



Interlink

International Cooperation in Environment

SPARK-NET - Sustainable energy Policy and Research Knowledge Network

Geographic area: Sub-Saharan Africa

Period: January 2002-June 2005

Environmental issues addressed: One of the important issues of the project was forest conservation and reforestation in relation to household energy: people threatened by poverty often take to haphazard forest exploitation as they're a resort. Where most other income opportunities have been taken away by war, domestic turmoil or economic recession, selling firewood or burning charcoal often offer the last remaining chances of survival. The project included a research and policy proposal of policy options to participating countries in Africa.

FP7 R&D Axis: 6.1.2 Environment and Health and 6.2.1 Conservation and sustainable management of natural and man-made resources and biodiversity

Website: <http://sparknet.info/>: <http://sparknet.info/>

Cooperating countries: UK, Germany, The Netherlands, Uganda, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Zambia, South Africa, Kenya, Mozambique

Partners:

Practical Action (Coordinator)	NGO	UK, Kenya, Zimbabwe
Eco Ltd	SME	UK
Women and Gender Studies (DWGS), University of Makerere	Institution	Uganda
Tanzania Traditional Energy Development and Environment Organisation (TaTEDO)	Institution	Tanzania
Scientific and Industrial Research and Development Centre - Energy Technology Institute (SIRDC/ETI)	Research organization	Zimbabwe
Rural Area Power Solutions (RAPS)	Private company	South Africa
University of Liverpool, Department of Public Health	Institution	UK
ECO-STUDIEN, SEPP UND BUSACKER PARTNERSCHAFT	Institution	Germany



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University of Twente, Technology and Development Group (TDG)	Institution	Netherlands
Energy & Environmental Concerns	NGO	Zambia

Abstract

Spark-net involved a large number of desk research studies for each of the countries, all completed jointly with northern and southern partners, electronic conferences with participation of partners and stakeholders. The results of the activities were policy options proposals for the different sectors, energy and health, energy and forestry, energy and gender.

Context and objectives

About 80% of the African population cook with biomass, most of the time with inefficient cook stoves and unhealthy conditions, and only a very small fraction of the population have access to electricity. Women and children are the most affected by the impact of energy poverty and lack of appropriate national policies related to household energy, energy and forestry, energy and health and energy and gender. The project aims to establish an interdisciplinary interactive Knowledge Network in Southern and East Africa called SPARK-NET in the field of energy for low-income households in rural areas. The focus of SPARK-NET was on increasing knowledge resources for local, national, regional and EU policy-making, and research through the creation of knowledge and the acceleration of the application of that knowledge to economic and social development.

Despite administrative difficulties, knowledge-sharing between partners was a success

The most important difficulties have been administrative, because of the large number of participating organisations and countries involved; therefore frequent delays in meeting targets by partners have happen.

The most important factors of success has been the diversity of knowledge among the partners and the participation of a diversity of partners, Academia and NGOs.

The proposed policies reached the governments

The most important output is that the policies implemented on gender and quality information were made available to government and stakeholders, who included them into their strategies. The website was also a very effective dissemination tool which was extensively used by all partners as well as visitors.