatives). Moreover, on an average 38% of the women population have been found illiterate in the project districts (Refer to Annex II for detail data and source).

To this context, the project intends to contribute for increasing access of rural communities to clean cooking solutions through improved cook stoves (ICS) and lighting solutions through grid-based community rural electrification (CRE) in the selected districts. The project will work with communities where some institutional arrangements which already exist in relation to above energy access solutions. This project also intends to unlock the potentiality of rural women by providing them the opportunities, access to resources and promoting women initiated micro enterprises which make use of power/energy from the above mentioned rural energy solutions thus by contributing to increase access to energy services through women enterprises to rural families specially to women as prioritized in the National Rural and Renewable Energy Programme of Alternative Energy Promotion Centre/Government of Nepal.

Moreover, during "Renewable Energy Week 2013"organised by Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPC), 'Clean Cooking Solution for All by 2017 and thereby producing indoor air pollution free Nepal' was announced by the Prime Minister to reach the goal of indoor air pollution free Nepal by disseminating more than 3 million quality stoves around the country. This project will also address to contribute to meet the national target.

This proposal has been developed based upon the feedbacks received by CRT/N staff during the implementation of its improved cookstoves programmes in various districts as well as in the course of implementation of ADB supported projects on women entrepreneurship development (These projects are mentioned under Section 18 of this proposal).

Project summary

This proposal has been developed based upon the feedbacks received during implementation of improved cookstoves programmes in various districts as well as in the course of implementation of ADB supported projects on women entrepreneurship development. The project will be implemented by a consortium of Centre for Rural Technology, Nepal (CRT/N), National Association of Community Electricity Users-Nepal, (NACEUN) and Practical Action Consulting (PAC). CRT/N leads the project.

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To this context, the project intends to contribute to increasing access of rural communities to clean cooking solutions through improved cook stoves (ICS) and lighting solutions through grid-based community rural electrification (CRE) in the selected districts. Direct beneficiaries of the project are identified as women entrepreneurs and rural households, members of local based organizations and indirect beneficiaries as men women and children, professionals from local and central line agencies. A total of 57,500 households will get access to energy technologies (improved cookstoves and electricity) and 1,000 will engage in energy enterprises as a result of project interventions.

At present, in terms of the targeted communities in the proposed districts, they have to use solid biomass such as fuelwood, animal dung and agricultural waste as cooking and basic energy needs. As such women have less time and opportunity to engage in income generating enterprises which is further hindered by higher rates of illiteracy, fewer opportunities to participate in decision making, little knowledge of their legal rights, less access to modern and sustainable energy solutions and fewer or less access to investment capital. In this line, the project will address problem of low level of entrepreneurship among the women by enhancing entrepreneurial capacity of women for expanding existing micro enterprises or initiating new micro enterprises for supply of sustainable energy technologies.

The project will also make efforts to raise awareness of the rural people on sustainable energy access and its productive use. Since the project is promoting improved cookstoves as clean cooking technology, the community will be educated by providing information on health hazards caused by indoor air pollution. In addition, the community will also be educated on energy efficiency, saving of cooking time and kitchen improvement that can be achieved through use of improved cookstoves.

The general objective of the project is:

Empowering women by creating enabling environment for women entrepreneurship in micro enterprises to enhance access to sustainable energy technologies and services and other sustainable energy-based micro enterprises for local production in rural areas

The project interventions designed with the following specific objectives will ensure achievement of the general objective in medium or longer term:

- To establish business enabling supports
- To build capacity of women to identify opportunities as well as to establish, operate and manage micro enterprises
- To provide inputs for policies promoting gender equity in micro enterprises development activities

For monitoring and evaluation, baseline survey along with its report, bi-annual field visits along with its reports, monthly updates of improved cookstoves database, evaluation study upon the completion and mid-term of the project by external consultants and end line survey along with its report will be carried out.