Overview

How can strategies and technologies be developed to provide poor people in remote areas with sustainable access to modern energy? What lessons can be learned from the experience of Energising Development (EnDev), which facilitates access to modern energy services in 24 low- and middle-income countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America?

This case study contrasts three interventions—in Kenya, Mali, and Mozambique—in order to learn from their successes and failures. It shows how projects were scaled up when results were positive and cut back when they failed to meet expectations.

Key contextual conditions: About 18 percent of the world’s people were without access to modern energy services in 2011. The problem is particularly severe in Sub-Saharan Africa, where two-thirds of the population—including most people who are poor or live in remote areas—lack access to electricity.

Key stakeholders: Small- and medium-size enterprises (beneficiaries); local EnDev teams; local NGOs; EnDev (a joint global programme of Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Australia, United Kingdom, and Switzerland, with additional co-funding from Ireland and the European Union); and local government agencies. These included, in Mali, the Agency for Domestic Energy and Rural Electrification (AMADER); in Mozambique, the rural renewable energy agency (FUNAE; Fundo de Energia); and in Kenya, the Ministry of Agriculture.

Lessons Learned

- To initiate self-sustaining local energy markets in a sustainable way that will be independent of EnDev and other donors in the long run, needs a close and comprehensive implementation approach at the local level. However, close cooperation with small-size enterprises that challenge the last mile in rural areas is unusual in development cooperation.

Development Challenges

- The sustainability of projects once the donor leaves has not been established.
- EnDev handles these constraints of micromanagement with its performance-based approach, through which the program identifies the most efficient way to target beneficiaries. It identifies beneficiary groups appropriately (demand-driven) and ensures that the budget is spent efficiently. This approach enables the program to scale up successful projects.
Delivery Challenges

- Structuring last-mile strategies to reach beneficiaries is difficult.
- The regional approach of ENDEV permits flexibility by addressing delivery bottlenecks with appropriate adaptations or scaling-up models. With its flexible reallocation of funds between technologies and countries based on performance, EnDev supports the most efficient, effective, and sustainable projects in the field. It is generally not bound by strict policies, guidelines, treaties, or bilateral agreements with partner countries, which allows for flexibility and nonbureaucratic changes.