Energy in National Decentralization Policies

A REVIEW FOCUSING ON LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AND SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

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Foreword

The enormous challenges posed by energy poverty are unlikely to be met without harnessing local capacity to meet community needs through local action. In many poorer countries, the central electricity grid is unlikely to be extended to rural or remote areas for decades. Besides electricity, people in these areas also need modern fuels for cooking, heating, mechanical power and thermal processing activities, and improved cooking stoves for use with traditional fuels.

National policies promoting decentralization of development planning and service delivery can be used to expand energy access in rural and remote areas, particularly if local actors (including local governments, civil society organizations and businesses) are able to participate in decentralized planning processes and are empowered to address community energy requirements. Procedures that allow the voices of poor men and women to be heard can enhance government accountability for the delivery of affordable, modern energy services, particularly when local people and institutions are active participants in designing and implementing local solutions to local challenges.

The main objective of this study is to better understand whether and how the energy-decentralization nexus is taken into consideration within national decentralization policies and sector-specific policies for the Least Developed Countries and Sub-Saharan African countries. The report is based solely on a review of information available online, and given the limitations of online research, does not attempt to characterize the status of energy and decentralization linkages in each of the countries. Yet, to the best of our knowledge this is the first time a study on the relationship between energy and decentralization has been produced.

The review provided some evidence that national decentralization policies can facilitate the participation of local actors in development planning, and help scale up energy service delivery for the poor through sub-national utilities, energy cooperatives, and private suppliers. However, for most of the countries reviewed, formal consideration of energy is largely missing in their decentralization policies. Sector-specific policies (relating, for example, to agriculture, forestry and water, as well as energy) are more likely to consider energy within the context of decentralization, but they are disproportionately focused on supply-side issues, and pay only limited attention to energy uses that are particularly important to the poor.

In order to take full advantage of the potential of national policies to expand energy access, governments need to integrate existing energy-related initiatives into national decentralization and sectoral programmes, and also ensure that energy access priorities are incorporated into decentralized local development processes. Enhancing energy service delivery at the local level will require better coordination and accountability mechanisms between national and local institutions, and across sectors, as well as empowerment of local authorities to plan and manage energy, and strengthened capacity of local actors to address energy demand issues.

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Executive Summary

Expanding access to modern energy services for over two billion energy poor to meet their basic human needs is of paramount importance for reducing poverty and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). If current energy trends are allowed to continue, the numbers of people without electricity and modern fuels are expected to continue growing in many poor countries, particularly in Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Strong action supported by political commitment is critical for tackling the challenge of energy poverty.

Decentralization can significantly improve and even shape efforts to expand access to modern energy services, particularly for poor rural women and men. First, in many developing countries, service delivery and infrastructure planning are being decentralized to the sub-national level. In this context, energy is directly relevant. Second, decentralization provides a platform for local actors to engage in planning and implementation in their own localities and to enhance their capacity for expanding energy service delivery in rural areas.

Policies and programmes are needed to encourage the integration of energy into development programmes and processes at the sub-national level. But there is very little information on global trends showing how energy is treated in relation to national decentralization policies and programmes. There is even less information on the challenges of, and opportunities for, linking energy with decentralization processes. This study was commissioned to fill those gaps. Its objective is to better understand whether and how energy is taken into consideration within national decentralization policies in LDCs and in SSA, and to provide a broad overview of the current situation on decentralization-energy linkages. Examples throughout the report and two case studies were also included to complement the analysis. To the best of our knowledge, it is the first time a study of this kind has been produced.

The study relies solely on information found on the Internet; more than 600 documents and sources were reviewed. Given the limitations of online research, however, the study does not attempt to characterize the status of energy and decentralization linkages in each of the countries. Analyzing the root causes of why energy may or may not be considered in the context of decentralization is also beyond the scope of this study. Additional studies are needed to address those topics.

The findings of this report are nevertheless sufficiently rich to point to broad trends, which are summarized below.

Decentralization can facilitate the active involvement of local actors in development processes, which can help to scale up energy service delivery for the poor. Rural energy programmes in Bangladesh, Nepal and Mali all show that decentralization of processes related to energy has led to the engagement of local actors at different stages of energy planning and implementation, which has been an important aspect of efforts to expand the delivery of modern energy services to the rural poor. Equally important is development of the capacity of local institutions to understand and incorporate energy into their planning and implementation processes. Capacity building strategies to support local governments and institutions are critical for the sustainability of local development planning under decentral-

ization. In Nepal, for example, development of local capacity was used to deal with bottlenecks in energy planning and coordination at the local level, with the result that there was significant improvement in energy service delivery.

Linkages between energy and decentralization are rarely discussed in national decentralization policy documents, which suggests that there is a gap in countries' decentralization approaches. This study was able to find only four decentralization documents that explicitly discuss energy in the context of decentralization policies, out of the 64 LDCs and SSA countries reviewed for this report. Those documents related to Madagascar, Nepal, South Africa and Sudan. Many countries are known to have policies and programmes in place (e.g., biomass management or micro-hydro programmes) that are focused on addressing the energy needs of the poor, and in which local actors, especially community groups and NGOs, already play a leading role, but the extent to which these policies and programmes are implemented by or otherwise involve sub-national governments is not always clear. In any event, the fact that very few decentralization policies or strategies reflect existing energy initiatives indicates that opportunities for synergies between decentralization policies and energy initiatives are not being fully exploited.

Sector-specific policies tend to better recognize energy issues in the context of decentralization than national decentralization policies, but their treatment of the energy-decentralization nexus varies greatly across energy issues.

- Sector-specific policies that explicitly mention energy in the context of decentralization are primarily energy policies, but also include policies related to other sectors such as water, agriculture and forestry. These were found for 48 percent of LDCs and 58 percent of SSA countries.

- Where the energy-decentralization nexus is discussed in sector-specific policies only limited attention is paid to energy end uses that are particularly important for the poor, especially heat for cooking and mechanical power. Overall energy supply is featured more prominently than energy end uses. Electricity and traditional biomass and, to a lesser extent, renewable energy and biofuels are mentioned the most. However, almost no information was found on modern fuels, improved cook stoves or mechanical power, all of which are particularly important for the poor, especially women. Limited information was also found on decentralization and fossil fuels, which include liquid and gaseous fuels not used for cooking and heating.

Three themes related to the energy-decentralization nexus – participation, local planning and service delivery – appear as common threads in the policy documents reviewed. Promoting participation of local actors in energy consultations can be viewed as a first step toward decentralization, while planning and service delivery that occurs at the local level implies a greater shift in responsibilities to sub-national actors.

- ***Participation.*** Some policy documents reviewed for this study include consultative and participatory processes, particularly with respect to traditional biomass management and renewable energy. Consultations are a crucial first step in identifying and then delivering the kinds of energy services needed to meet local demand, and in evaluating project outcomes, which are more likely to be sustainable if the intended beneficiaries are consulted directly and if they participate in the project's management and delivery. This approach is reflected in some of the documents that were found and reviewed. For example, in the Central African Republic, consultations with local communities led to energy sector reforms nationally and also created a space for building partnerships with local authorities and organizations involved with productive activities at the local level.

- ***Local planning.*** The examples available suggest that policies, development planning, and capacity building at the national and local level need to reinforce each other. This requires a supportive enabling environment, effective capacity building strategies, and links between national and local policies and planning. In addition, local development planning is more successful in addressing energy needs if it incorporates energy as a key component of a broader process, rather than in isolation. This approach offers opportunities to coordinate local energy interventions with other sectoral interventions that require energy, such as agriculture, water, health and women's empowerment. In the Maldives, for example, energy supply and development functions are integrated into the wider social and economic mandate of Atoll Development Committees, the main sub-national government institutions.

- ***Service delivery.*** A common thread in the documents reviewed for this report is the decentralization of service delivery related to energy. While service delivery may be managed directly through the ministry responsible for energy policy, energy ministries generally have only a small number of staff, and rarely at the local level, so some form of decentralized energy service delivery is required. In some cases, energy ministries work through other ministries, which can offer opportunities to strengthen cross-sectoral synergies and local coordination of different services. National energy utilities or semi-autonomous agencies may also handle service delivery responsibilities, directly or in collaboration with sub-national utilities, local governments, the private sector, or energy cooperatives. Bangladesh offers an interesting example of central government support for electricity service delivery undertaken through a multitude of independent, community-managed energy cooperatives. NGOs and the private sector can also be important vehicles for energy service delivery, with even greater potential for increasing the degree of decentralization.

To take full advantage of decentralization opportunities, efforts are needed to integrate energy issues into local development planning and processes promoted under decentralization schemes. Local institutions can potentially provide an efficient delivery window at the local level and a coordinated approach to identifying, providing and monitoring local energy needs and services. They can also provide accountability frameworks that bring service providers and beneficiaries closer. In Nepal, for example, district level government bodies gained considerable responsibility over mini- and micro-hydropower development following the enactment of national decentralization legislation in the 1990s. What resulted was a clear division of authority and responsibility on energy between the national and local government administrations, and an articulation of their budgetary relationship. The national authority's role was confined to policy coordination, while local planning and implementation responsibility was delegated to the district level.

In particular, development practitioners and governments could consider the following entry points:

- Understanding and addressing the extent to which energy is reflected within decentralization policies and strategies and whether and how energy in the context of decentralization is reflected in sector-specific policies;
- As part of decentralization schemes, ensuring that energy priorities most relevant to meeting development aspirations are part of local development planning and programme decision-making; and
- Identifying opportunities to incorporate energy into ongoing activities. This can focus on strengthening:
  - The participation of local authorities, communities, energy entrepreneurs, NGOs and research institutions, through consultations on, and involvement in, energy initiatives;
  - Energy service delivery at the local level through enhanced coordination and accountability mechanisms between national and local institutions and across sectors, as well as policies and organizational structures that are focused on the expansion of energy access at the local level; and
  - Local planning processes, including: empowering local authorities to plan, manage, and monitor energy; establishing clear lines of authority; and enhancing local knowledge and skills in energy.

1 Context

Energy deeply influences people's lives. It is central to practically all aspects of human welfare, including access to water, agricultural productivity, health care, education, job creation, and environmental sustainability. Yet more than two billion people in developing countries still lack access to safe and reliable energy and pay high prices for poor-quality substitutes. This situation entrenches poverty; constrains delivery of social services; limits opportunities; erodes environmental sustainability at the local, national and global level; and creates negative impacts on education and health. The situation is particularly acute in LDCs and SSA, where energy poverty is the severest and four out of five people in rural areas lack access to modern energy services.

Local actors, including local governments, communities and private service providers, are key to the expansion of energy services for the poor, particularly in rural and remote areas. Their active involvement can allow rural people's energy demand to be more accurately profiled, facilitate participatory planning that allocates resources to the priority energy needs of the poor, and improve accountability frameworks at the local level. Indeed, it is unlikely that expansion of access to modern energy services for the rural poor will be accelerated effectively without more active engagement by local actors.

National decentralization initiatives that shift political, fiscal and administrative responsibilities from central to sub-national governments and, at times, to civil society and the private sector, are highly relevant to the expansion of access to modern energy services, particularly for the rural poor. First, in many developing countries a number of public functions, such as service delivery and infrastructure planning, have been or are being decentralized to the sub-national level under the broad framework of national decentralization policies. Energy, encompassing both infrastructure and service delivery issues, is directly relevant to decentralization processes. Second, decentralization provides an important platform for local actors to engage in planning, financing, implementing, and monitoring energy in their own localities. Their active participation is vital, since they act as both potential delivery agents and beneficiaries of modern energy services in rural and remote areas of developing countries.

Given the above, efforts are needed to promote synergies between decentralization and energy policies and programmes to address energy poverty challenges. Unfortunately, a global overview of how energy is treated in relation to national decentralization policies and programmes is not readily available. In fact, anecdotal evidence even suggests that energy is often a missing component in policies, initiatives or even discussions on decentralization.[1] This study was commissioned to begin to fill that gap in information.

[1] At least one other survey has collected data on financial decentralization, which includes an indicator on expenditures on 'energy and fuels'. This indicator is expressed as a percentage of total expenditures of sub-national governments (usually less than five percent) (World Bank 2008).

2 Purpose of the study

The main objective of this study is to better understand whether and how the energy-decentralization nexus is taken into consideration within national decentralization policies as well as sector-specific policies. The purpose of this study is not to analyze the root causes of why energy may or may not be considered in the context of decentralization. Rather, it is focused on producing a broad overview or snapshot of the decentralization-energy nexus at a given point in time and a given set of countries. Thus, this study does not attempt to make definitive characterizations as to the exact status of energy and decentralization linkages in each of the countries. It is focused on capturing an overview of the situation for a sub-set of developing countries. While this is only a first step towards a further understanding of the relationship between energy and decentralization, to the best of our knowledge this is the first time a study of this kind has been produced.

The study consists of two parts. First, for each country reviewed in the study, it attempts to answer the following questions:

- To what extent do national decentralization policies reflect energy issues?
- To what extent do sectoral policies, particularly energy policies, recognize energy issues (including specific energy categories such as electricity and cooking fuels) in the context of decentralization?
- What are the main characteristics of the energy-decentralization nexus reflected in national decentralization/sectoral policies?

Second, it provides examples throughout the report, as well as case studies from Kenya and Nepal, for a more in-depth understanding of energy and decentralization within different national contexts.

The study focuses on the LDCs and the countries of SSA, where access to modern energy services remains particularly constrained for poor men and women. In these countries, more than 80 percent of people rely on solid fuels for cooking and heating, and more than 70 percent lack access to electricity. Of a total of 64 study countries, 50 are LDCs and 45 are in SSA; of these, 31 countries are both LDCs and SSA countries.[2]

[2] Countries are considered to be LDCs based on United Nations classification systems (UN 2007). The UNDP regional classification was used for SSA countries (UNDP 2007c). The LDC country list used in this report was the one in place as of early 2007. See Annex 1 for a list of the LDCs and SSA countries.

3 Approach

Data collection

A desk review was conducted of current information available on the Internet regarding energy and decentralization in the selected countries. This was done primarily during the period from October 2007 to March 2008 and again from July to August 2008. Approximately 600 sources and documents were found in English and French. (See Annex 2 Country Information Sources Reviewed for a list of all the sources consulted.)

Information was collected from national governments' websites on policies related to decentralization, energy, agriculture and other relevant sectors. Information was also sought from international organizations such as United Nations agencies, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank, as well as a range of other sources, including donor-funded programmes and projects, case studies, technical reports and other studies from donor agencies or research institutions. Media sources were not included except in rare circumstances.

Once the documents were collected, they were reviewed to determine whether energy was mentioned in the context of decentralization. Based on the available information, the authors focused on answering the following questions:

- Was a decentralization policy found online? Was the full decentralization policy document found online?

  A decentralization policy was considered to exist when the policy was found online and where decentralization was featured as an important topic. A decentralization policy can be a constitution, legislative act, framework, regulation, programme, strategy, plan, or policy statement. It may include full decentralization policy documents (e.g., the full text of a local government act or a decentralization plan) or secondary sources (e.g., a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), government website, or project document) that refer to the policy document's contents. Statements that indicated a decentralization proposal was being considered were not included unless a clear plan or policy statement was articulated.

- Does the decentralization policy explicitly mention energy?

  The decentralization policy documents found online were searched and the document text reviewed to determine whether energy was mentioned in the context of decentralization. For instance, country constitutions and local governance acts outlining the powers and functions of sub-national governments were found and searched. In South Africa, for instance, the decentralization policy that was found (the country's constitution) states that local governments have executive authority and rights to administer electricity (Government of South Africa 1996). This was considered to be a decentralization policy that explicitly mentions energy.

- Were sectoral policies found that explicitly mention energy and/or specific energy categories[3] in the context of decentralization?

  In addition to decentralization policies, other policies were also searched to determine whether energy or specific energy categories

[3] See Table 2 for a description of the categories used in this report.

were explicitly mentioned in the context of decentralization. These other policies were primarily energy policies, but efforts were also made to review other sectoral policies, such as agriculture, water, health, education, and small business, where energy plays a role. These sectoral policies (either the full policy document or references in secondary sources) include legislative acts, frameworks, regulations, programmes, strategies, plans, or policy statements.

In answering these questions, decentralization was considered to be a political and technical process involving shifts in a combination of political, fiscal, and administrative responsibilities from central to sub-national governments and, at times, to civil society and the private sector (UNDP et al. 2009). Decentralization also broadly includes issues that touch upon local governance issues (UNDP et al. 2009). Evans and Manning (2004) provide a useful description of the different degrees of decentralization, which was used in answering the questions above. Its main features are outlined below and in Table 1:

- ***Deconcentration*** occurs when the central government assigns responsi-bilities for certain services to its regional branch offices. There is no transfer of authority to lower levels of government; rather decision-making is shifted to national government staff located in the regions.
- ***Delegation*** occurs when the central government transfers responsibility for decision-making and administration of certain public functions to local governments or semi-autonomous organizations that are not wholly controlled by the central government, but are ultimately accountable to it. Delegation is often characterized as a principle-agent relationship, where the agent is induced to act in accordance with the wishes of the central government.
- ***Devolution*** occurs when the central government transfers authority for decision-making, finance and management to quasi-autonomous units of local government. The latter are accountable to their constituencies for their performance.

In addition, for the purposes of this report, decentralization to a community-based organization was considered to be decentralization only when a government actively encouraged the creation of organizations such as community-managed cooperatives, and transferred management activities to them, such as community-managed forestry cooperatives managing fuelwood. The unbundling or privatization of utilities was not considered to be decentralization for the purposes of this report. Furthermore, consultative or participatory processes, while involving local communities, do not necessarily provide evidence of the transfer of any particular functions to an organization, and were therefore excluded when making the determination that energy was considered in the context of decentralization. For practical purposes, activities by NGOs or the private sector were also generally excluded, except in rare circumstances where the linkages with decentralization processes were presented explicitly.

Table 1: Political, Fiscal, and Administrative Features of Decentralization

	Political features	Fiscal features	Administrative features
Deconcentration (minimal)	• No locally elected governmental authority. • Local leadership is vested in local officials, such as a governor or mayor, who are appointed by and accountable to the central government.	• Local government is a service delivery arm of the central government, and has little or no discretion over how or where service is provided. • Funding is provided by central government through individual ministry budgets. • There are no independent revenue sources.	• Staff working at the local level are employees of the central government, and fully accountable to the centre, usually through their respective ministries.
Delegation (intermediate)	• Government at the local level is led by locally elected politicians, but they are accountable, or partially accountable, to the central government.	• Spending priorities are set centrally, as well as programme norms and standards; local government has some management authority over allocation of resources to meet local circumstances. • Funding is provided by the central government through transfers, usually a combination of block and conditional grants. • There are no independent revenue sources.	• Staff could be employees of the central or local government, but pay and conditions of employment are typically set by the centre. • Local government has some authority over hiring and location of staff, but is less likely to have authority over firing.
Devolution (substaintial)	• Government at the local level is led by locally elected politicians who are fully accountable to their electorate.	• Subject to meeting nationally-set minimum standards, local government can set spending priorities and determine how to best meet functional obligations. • Funding can come from local revenues, revenue sharing arrangements and transfers (possibly with broad conditions) from central government.	• Staff are employees of local government. • Local government has full discretion over salary levels, staffing numbers and allocation, and authority to hire and fire. • (Standards and procedures for hiring and managing staff, however, may still be established within an overarching civil service framework covering local governments generally).

Source: Evans and Manning (2004, p.2-3)

Limitation of the study

The study is a desk review based only on information found on the Internet. Efforts were made to obtain relevant and up-to-date information online, resulting in the review of more than 600 documents and sources. However, the information found was uneven in coverage, relevance and depth, given that the quality and quantity of the online information tends to vary widely across countries and issues. Some policies found and reviewed may not have been implemented, while there may be others that exist and have been implemented but are not readily accessible through online sources.

Results must therefore be interpreted with the following points in mind:

- Detailed policy information for the developing countries included in this study is not always available online. Some countries do not maintain a government website, while only a few countries such as Nepal provide extensive documentation of their policies.[4]
- Online sources constantly change, with documents and information being added, removed or updated. For some countries, the only documentation found was outdated or did not reflect more recent developments.
- Where information is available, statements are often limited to a single sentence or paragraph. For instance, the 2005 Energy Policy for the Maldives states that "the major issues regarding energy efficiency and conservation programs are: [...] encouraging technical assistance and engineering services at the national and local level" (Republic of Maldives 2005).
- Information was harder to find for some energy categories than others. It was particularly difficult to obtain information on mechanical power. Mechanical power is not generally defined as an energy issue and can fall under a variety of areas (e.g., water pumping, agricultural production, or small business).
- Countries in crisis or conflict, or those that recently experienced conflict, also tend to have limited information available on decentralization or energy.

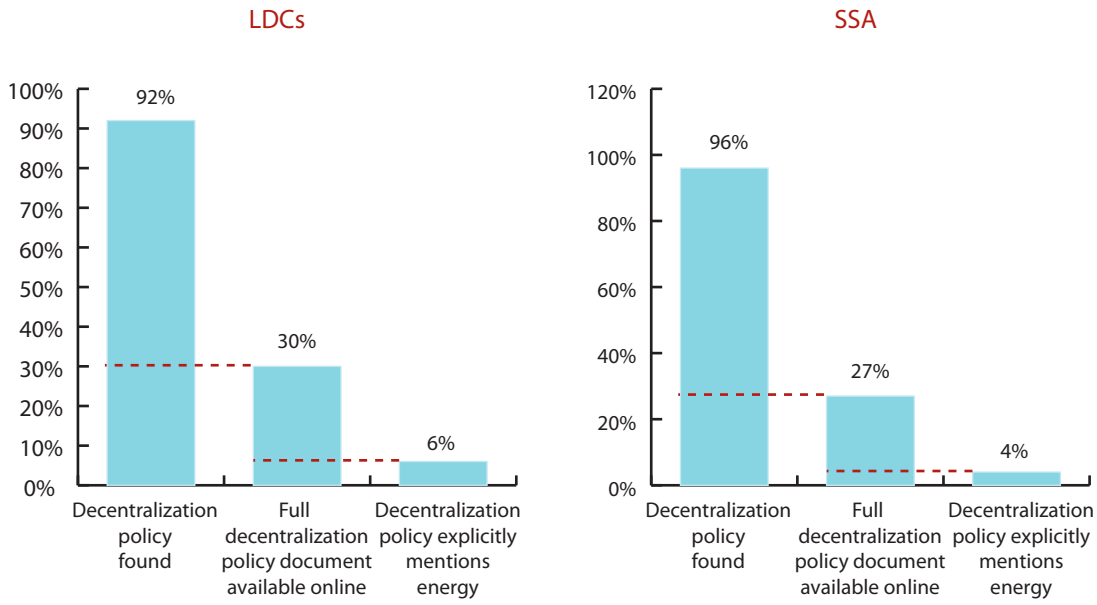
For a greater, in-depth understanding of energy and decentralization, additional analyses are needed based on country surveys, interviews and case studies. These could explore in more detail the degree of a country's decentralization (delegation, deconcentration, or devolution) and features of decentralization (political, fiscal, and administrative) in relation to energy in general or in specific energy categories.

[4] Nepal makes a variety of documents available online, which include discussions of energy decentralization in the local self-government act and associated regulations, the country's PRSP, the 2006 rural energy policy, the agricultural plan, and various donor-sponsored projects.

4 How do national decentralization policies reflect energy?

Virtually all countries have some form of decentralization in place, mainly through sub-national governments that exercise jurisdiction over a particular region, district or locality. Decentralization policies were found for most countries surveyed, even where there was limited information available online on other policies. As shown in Figure 1, of the countries examined, information about a decentralization policy was found online for 46 out of 50 LDCs (92 percent) and 43 out of 45 countries for Sub-Saharan Africa (96 percent). The exceptions were the Central African Republic, Liberia, the Maldives and Myanmar. Even though a decentralization policy was not found for these countries, a policy may nevertheless exist, but just not be accessible online.

Figure 1: Share of Countries whose Decentralization Policy Explicitly Mentions Energy



Note: Of 50 LDCs and 45 SSA countries, 31 countries are both LDCs and SSA.

Among the decentralization policies available, the degree of decentralization varies significantly and can be considered along a sliding scale reflecting progress toward a greater degree of decentralization. Moreover, countries can be decentralized in different manners, including politically, fiscally or administratively. For instance, in the Central African Republic local authorities are appointed directly by the central government, which represents a mild form of decentralization.[5] In Ghana, a number of responsibilities have been decentralized to the districts, but the central government still maintains a great degree of control through directives and decrees. In Nigeria, each state has its own elected government with a wide range of fiscal and programming authorities (Work 2002).

Only a small proportion of the decentralization policies found explicitly mention energy. Figure 1 shows that only three LDCs (6 percent) and two SSA countries (4 percent) explicitly mention energy in their decentralization policies. (The total is only four because one country is both an LDC and SSA country.)

It is important to keep in mind that in many cases the full policy document outlining a country's decentralization policy was not available. A complete decentralization policy document was found for only 15 LDCs (30 percent) and 12 SSA countries (27 percent). Even taking into consideration this limited number of countries, however, energy still remains poorly reflected in the decentralization policies found and reviewed. Those that mention energy represent 20 percent of LDCs and 17 percent of SSA countries for which full decentralization policy documents were found.

The four countries that explicitly mention energy in decentralization policies are Madagascar, Nepal, South Africa, and Sudan. Since decentralization is a process, countries fall along different points in their paths toward increased decentralization. In Madagascar, there is only limited decentralization with respect to energy, but implementation of a 2006 national decentralization strategy is expected to lead to all aspects of electricity being managed at the local level by 2012–2015 (Repoblikan'i Madagasikara undated). The decentralization plan features financial and administrative dimensions, and includes targets for financing and staffing of rural electricity projects at the local level (e.g., a percentage of central energy financing and staff is to be decentralized to the local level).

In contrast, districts in Nepal already have considerable responsibility over mini- and micro-hydropower development following the enactment of national decentralization legislation in the 1990s (as described in Box 1). This opened the door for the government of Nepal, with the support of donors, to introduce an energy agenda into discussions about local governance. It required a clear division of authority and responsibility

[5] However, "the Government is preparing a bill on the decentralisation of its implementing decrees in order to effectively transfer power and resources to local governments" (AfDB 2007).

between national and local administrations, and an articulation of their budgetary relationship. The national authority's role was confined to policy coordination, while local planning and implementation responsibility was delegated to the district level (see the detailed case study for Nepal in the section on case studies).

Box 1: Nepal's Framework to Decentralize Energy Planning

The 1999 Local Self-Governance Act, the main legal document guiding decentralization in the country, states that the district-level committees have the responsibility to "formulate, implement, operate, distribute and maintain and repair projects on mini and micro hydropower" (Government of Nepal 1999). Before this legislation, and the UNDP–supported Rural Energy Development Programme that began in 1996, rural energy initiatives in Nepal were based on a centralized, top-down approach. This caused coordination problems on the ground that impeded the delivery process. By moving towards a decentralized institutional approach, the authority to plan local energy programmes has shifted from central institutions such as the National Electricity Authority (NEA) to the districts. This decentralized approach to rural energy service delivery has led to a strong sense of ownership among the communities, nurtured local authorities' leadership and successfully accelerated the delivery of energy services to rural areas.

Sources: Government of Nepal (1999); UNDP (2004).

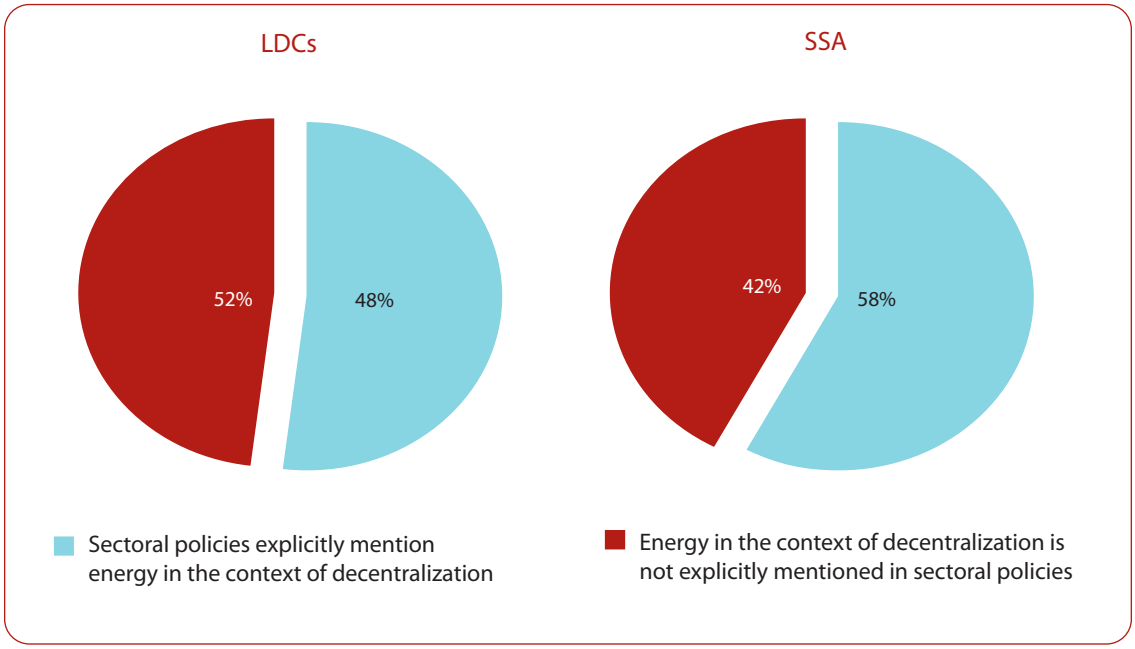
For South Africa and Sudan, the full policy documents that were found provide only cursory information on energy in the context of decentralization. In South Africa, the country's constitution gives local governments executive authority and rights to 'administer' electricity (Government of South Africa 1996). In Sudan, the national and local authorities have 'concurrent' powers in electricity generation (Sudan Tribune 2005).

5 How do sectoral policies recognize energy in the context of decentralization?

Overview

Energy may not be well reflected in the decentralization policies found, but sector-specific policies often address energy in the context of decentralization. As noted previously, these policies include energy policies as well as other sectoral policies such as those relating to water, forestry and the environment. In Nepal, hydropower development, including mini- and micro-hydropower, falls under the purview of the Ministry of Water Resources, while in Lesotho traditional biomass falls under the purview of the Department of Forestry and Land Reclamation. As shown in Figure 2, energy in the context of decentralization is explicitly mentioned in sectoral policies for 24 LDCs (48 percent) and 26 Sub-Saharan African countries (58 percent).

Figure 2: Share of Countries with Sectoral Policies that Explicitly Mention Energy in the Context of Decentralization



Note: Of 50 LDCs and 45 Sub-Saharan African countries, 31 countries are both LDCs and Sub-Saharan African countries.

The various sectoral policies found were also reviewed to determine whether specific energy categories are considered within the context of decentralization. As shown in Table 2, the categories used in this report consist of those concerned with the supply of energy, including electricity and traditional biomass supply, and those concerned with the services provided by energy end uses.[6] Energy end uses can include a wide range of services (e.g., cooking, heating, lighting, refrigeration and mechanical power for agro-processing) but are confined to cooking and heating, and mechanical power, in this report.

Table 2: Energy Categories[7]

Energy Category	Description
Energy Supply (production, generation, transmission, distribution)	
Electricity	• Electrical power, primarily centralized electricity systems
Fossil Fuels	• Liquid and gaseous fuels excluding those used for cooking and heating but including gasoline, diesel and aviation fuel • Solid, non-traditional fuels, including coal, coal dust and lignite
Renewable energy and biofuels	• Solar, including solar heating and photovoltaic • Wind power • Geothermal energy • Large and small hydropower • Biofuels, including modernized biomass and biogas • Decentralized renewable energy systems
Traditional biomass	• Charcoal, fuelwood, wood chips, agricultural residues and dung
Energy Services (end uses)	
Cooking and heating	• Modern liquid and gaseous fuels, including kerosene, LPG and ethanol • Improved cooking stoves, ventilation systems and heating devices
Mechanical power	• Fuels and end use equipment to power mechanical devices used for productive purposes such as water pumping, grinding, milling, hulling, rice de-husking and sawing

[6] The categories used in this report are based on the way energy categories are generally discussed in the documents reviewed. For instance, standard descriptions of renewable energy generally do not include large hydropower, but in many of the documents reviewed small and large hydropower were not distinguished. Providing such a distinction for the individual sources was beyond the scope of this report. Additionally, in this study biomass is listed separately from other forms of renewable energy. Traditional biomass is listed separately because it is generally considered in a different category from other types of renewable energy.

[7] Transportation policies were not sought out or reviewed, although fuels used in transportation (gasoline and diesel) were included in part of the broader discussion on fossil fuels.

Of these, three categories – traditional biomass, cooking and heating, and mechanical power – are particularly important for poverty reduction, as well as gender equity. The majority of people in LDCs and SSA rely on traditional biomass for their cooking and heating needs; they tend to lack access to more efficient, cleaner fuels such as kerosene or liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), energy efficient cooking stoves, or mechanical equipment for water pumping and agro-processing. This situation disproportionately affects women and children, particularly in rural and remote areas, who are generally responsible for time consuming and labour intensive fuelwood and water collection, and manual agro-processing, and who suffer the most from indoor air pollution caused by cooking fires.

In policy documents where the energy-decentralization nexus is addressed, energy supply is featured more prominently than energy end uses. Energy decentralization is a consideration in the sector-specific policies reviewed but, as shown in Table 3, decentralization tends to be addressed mostly in policies on electricity and traditional biomass and, to a lesser extent, renewable energy and biofuels. Almost no information was found on decentralization and modern fuels, improved stoves for cooking, or mechanical power, which are particularly important for the poor, and are gender sensitive. Limited information was also found on fossil fuels, which include liquid and gaseous fuels not used for cooking and heating.

Table 3: Number and Share of Countries with Sector Policies that Explicitly Mention Energy Categories in the Context of Decentralization

Countries	Energy supply				Energy services	
	Traditional biomass	Electricity	Renewables and biofuels	Fossil fuels	Mechanical power	Cooking and heating
Least Developed Countries						
No. of countries	16	12	9	0	1	1
% of countries	32%	24%	18%	0%	2%	2%
Sub-Saharan Africa						
No. of countries	17	11	5	2	1	0
% of countries	38%	24%	11%	4%	2%	0%

Note: Of 50 LDCs and 45 Sub-Saharan African countries, 31 countries are both LDCs and Sub-Saharan African countries.

Traditional biomass

Traditional biomass in the context of decentralization was explicitly mentioned in sectoral policies for 16 LDCs (32 percent) and 17 SSA countries (38 percent), more than any other energy category, including electricity.

Of the information found and reviewed, decentralization efforts often focused on social or community forestry schemes under the purview of forestry initiatives. These schemes involve enhancing the role of communities in managing forestry resources, as well as the role of sub-national governments (see Box 2).[8]

Box 2: Decentralization of Traditional Biomass Management in Guinea

Currently, at the district level, forestry programmes are the responsibility of District Forestry Officers through their forestry personnel. Other cooperating institutions are the relevant area-based NGOs, schools, other government ministries and departments, and the villagers or community-based organizations. In 2007, the Government of Guinea planned to implement a master forest development plan based on a more community-based, participatory, decentralized approach. The plan is to provide greater economic and financial incentives for rural communities (villages) in the use, distribution and management of forest resources, including regulating and controlling wood charcoal exports and promoting the use of alternative energy sources.

Source: IMF (2008)

The link between community/social forestry management and fuelwood management is sometimes weak in the documents available. In many instances, fuelwood management is not mentioned in statements by governments about forestry resource management at the local level. Fuelwood management figures in only 10 out of the 22 LDCs and SSA countries for which forestry resources are explicitly mentioned in the context of decentralization. Deforestation, environmental degradation, land degradation, timber and logging, and protected areas are just as often cited in the rationales for community involvement in forestry resource management.

[8] These results are consistent with the community co-management approach to natural resources that has been actively promoted since the late 1980s, and which has sought to secure local community involvement (World Bank 1998).

Electricity

Electricity was explicitly mentioned in the context of decentralization for 12 LDCs (24 percent) and 11 SSA countries (24 percent) in the reviewed documents. Information on electricity was available from documents such as national development strategies and PRSPs, where a full chapter is often devoted to it. The primary focus tended to be on supply-side issues, such as electricity generation, grid extension, policies related to concessions or privatization, and the creation of electricity regulatory bodies.

Where decentralization is raised as an issue, local government involvement in electricity management is a common topic raised in the context of decentralization (see Box 3). In South Africa, for example, the government's 2003 policy on the electricity distribution industry requires distribution to be separated from the national electricity utility and merged with the electricity departments of municipalities to form a number of financially viable regional electricity distributors (Government of South Africa 2003).

Box 3: Local Governments, Electricity Generation and Distribution in Mozambique, Burkina Faso and Ghana

A number of countries have given rights and authority over electricity generation and distribution to sub-national governments, with differing degrees of implementation. In Mozambique, municipalities have the right to operate power production and distribution systems within their own areas and to award concessions for electricity services to private operators. However, local governments have been unable to maintain inherited urban infrastructure and service levels, let alone extend them, given a lack of financial and human resources. Municipalities in Burkina Faso have also been assigned an extensive set of functions, including electricity distribution. However, in practice, these functions have been poorly implemented due to lack of financial resources and human capacity. Electricity is in reality still managed by the national public utility. In Ghana, funding for electricity distribution is provided by the government and is supplemented by funding from district assemblies, and a fee for rural electrification levied on the utility bills of urban dwellers.

Source: DANIDA (2001); Obwone et al. (2000); World Bank (1999, 2007).

Community involvement was highlighted only in a few cases in the references to electricity. In Lesotho, for instance, the government intends to ensure the involvement of local communities in the design, planning and implementation of its electrification programme (Lesotho Electricity Authority 2003). In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the government is contemplating the creation of energy cooperatives in rural and semi-urban areas aimed at improving rural electrification (IMF 2007).

Renewables and biofuels

Renewable energy, including biofuels, was explicitly mentioned in the context of decentralization for nine LDCs (18 percent) and five SSA countries (11 percent). The information available often called for a close partnership with local governments, local communities, or both. For instance, in Lao PDR off-grid renewable electrification projects have been implemented by the Ministry of Industry and Handicrafts, Electricité du Laos, and provincial authorities in cooperation with the private sector (IMF 2004). The off-grid electrification policy includes the "promotion of community ownership in the local areas for renewable energy" (Malaykham 2006).

Biogas digesters for households and biomass gasification are growing technologies in some developing countries (REN21 2008). However, relevant information was found only for Nepal, where the use of biogas has expanded thanks to a decentralized approach to energy.

Fossil fuels

Information was found on fossil fuels in the context of decentralization for only two countries. This category includes liquid and gaseous fuels not used for cooking and heating, such as gasoline and diesel, which are important for engines used for mechanical power.[9] In the documents reviewed, the costs of modern fuels are often discussed within national development frameworks, particularly as they relate to increases in the price of fossil fuels and their impact on the economy, but rarely in the context of decentralization or effects on the poor.

The two countries for which information on fossil fuels was found are Kenya and South Africa. In Kenya, regulatory functions in the petroleum sector are shared among various players, including the Ministry of the Environment, provincial administrations, local authorities, and the Kenya Bureau of Standards. In South Africa, decentralization of diesel distribution systems has been proposed as a solution to rural supply bottlenecks (see Box 4).

Box 4: South Africa: Decentralizing the Distribution of Diesel Used for Agricultural Production

The 1998 energy policy for South Africa states that strategies will be established to increase access to diesel supplies. These strategies include creating or expanding rural cooperatives or establishing communal bulk storage facilities owned and managed by local communities. This approach is proposed because "many smallholder farmers experience difficulties in accessing diesel supplies. This is caused by limitations on the number of supply points, due to distribution cost constraints, resulting in farmers having to travel long distances to buy fuel. Government will facilitate the removal of market barriers so as to provide access to bulk diesel supplies for small-scale farmers."

Source: Government of South Africa (1998)

[9] Fossil fuels used for cooking and heating, such as LPG and kerosene, are included under the category 'cooking and heating.'

Mechanical power

References to mechanical power in the context of decentralization were found for only one country. Mali is the only country for which mechanical power is linked to decentralization in the reviewed documents (see Box 5). The multifunctional platform programme, which provides milling, grinding, rice de-husking and other services to rural communities using motorized equipment, has developed a local, regional and national management structure for delivery of services to local communities.

Given the role of mechanical power in improving productivity, it would be expected to be a more prominent part of local service delivery programmes such as those for improving agriculture, water and irrigation, or small business, and therefore reflected in decentralization or sectoral policies.

Box 5: Decentralized Delivery of Mechanical Power to Rural Mali

In 1999, the Government of Mali appointed a national director within the Ministry of Industry and Commerce to address energy poverty and act as a focal point within government for coordinating efforts to deliver motive power to rural areas. There is a clear line of communication from the national to the regional to the village level. Four regional advisory units assess potential sites and provide technical and managerial training to the end users in villages, who manage and operate their own local delivery systems using diesel engines. The regional units work with community groups to perform extensive monitoring and evaluation of the installed energy systems. The national ministry that is the focal point has changed over time, but the basic structure remains the same. The programme has been effective in improving people's lives, based on an assessment of development impacts. It has also been able to provide mechanical power to about 10 percent of Mali's rural population.

Source: UNDP website http://www.undp.org (accessed August 2008).

[10] This was the case when the review was conducted (i.e., early 2008). As of now, there are more countries reported to be linking mechanical power to decentralization processes, particularly in West Africa.

Cooking and heating

Cooking and heating was explicitly mentioned in the context of decentralization for only one country. In Lao PDR, more efficient appliances were noted in the context of decentralization and natural resource management, but even then, improved cooking stoves were not specifically mentioned and could only be inferred (IMF 2004).

Policies and programmes exist in countries with respect to fuels and devices for cooking and heating, representing opportunities for linking national policies and programmes with local level consultation and planning. However, in the documents reviewed, no evidence was found that these linkages are being made. Policies or programmes focusing on disseminating improved cooking stoves could potentially be implemented or coordinated through local institutions, which are better able to reach rural and remote communities.[11]

Many countries also may have policies in place that provide kerosene or LPG subsidies to decrease the relatively high costs of these fuels, a major barrier to their use, compared to traditional biomass. However, in the policies reviewed for this study, these efforts were not linked to decentralization.[12]

[11] At least one third of African countries, for instance, have programmes for improved biomass cooking stoves, and many more have pledged to help develop the technology, spread information, foster projects, and generally promote access to improved cooking stoves for rural populations currently using traditional biomass (REN21 2008).

[12] Despite subsidies and other policies in place for improving access to fuels such as LPG and kerosene, these fuels may still be unaffordable for rural or remote households and the policies may end up benefiting those living in urban areas or certain geographical areas. In addition, national companies, both private and public, that are responsible for distributing liquid fuels may have storage facilities in rural areas, but the lack of adequate transport systems and the cost of transportation may be a constraint in ensuring reliable distribution of modern fuels to these areas (UNDP 2007d).

6 Main characteristics of the energy-decentralization nexus in the policies reviewed

Degrees and features of decentralization

The policies found and reviewed show that countries vary widely in the degree to which energy is considered in the context of decentralization, and in the features addressed. These features include different elements of deconcentration, delegation and devolution for the different political, fiscal and administrative responsibilities at the local level. For instance, in Kenya the national government has established and staffed regional energy centres directly, a weak form of decentralization, while in Nepal local districts have the authority to formulate, implement, operate, distribute and maintain rural mini- and micro-hydropower systems as well as other energy systems. The local districts also have fiscal responsibilities related to these systems.

Characteristics of the energy-decentralization nexus

A review of the policy documents found that the topic of energy and decentralization tends to be discussed in connection with three main themes: participation, local planning and service delivery. Promoting participation of local actors in consultations can be viewed as a first step toward decentralization, while planning and service delivery that occurs at the local level implies a greater shift in responsibilities to sub-national levels. Countries vary widely in their degree of decentralization (i.e., deconcentration, delegation or devolution), any of which may include elements of the three common themes found.

Participation

Some policy documents reviewed for this study include elements of consultative and participatory processes, particularly with respect to traditional biomass management and renewable energy. Consultations are crucial, first to identify and then to deliver the kinds of energy services needed to meet local demand, and later to evaluate project outcomes. Projects are more likely to be sustainable if the intended beneficiaries are consulted directly and if they participate in the project's management and delivery. This approach is reflected in some of the documents found and reviewed. For example, in the Central African Republic, consultations with local communities led to energy sector reforms nationally and also created a space for building partnerships with local authorities and organizations involved with productive activities at the local level (see Box 6).

Box 6: Central African Republic: Grassroots Consultations Lead to Energy Sector Reform and Greater Local-Centre Linkages

In the Central African Republic, local consultations catalyzed central agencies into leading a much-needed national energy policy reform process through the development of a new national energy strategy framework aimed at improving access to rural energy services. The consultations were critical to the success of the intervention. They took place in 10 remote rural communities representing the different geographic environmental areas of the country. The consultations created a space for direct dialogue among rural people, high-level staff from the energy ministry, and representatives of the private sector. The number of consultations was also important, since the ministry staff only progressively became convinced of the need for major change with each new consultation in a new community. Partnerships with local structures linked to the main regional productive activity, and capacity development for local authorities, have resulted in the mobilization of local resources and access to existing experiences and networks.

Source: UNDP (2006).

Greater participation is ultimately expected to lead to improvements in energy management and service delivery. This approach is reflected in some of the documents found and reviewed. For instance, in April 2003, Senegal adopted an energy sector development policy to promote the sustainable management of wood resources by empowering local communities to take greater responsibility in fuelwood management (AfDB 2005).

Local Planning

Local energy planning requires coordination with, and support from, national governments. The role of sub-national institutions in local energy planning is not fully elaborated in the documents found online and reviewed. However, the available examples suggest that policies, development planning and capacity building at the national and local level need to reinforce each other and be flexible over time, given periodic shifts in perspective. For instance, in Cambodia, a report found that a national level coordinating agency is needed to focus on issues related to energy and poverty, with links to local and provincial energy coordination, and supportive policy and capacity strategies (UNDP 2007b).[13] The University of Twente notes that in Southern Africa a disconnect often exists between central energy policy, planning and implementation and local development planning. This will be addressed as part of the university's e-mind set initiative (University of Twente website).

[13] UNDP's Regional Centre in Bangkok has documented institutional and policy barriers, including at the local level, to rural energy development for ten Asian countries and regions. See http://regionalcentrebangkok.undp.or.th.

Local development planning that incorporates energy as a key development component can address local energy needs better as part of the broader local development process, rather than in isolation. Local planning offers opportunities to coordinate local energy interventions with other sectoral interventions that require energy, such as agriculture, water, health and women's empowerment. In the Maldives, for instance, energy supply and development functions are integrated into the wider social and economic mandate of Atoll Development Committees, the main sub-national government institutions (UNDP 2007e). In Mozambique, establishing cross-sectoral links at the local level was expected to support policies that were more demand-oriented (see Box 7).

Box 7: Mozambique: Local-National Coordination Mechanisms Support Energy Policy Reforms

Provincial forestry authorities in Mozambique, unlike their provincial energy counterparts, have staff at the district level with direct contact with communities. Their involvement was considered critical in providing information and developing a demand-oriented fuelwood policy previously lacking in the management of forestry resources. Therefore, a project was developed on energy policy reforms that provided for the creation of coordinating and monitoring mechanisms:

- At the national level, between national and provincial energy and forestry authorities; and
- At the provincial level, between energy and forestry authorities and those dealing with education, health, environment, women and social welfare, and enterprise development.

Source: UNDP (2006).

An enabling environment is needed to support decentralization efforts, otherwise local energy planning may not flourish, or may even be thwarted. In Nepal, for instance, decentralization efforts in energy were supported by a decentralization policy framework that outlined local authority in planning, implementing and monitoring mini- and micro-hydropower generation, and without which local energy planning would not be possible (see Box 1). Nepal's Biogas Support Programme has been able to expand access to biogas thanks to a subsidy scheme that varies in size according to the remoteness of the region and size of the biogas plant. The subsidy has been effective at growing the biogas industry[14] and leveraging high-quality installations and competition among biogas companies, resulting in a drop in biogas prices.[15]

Capacity building strategies underpin the sustainability of local development planning under decentralization modalities. In Nepal, for instance, developing local capacity was the cornerstone of the approach used to deal with bottlenecks in energy planning and coordination at the local level, resulting in significant improvements in service delivery (see Box 8). These strategies need to allow local governments to be actively involved, with the possible collaboration of civil society and the private sector, in developing energy resources that improve people's lives and empower them through enhanced productive uses.

[14] The number of biogas companies has grown from none to 50. In order to receive subsidies, biogas companies must register and prequalify with the Alternative Energy Promotion Centre, the main policy and coordinating body in Nepal for mini and micro hydropower. Prequalification is based on companies meeting certain technical standards. Once a company is part of the programme, periodic inspections are undertaken to ensure that the standards are met (Global Energy Network Institute, http://www.geni.org/globalenergy/index2.shtml, accessed April 2009).

[15] About 150,000 households in Nepal receive energy for lighting and cooking from biogas produced in household-scale plants (REN21 2008).

Box 8: Nepal: Local Capacity to Plan, Implement, and Monitor Mini- and Micro-Hydropower Expansion

In Nepal, long-term efforts to develop the capacity of district and village institutions in energy have allowed for the expansion of micro-hydro in remote, hilly locations.

Planning and coordination bottlenecks. Prior to the UNDP-sponsored Rural Energy Development Programme (REDP), which started in 1996, there were many institutionally supported rural energy initiatives. The institutional delivery model was, however, highly centralized with institutions, such as the Agricultural Development Bank of Nepal and donor agencies, planning and coordinating directly with NGOs and local communities and implementing projects at the community level through their field offices. Within this model, coordination was lacking among NGOs executing the initiatives, and local authorities did not have oversight and planning responsibilities. As a result, many initiatives were implemented in a scattered, unfocused and unsustainable manner. These challenges hindered the sustainable delivery of energy services to rural areas. In order to overcome the challenges of delivering energy services to rural areas, there was a need to decentralize the delivery and planning process. Through the REDP intervention, the national government also set up an institutional system within local authorities at the district and village level to better coordinate rural energy service delivery.

Institution building. At the central government level, the focus is on the coordination of policy formulation. The government shifted the authority to plan local energy programmes from central institutions such as the National Electricity Authority (NEA) to district committees. Furthermore, the responsibility to manage and deliver energy services has been decentralized to communities under the oversight of local authorities, Village Development Committees, and District Development Committees. A number of organizations have been formed at all levels – village, district, and central – to develop local capacity to plan, manage and monitor energy services for rural households. The District Development Committees are the key coordinating institutions for all planning activities in the district and provide technical and capacity assistance to the local governments. This decentralized approach to rural energy service delivery has led to a strong sense of ownership among the communities, nurtured local authorities' leadership, and successfully accelerated the delivery of energy services to rural areas.

Financial mechanisms. To help establish and run rural energy systems that are financially sustainable, the government set up self-governing energy funds at the district and village level. Resources from central-level agencies, such as the Alternative Energy Promotion Centre's Rural Energy Fund, are deposited in district energy funds that allocate these resources to village-level energy funds. Local authorities from the districts are the decision-makers and determine whether or not to invest in rural energy systems in particular villages. At the village level, the community energy fund is established and owned by rural households. The village energy fund is initially used for capital investment in construction and implementation of the rural energy system. The operational revenue from end users is then deposited back into the community energy fund. When the system generates profits, dividends are shared among stakeholders. This approach to financing has increased the sense of village-level institutional ownership and helped to create an opportunity to generate funds locally. Mobilization of local resources has contributed to making rural energy systems financially sustainable.

Source: UNDP (2007a); EC (2007).

Service Delivery

A common thread in the documents found and reviewed for this report was the decentralization of service delivery related to energy. Service delivery includes the direct delivery of energy services, such as electricity and mechanical power, as well as supportive services, such as technical support for energy efficiency or renewable technologies, and financial services that support energy access expansion. While service delivery may be managed directly through the ministry responsible for energy policy, energy ministries generally have only a small number of staff, especially at the local level, so some form of decentralization is necessary. In Kenya, the government has been able to establish and staff 10 regional energy centres servicing more than 100 districts. (See the case study on Kenya for a detailed history of Kenya's decentralization with respect to energy.)

Energy ministries often work through other ministries, offering opportunities to strengthen cross-sectoral synergies and local coordination of different services provided by national governments. In Bangladesh, the Local Government Engineering Department under the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives was created mainly to provide technical support to local government institutions. It plays an important role in disseminating appropriate technology for biogas generation all over the country, as it has field offices at the sub-district level. It is also involved in solar photovoltaic programmes (ESCAP 2001).

Designated institutions, including semi-autonomous agencies and energy utilities, under the responsibility of the ministry of energy, or even other ministries, may be responsible for coordinating service delivery or directly delivering services themselves. In the Central African Republic, there is a rural electrification agency and an agency responsible for regulating the electricity sector. Designated institutions may also share the responsibility of service delivery with sub-national utilities, local governments, the private sector or energy cooperatives. Bangladesh offers an interesting example of central government support for electricity service delivery undertaken through a multitude of energy cooperatives that are independent and community managed (see Box 9).

Box 9: Bangladesh's Rural Electrification Board: Energy Cooperatives Expand Access to Electricity

Before the rural electrification programme under Bangladesh's Rural Electrification Board (REB) began in 1977, Bangladesh's electrification programme was carried out by the Bangladesh Power Development Board and was mainly limited to urban centres. The REB is the only government institution that has been able to expand electricity access to rural areas. It is regarded by many as one of the most successful rural electrification programmes within developing countries. Bangladesh now has 70 rural electricity societies known as Palli Bidyut Samities (PBSs). About 30 million people in rural areas now have electricity through the 5.2 million metres installed under this programme. These connections bring electricity to rural farms and supply electricity to more than 114,000 irrigation pumping stations.

Cooperative model. The PBSs are independent, privately owned cooperatives that develop and distribute electricity. In a typical PBS, customers are members of the cooperative, which draws up the electrification master plan for the area it covers. The member consumers participate in decision-making through elected representatives to the PBS governing body. Retail tariffs are set by each cooperative and approved by the REB. Cross-subsidies are permitted, but average tariffs should at least cover costs for operation, maintenance, depreciation, and financing.

Coordination and training. The REB assists communities in establishing PBSs through initial organizational activities, training of manpower, operational and management activities, procurement of funds, liaising with the energy utilities and other relevant agencies, and conducting elections.

Financial support. The PBSs receive subsidized financing through low-interest loans with long repayment periods. During the start-up period (up to six years), cooperatives with losses receive direct subsidies, and a common revolving fund allows them to benefit from cross-subsidies. Cooperatives also receive subsidies for investments in distribution infrastructures, and buy power from the national grid at a subsidized rate, negotiated by the REB.

Management control. The PBSs operate in a financially sustainable manner under the direct control of the REB. There is also a strict system of 'checks and balances' in the area of procurement. The REB instils strict discipline into the process through comprehensive training in the areas of management, rules and regulations. A Performance Target Agreement is signed every year to improve on the previous year, based on criteria such as increasing revenue, decreasing system losses and increasing the number of connections.

Source: REB website, http://www.reb.gov.bd; USAID (2002).

The private sector and NGOs can also become important vehicles for energy service delivery, with even greater potential for increasing the degree of decentralization. Although the scope of this study excluded the private sector and NGOs for practical reasons, these are key players in furthering energy service delivery because they can harness markets or provide alternative operational models. For instance, in Pakistan, a Global Environment Facility (GEF) project was able to show how building the capacity of community-based organizations led to a successful model for disseminating new energy-efficient cooking stoves and improving the lives of those who use them (see Box 10).

Box 10: Developing the Capacity of Community Organizations to Distribute Improved Cooking Stoves in Pakistan

A GEF project in 2005-2006 built on the award-winning Building and Construction Improvement Programme in northern Pakistan. The key objectives were to promote and distribute energy-efficient products, mainly improved cooking stoves, in districts in northern Pakistan, and to build the capacity of six local community-based organizations to address environmental issues. For an estimated 1,150 households, the project reduced indoor air pollution by 80 percent, health impacts by 25-50 percent, fuelwood consumption by 40-60 percent, greenhouse gas emissions by more than 50 percent, and household energy expenses by 50 percent.

Source: UNDP (undated).

7 Conclusions

This report is a first attempt to assess whether the energy-decentralization nexus is considered within decentralization and sector-specific policies for LDCs and SSA. While there still remains much more to uncover about energy and decentralization in these countries, the information available was sufficiently rich to broadly map the current situation and illustrate the findings with a range of examples.

Active involvement of local actors is a powerful means for scaling-up energy service delivery for the poor. Several pieces of evidence from developing countries demonstrate that the effectiveness of efforts to deliver modern energy services for rural poor people can expand dramatically with the active involvement of sub-national actors in planning, fiscal and administrative functions related to energy. Decentralization processes, at least in theory, can significantly strengthen the involvement of local actors in energy service delivery. A more detailed analysis would be needed, however, to fully examine the challenges and opportunities for synergies between energy and decentralization.

Linkages between energy and decentralization are rarely discussed in the national decentralization policy documents reviewed, suggesting a gap in these countries' approaches. Many countries are known to have policies and programmes in place focused on addressing the energy needs of the poor in which local groups and actors already play a leading role. Yet very few decentralization policies or strategies reflect such initiatives, suggesting that opportunities for synergies between decentralization and energy initiatives are not fully exploited.

Sector-specific policies, particularly energy policies, tend to better recognize energy issues in the context of decentralization. Their treatment of different energy issues varies greatly, however. For example, only limited attention is paid to energy end uses that are particularly important for the poor, especially heat for cooking and mechanical power, in sector-specific policies that also address decentralization.

Three themes related to the energy-decentralization nexus – participation, local planning and service delivery – represent common threads in the policy documents reviewed. When local actors have opportunities to participate in consultations and planning with regard to energy demand and delivery, or undertake service delivery functions, then energy systems and projects are more likely to be sustainable.

To take full advantage of decentralization opportunities, efforts are needed to integrate energy issues into local development planning and processes promoted under decentralization schemes. It is equally important to develop the capacity of local institutions to understand and incorporate energy into their planning and implementation processes. Local institutions can potentially provide an efficient delivery

window available at the local level, and a coordinated approach to identifying, providing and monitoring local energy needs and services.

In particular, development practitioners and governments could consider the following entry points:

- Understanding and addressing whether and how energy is reflected within decentralization policies and strategies and whether and how energy in the context of decentralization is reflected in sector-specific policies;
- Ensuring that energy priorities most relevant to meeting development aspirations are part of local development planning and programme decision-making, in the broad context of decentralization schemes; and
- Identifying opportunities to incorporate energy into ongoing activities. Such action can focus on strengthening:
  - The participation of local authorities, communities, energy entrepreneurs, NGOs and research institutions, through consultations on and involvement in energy initiatives;
  - Energy service delivery at the local level through enhanced coordination and accountability mechanisms between national and local institutions and across sectors, as well as policies and organizational structures that are focused on the expansion of energy access at the local level; and
  - Local planning processes, including empowering local authorities to plan, manage and monitor energy, establishing clear lines of authority, and enhancing local knowledge and skills in energy.

As previously noted, the information available online is uneven in coverage, relevance and depth. Future analysis could rely on country surveys, interviews and case studies for a greater in-depth understanding of energy and decentralization. Future studies could explore the degree and type of decentralization (political, fiscal and administrative) in relation to energy in general or in specific energy categories.

Case Studies
Kenya: Creating National Institutions

Decentralization of development activities in Kenya dates back to the early 1980s. The District Focus for Rural Development (DFRD) strategy was launched by the Government of Kenya in 1983. The strategy was the result of policies and measures that had been in the making since the mid-1960s to decentralize the process of planning and implementation to the country's districts. One of the objectives of the strategy was to encourage local participation.

As part of the DFRD strategy, District Development Committees (DDCs) were set up. The DDCs determined their populations' priority projects and forwarded them for inclusion in the Ministry of Development Planning's budgets. This early approach to decentralization of development activities was not sector-specific; it included energy-related projects as well as other types of projects. However, the approach had a number of weaknesses. Critics pointed out that it was a political rather than a development strategy, and could not be effectively implemented in a country that was characterized by patronage and rapidly shifting factional alliances (Tostensen and Scott 1987). They suggested that the same political forces operating at the central government level were involved in the DFRD operations at the district level, especially in terms of allocation of funds and other resources.

The DFRD approach was later complemented by other approaches, including setting up the Constituency Development Fund (CDF), the scheme that the Kenya government had conceived just three years earlier and had used to inject $100 million into rural areas for its constituency-based rural development projects. The CDF programme partially corresponds to a *devolution* model in the sense that it was established through legislation, and that the Member of Parliament who is responsible for the programme in the constituency is an elected official. However, the programme is not managed through an elected council as in the case of local authorities (Chweya 2006). The CDF is outside mainstream sectoral budgeting and is used for projects identified through political constituencies using a bottom-up approach (Gitonga 2007).

Efforts to prepare a strategic plan for the Ministry of Local Government (MOLG) began in 2002, and the Five-year Strategic Plan (2004-2009) was published in February 2005 (Republic of Kenya 2005). The local government sector, including MOLG, generally had an image of poor performance, mismanagement and corruption. The Kenya Local Government Reform Programme led research on innovative initiatives to further improve service delivery, thereby enhancing the ministry's role in supporting socio-economic development. Following the recommendations that emerged from the research, provincial local government offices were to be situated in the provinces, with the exception of Nairobi (Republic of Kenya 2005). While the Strategic Plan did not

mention energy services directly, it was in line with the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC)[16] government's priority programme to improve public sector performance and service delivery at the local level, as set out in the Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation (ERS). The ERS itself recognized the need to transform local governance institutions and prepare them for the greater responsibilities that they would undertake under the new Constitutional dispensation (Republic of Kenya 2005). The programme viewed energy as a driver for wealth creation and economic development and was able to bring forward small and medium enterprises. There were some elements of decentralization of wealth creation opportunities, and energy was discussed to some extent under a chapter on infrastructure. Specifically with regard to arid and semi-arid land within the country, ERS mentioned the government's objective of access to energy services to promote sustainable livelihoods and to meet poverty challenges. It also noted that fuelwood and charcoal are the main energy sources for cooking and lighting used by the poor people, putting tremendous pressure on forest resources (Republic of Kenya 2003). As a follow up to the ERS, Kenya Vision 2030 was launched in October 2006 (Kibaki 2006).

Locally constructed LPG stoves in Kenya. Expanding access to clean cooking fuel reduces health hazards due to indoor air pollution.

[16] NARC, the coalition which campaigned for President Mwai Kibaki's landslide victory in 2002, disintegrated in 2005 over a pre-election pact, which promised a 50-50 sharing of cabinet posts. In September 2007, Kenya President Kibaki announced his defection from NARC to a new coalition, the Party of National Unity (Media Focus on Africa Foundation 2007).

In terms of priorities within Kenya Vision 2030, 20 flagship projects were identified for implementation in six key sectors, and infrastructure development was recognized as a key enabler to support growth in those sectors. It was noted that about 33 percent of development spending now goes to energy and infrastructure, and there remains a need to subsidize energy costs in key areas and within flagship projects (Kibaki 2006).

Overall, decentralization of development policies in Kenya remains sectoral in nature (focused on economic and social sectors). Energy is not a specific focus but is included as part of sectoral development priorities (Gitonga 2007). Nevertheless, the rural electrification scheme was meant to expand the connection of electricity to rural areas. It is budgeted from the central government and the choices of regions to be electrified are made by the Ministry of Energy, and the Kenya Power and Lighting Company, which receives funds from the Government. Additionally, the Energy Policy (2004) and the Energy Act (2006) recognize the decentralized nature of energy production and distribution.

Box 11: Demonstrating the Viablity of Micro-Hydro Prompts Policy Change in Kenya

The considerable potential for micro-hydro remains largely underdeveloped and unexploited in Kenya because inadequate attention and policy support have been given to creating an environment where the incentives, training and technical information necessary to develop sustainable systems are sufficiently in place. A collaboration begun in 1998 by the UNDP/GEF Small Grants Programme, the Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG), the Renewable Energy Department of the Ministry of Energy, and the Tungu-Kabiri community set out to demonstrate how micro-hydro systems can be installed and supported in rural areas of Kenya. The demonstration project, which ended in 2002, provided examples of the developmental impacts that access to adequate energy services can have on rural communities and piqued the interest of national policymakers as well as surrounding communities. By bringing awareness of successful micro-level projects to the macro-level policy arena, the project has prompted changes in national understanding of the viability of micro-hydro and has generated support for national policy that will make micro-hydro a more significant part of Kenya's energy mix.

Energy and Relevant Legislative Acts, Policies, Programmes and Institutions

The main sources of energy supply in Kenya are electricity, fuelwood, petroleum and renewable energy (Republic of Kenya 2003). The Energy Policy, officially known as Sessional Paper No. 4 on Energy (Republic of Kenya 2004), proposed the following policy interventions: enactment of an Energy Act to succeed the Electrical Power Act, 1997, and the Petroleum Act, Ch. 116, to facilitate regulation and enhance stakeholder interests; establishment of a single, independent energy regulator; privatizing of the Kenya Electricity Generating Company over time with an initial public offering of 30 percent of its equity through the Nairobi Stock exchange; unbundling of KPLC into two entities, one for transmission (which would be 100 percent state owned) and the other for distribution (which would be private-sector owned); an increase in the lifeline tariff applicable to domestic consumers of up to 50 kWh per month to at least recover the cost of electricity generation; and creation of a Rural Electrification Authority to accelerate the pace of rural electrification in the country, a function that was being undertaken by the Ministry of Energy (Republic of Kenya 2004). Increased efficiency through training of charcoal makers and increased use of improved cooking stoves were also emphasized for conservation purposes.

With respect to petroleum, the Energy Policy recommended divestiture of government interests in oil refining and marketing, and eventually in the Kenya Pipeline Company, and promoting investments in oil refining including supply and distribution of petroleum products throughout the country.[17]

The *MDGs Needs Assessment Report* (2006) addresses energy issues in detail and notes that two institutions of critical importance to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are schools and hospitals.[18] The report adds that for remote institutions, a decentralized approach through use of renewables such as mini-hydro, and solar and wind power is needed.

The Energy Act 2006 was effective beginning 7 July 2007. The Act brought to fruition a number of the Energy Policy's recommendations, including the establishment of the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) (Ministry of Energy 2006b). The ERC performs as a single sector regulatory agency, with responsibility for economic and technical regulation of power, renewable energy and downstream petroleum subsectors.[19] With respect to rural electrification, the Rural Electrification Authority was established with

[17] It also recommended enhancing exploration for fossil fuels, particularly hydrocarbons, through: subdividing of exploration acreage into smaller blocks and collecting additional geological data to attract more oil prospecting companies; financing of strategic stocks by the government and the private sector, equivalent to 90 days' demand in the medium to long term; and strengthening of regional and international cooperation to promote data and information exchange on oil exploration (Republic of Kenya 2004).

[18] A separate energy needs study is necessary to collect primary data on needs of schools and hospitals and to categorize those institutions according to boarding and day facilities; proximity to national grids; income generation capacity; and appropriate type of energy (KenGen website; Kenya Ministry of Energy 2006a, 2006b).

[19] These responsibilities include tariff setting and review, licensing, enforcement, dispute settlement, approval of power purchase, and network service contracts.

responsibilities that include: managing the newly established Rural Electrification Programme Fund[20]; developing and updating the rural electrification master plan; implementing and sourcing additional funds for the rural electrification programme; and promoting the use of renewable energy sources.[21]

However, from the latest available sources, including the Energy Act (2006), the privatization of the Kenya Electricity Generating Company and unbundling of the Kenya Power and Lighting Company has not happened yet (KenGen website). Currently energy sector parastatals include — in addition to the Kenya Electricity Generating Company and the Kenya Power and Lighting Company — Kenya Petroleum Refineries Limited, the National Oil Corporation of Kenya (NOCK), the Kenya Pipeline Company, and the Energy Regulatory Commission.

Issues and Institutions for Various Energy Subsectors

The quality of electricity supply in Kenya has a reputation of being unreliable and expensive. A number of reforms carried out in the power sector since 1994 include a review of tariffs, retrenchment in the key power utility institutions, liberalization of power generation in 1995, and separation of power distribution from generation and regulatory services. Despite these reforms, the quality of electricity services did not improve and frequent unplanned power outages continued. The 2003 Economic Recovery Strategy included a recommendation to accelerate the Geothermal Resource Assessment to determine the economic effectiveness of using geothermal energy to generate electricity (Republic of Kenya 2003).

As noted, the Kenya Electricity Generating Company (KenGen) is responsible for power generation, the Kenya Power and Lighting Company is responsible for transmission and distribution, and the Energy Regulatory Commission is the regulatory body. Power generated from hydro sources currently forms 72.3 percent of KenGen's total electricity output.[22]

Within the petroleum subsector, the main problem has been the high cost of petroleum products due to the inefficiency of Kenya Petroleum Refineries Limited (KPRL), which passes those costs on to consumers. An

[20] The Rural Electrification Programme Fund will support the electrification of rural areas and other areas considered economically not viable for electrification by licensees; it consists of the electricity sales levy, fees, and "other charges levied by the Commission under the Energy Act; such moneys as may be appropriated by Parliament for that purpose; donations, grants and loans; and all other moneys lawfully received or made available for the programme as the Minister may approve" (Kenya Ministry of Energy 2006b).

[21] In this context renewable energy sources include but are not limited to: small hydro, wind, solar, biomass, geothermal, hybrid systems, and oil-fired components. The Rural Electrification Authority is charged with taking into account the specific needs of certain areas, including the potential for using electricity for irrigation and in support of off-farm income-generating activities, and managing the delineation, tendering, and award of contracts for licenses and permits for rural electrification (Kenya Ministry of Energy 2006a, 2006b).

[22] The company's hydropower stations have a total installed capacity of 677.3 MW.

independent study to establish the economic viability of the continued operation of KPRL relative to imports of petroleum products was completed in December 2003, with the aim of using the study findings in the government's decision on the future of KPRL (Republic of Kenya 2003). Additionally, National Oil Corporation of Kenya Limited was incorporated in 1981 under the Companies Act (Cap 486).[23] Since October 1994, when the oil industry was deregulated, its mandate to import 30 percent of the country's crude oil requirements ceased and NOCK has been marketing petroleum products to the final consumers. Currently, NOCK's share of the domestic market is approximately three percent. In order to increase efficiency in downstream operations, NOCK has invested extensively[24] (NOCK website).

In terms of policy directions for the biomass subsector, initiating commercialization of fuelwood in farms has been recommended (Republic of Kenya 2006a). Approximately 500,000 ha can be initiated by development of woodlots in private farms where land is idle and/or unsustainable for agriculture. It is estimated that a possible 504,000 ha of plantations can be mobilized with a yield of 14.29 tonnes per ha per year, with total annual supply after project implementation an impressive 7,202,160 tonnes per year. Models of such plantations show a high internal rate of return, conservatively estimated at 45 percent.[25] However, sustainability of such operations and the accountability of the key ministries involved (in this case, the Energy and the Environment and Natural Resources ministries) should be ensured.

For renewables, the Energy Policy suggests that the government will design incentive packages to promote private sector investments in renewable energy and other off-grid generation. The Government will also provide support for research and development in emerging technologies, such as cogeneration and wind energy. Cogeneration in the country's sugar belt will be promoted through an attractive bulk tariff regime that recognizes the need to reduce oil-based thermal generation and tap the current cogeneration potential, which is estimated at 300 MW of electricity (Kenya Ministry of Energy 2006a). The Energy Act (2006) mentioned, among other things, promoting the development of appropriate local capacity for the manufacture, installation, maintenance and operation of basic renewable technologies such as bio-digesters, solar systems and hydro turbines (Kenya Ministry of Energy 2006b). However, no specific measures were adopted for institutional strengthening in renewables.

[23] The company's main objective then was to coordinate oil exploration (upstream) activities. In 1988, the company was mandated by the government to supply 30 percent of the country's crude oil requirements, which would in turn be sold to oil marketing companies for refining and onward sale to consumers. However, after deregulation of the oil industry in 1994, the company lost that mandate and had to formulate new survival strategies that saw its entry into downstream operations (NOCK website).

[24] NOCK has constructed a truck-loading facility in Nairobi in order to serve Nairobi and its markets, which represent about 60 percent of the domestic demand for petroleum products in Kenya. For increased efficiency in downstream operations, NOCK has also invested in both computer hardware and software and training of staff to improve the efficiency of administration of services and accounting processes, in order to facilitate faster decision-making and strategic planning.

[25] It is suggested that better management of existing indigenous forests and plantations would improve their yields significantly (e.g., existing supply could sustainably yield 350,000 tonnes annually from logging waste and small wood extraction from the indigenous vegetation) (Kenya Ministry of Energy 2006a).

Case Studies
Nepal: Building Capacity for Local Energy Delivery

The concepts of decentralization and participatory development have a long history in Nepal. The enactment of the Decentralization Act in 1982 and the adoption of relevant regulations in 1984 marked important steps in the process of decentralization. These legal frameworks set in motion the process of deconcentration of functional responsibilities to the district level of governance. After the restoration of democracy in 1990, three separate Acts – the District Development Committee (DDC) Act, the Village Development Committee (VDC) Act and the Municipality Act – were adopted in 1992, and local bodies were formed in accordance with the new Acts. (NDF 2002) Following the guidelines set forth in the 1990 Constitution, the 1999 Local Self Governance Act (LSGA) sets out Nepal's principles[26] and policies for the development of a local self-governance system (Government of Nepal 1999). The LSGA calls for a comprehensive transfer of central decision-making power and implementing authority (of various local level development activities) to local bodies. Despite political instability, the LSGA was approved and resulted in close collaboration between the government, donors and civil society in supporting a common framework.

In the LSGA document itself, reference is made to energy only once, and to electricity a number of times. No reference is made to other energy sources. While describing the functions, duties and powers of the DDC, the Act includes: formulating, implementing, operating, distributing, maintaining and repairing projects using mini- and micro-hydropower and other energy sources. It also states that VDCs have the function of generating and distributing electricity for irrigation, soil erosion and river control purposes, among others. Interestingly, in describing the requirements for an area to be specified as a municipal area, the availability of electricity (exact language is 'with electricity') not access to electricity is noted (Part 3, Ch. 1, para 72, sections 1 and 2). Similarly, under the definitions of a municipal corporation and a sub-municipal corporation, both are required to have "the facilities of electricity" (Ch. 3, para 88, sections 2a, 2b, and 2c). As described in the LGSA, the functions, duties and powers of each Ward Committee within the municipality include arranging for electric lamps on the roads and streets within the Ward.[27]

According to a review of the decentralization reform process conducted jointly by the Government of Nepal and donors, while the LSGA includes a provision for the government to share locally generated revenue with DDCs, a lack of clear implementation procedures for revenue sharing in forestry, tourism, natural resources and electricity generation undermines the effectiveness of this provision.[28]

[26] These principles include (i) devolution of such powers, responsibilities, means, and resources as required to make the local bodies capable and efficient in local self-governance; (ii) building and developing institutional mechanisms and functional capacities of local bodies that are able to take into consideration local needs; and (iii) devolution of powers to collect and mobilize such means and resources as required to discharge the functions, duties, responsibility, and accountability conferred on the local bodies.

[27] Additionally, the Municipality's mandatory functions and duties include generating and distributing (or causing to be generated and distributed) electricity in the Municipality area. With respect to water resources, environment, and sanitation (Ch. 4, para 96, section c 8), the Municipality may also arrange for the supply of electricity and communications facilities (Ch. 4 para 96, section g). In terms of taxes, fees, service charges and fares: any Municipality may impose service charges for making available facilities including electricity, and the Municipality may determine the expenditures required to repair and maintain electricity and other services constructed by it and collect the same from the concerned consumers annually (Ch. 8, para 145, sections 1 and 5).

[28] The government handed over the collection of land revenue to local governments, but decreases in the fees it requires for land registration—a major source of DDC revenue—have caused losses to DDCs and shows how the central government often fails to coordinate its actions with DDCs (Government of Nepal 2001).

Energy Sector and Relevant Acts, Institutions, Policies and Programmes

The Energy Act (1992) is a key piece of legislation for the energy sector. The Act established supply incentives designed to improve the participation of local institutions and the private sector in generating hydroelectricity. In this context, the Subsidy Policy (2000) is also of relevance. This policy was based on the price equalization principle, with the intention of balancing out costs for people in different parts of the country, although it was not entirely successful in achieving this. Some have noted that this approach does not recognize the differences in purchasing power of people living in different locations. The subsidy policy was complemented by the Renewable Energy Subsidy Policy (2000) and the Renewable Energy Subsidy Delivery Mechanism (2000). For renewables, it is noteworthy that the rate of growth of solar home systems installed increased markedly in the period from 1995-1996 to 1996-1997 as well as from 1999-2000 to 2000-2001, corresponding to the introduction of a subsidy for solar home systems for the first time in 1995 and a new subsidy policy in 2000 (Gurung 2003).

The Hydropower Development Policy (2000) recognized the importance of community participation and rural electrification funds. The Tenth Plan (2002-2007) further emphasized community managed rural energy development. This plan benefited from the mid-term evaluation of the Ninth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002), which had reviewed the Rural Energy Development Programme (REDP) model (Gurung 2003).

The REDP was initiated in 1996 as a joint programme of the Government of Nepal, UNDP and the World Bank. It complements the rural electrification objective of the Tenth Five Year Plan by promoting micro-hydro, solar, wind energy, and biogas schemes. It adopts a holistic approach by linking rural electrification with rural economic activities and the livelihoods of rural people. Decentralized and participatory planning, decision-making, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation activities are basic pillars of the success of the programme.

A second phase of REDP (with additional support from the World Bank) was built on the successes and achievements of the first phase (which was supported only by the Government and UNDP) with the goal of replicating those successes in more districts. The Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPC), under the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology, is the executing agency for the programme.[29] The REDP addressed rural energy issues at three levels.[30] It modified existing institutional mechanisms and established new institutions that provide a holistic perspective for rural energy development in Nepal. More recent outputs of

[29] The Programme Management Committee is comprised of representatives from the National Planning Commission, the Ministry of Local Development, the District Energy Network, the Association of District Development Committee of Nepal, and the National Association of VDCs in Nepal (UNDP REDP website, http://www.redp.org/np).

[30] At the VDC or community level, REDP empowered people through building their capacity in planning, management, and operation of rural energy systems. At the district level, it helped institutionalize the rural energy planning and management by establishing the Rural Energy Development Section (REDS) under the DDC, and at the central government level, it provided policy supports for decentralized rural energy development (Gurung 2003).

the REDP include a holistic Rural Energy Development Sector Policy aimed at supporting the overall development objective of poverty alleviation (formulated by the government and operationalized in 2006) and a central Rural Energy Development Agency, established in 2006.

A number of changes were implemented in each district, including the creation and strengthening of Rural Energy Development Sections, District Energy Funds, and District Energy Committees in all 25 districts by 2006. The Government of Nepal and UNDP also signed a US$1.9 million rural energy project agreement for the third phase of the programme, for the period 2007-2010 (UNDP 2007b).

The Rural Energy Policy of Nepal was prepared in November 2006. This policy document defines rural energy as "energy that is environmentally friendly and used for rural households, economic and social purposes such as micro- and mini-hydro, solar energy, wind energy, biomass energy, etc." The term 'rural energy' is used interchangeably with 'renewable energy' (Government of Nepal 2006). The policy document lists among its objectives development of the capacity of local bodies to play leadership roles in rural energy project planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation at the local level. It also emphasizes involvement of cooperatives, user groups, NGOs and the private sector.

An improved water mill in Nepal. Expanding access to mechanical power dramatically reduces the time and labour spent on agro-processing activities in rural communities, especially by women and children.

Photo Credit: File Photo - Centre for Rural Technology, Nepal (CRT/N)

The establishment of a Central Rural Energy Fund, replacing the Rural Energy Fund previously operating under AEPC, is also noted in the Rural Energy Policy. This new fund at the central government level will mobilize financial resources from various sources and provide funding to the local level as needed. The formation and management working modality of the CREF will be prescribed by the Government of Nepal. The Rural Energy Policy document also states that the AEPC under the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology will provide necessary capacity building support to local bodies to formulate and implement rural energy programmes.

More Details on Issues and Institutions within Various Energy Subsectors

The Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) was created in 1985 under the Nepal Electricity Authority Act of 1984, through the merger of the Department of Electricity of Ministry of Water Resources, the Nepal Electricity Corporation, and related Development Boards with the aims of improved efficiency and more reliable service (NEA website). The NEA is responsible for generating, transmitting and distributing power throughout the entire country. However, this institution was often criticized for its centralized operational modality and its inefficiency, which led to an inability to increase energy access in remote rural areas. Later, it developed a community electrification approach that was seen as a positive step towards better management of electricity in the country and may be attributed to the lessons learned from the community-managed approach promoted by REDP and others (Gurung 2003). However, grid-based rural electrification remained very costly in the remote mountainous regions of Nepal. Other criticisms of NEA included its lack of interest in micro-hydro, as it failed to address the energy accessibility issue in the country, and rural electrification in the remote mountains remained bleak under this modality (Gurung 2003). Overall, the Rural Energy Policy of 2006 seems to have benefited from these criticisms, as it makes provisions to enable cooperatives and local bodies to take electricity from the national grid on lease.[31] The subsidy rate and disbursement criteria of the renewable rural energy subsidy arrangement will be revised as required on the basis of geographical conditions, population and available resources. The Rural Energy Policy also states that micro-hydro projects developed by user groups and cooperatives will be encouraged.

Other relevant institutions, such as the Water Energy Commission Secretariat, the Department of Electricity Development and the Tariff Fixation Board were criticized for their exclusive focus on large power development issues (Gurung 2003). For renewable energy development, the AEPC had limited autonomy. Challenges in coordinating various agencies involved in the rural energy sector have in the past hampered the effectiveness of the AEPC in its role of promoting rural energy. The Rural

[31] It also makes provisions to include electricity in the national grid from electricity produced by communities, cooperatives, and private electricity projects (Government of Nepal 2006).

Energy Policy (2006) notes the role of the AEPC and suggests that at the central government level the AEPC will carry out activities related to the formulation of rural energy policy and programmes, studies and research, subsidy disbursements, technical assistance, selection of companies and organizations installing rural energy systems, and donor coordination, monitoring and evaluation. The Biogas Support Programme supported by the SNV-Nepal (The Netherlands Development Agency in Nepal), has demonstrated a private-sector-led development model in the promotion of biogas that is popular among well-off to middle-income people in rural areas and peri-urban areas. Biogas is also given emphasis in the Rural Energy Policy.

The Energy Sector Assistance Programme (ESAP) was signed between the Nepalese government and the Government of Denmark in 1999, with the ESAP period expected to continue for 15 to 20 years. The AEPC and the Nepal Electricity Authority are the national agencies for the programme. Phase II of ESAP has five components: institutional support to the rural energy sector; biomass; mini-grid; solar; and financial assistance to rural energy investments (rural energy fund). In terms of renewables, the solar energy component of ESAP, also known as Solar Energy Support Programme (SSP), played a major role in the market expansion of solar home systems (AEPC website).

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Annex 1. List of Countries

No.		Least Developed Countries	Sub-Saharan Africa
1	Afghanistan	Yes	No
2	Angola	Yes	Yes
3	Bangladesh	Yes	No
4	Benin	Yes	Yes
5	Bhutan	Yes	No
6	Botswana	No	Yes
7	Burkina Faso	Yes	Yes
8	Burundi	Yes	Yes
9	Cambodia	Yes	No
10	Cameroon	No	Yes
11	Cape Verde	Yes	Yes
12	Central African Republic	Yes	Yes
13	Chad	Yes	Yes
14	Comoros	Yes	Yes
15	Congo, Democratic Republic of	Yes	Yes
16	Congo, Republic of	No	Yes
17	Cote d'Ivoire	No	Yes
18	Djibouti	Yes	No
19	Equatorial Guinea	Yes	Yes
20	Eritrea	Yes	Yes
21	Ethiopia	Yes	Yes
22	Gabon	No	Yes
23	Gambia	Yes	Yes
24	Ghana	No	Yes
25	Guinea	Yes	Yes
26	Guinea-Bissau	Yes	Yes
27	Haiti	Yes	No
28	Kenya	No	Yes
29	Kiribati	Yes	No
30	Lao People's Democratic Republic	Yes	No
31	Lesotho	Yes	Yes
32	Liberia	Yes	Yes
33	Madagascar	Yes	Yes

No.		Least Developed Countries	Sub-Saharan Africa
34	Malawi	Yes	Yes
35	Maldives	Yes	No
36	Mali	Yes	Yes
37	Mauritania	Yes	Yes
38	Mauritius	No	Yes
39	Mozambique	Yes	Yes
40	Myanmar	Yes	No
41	Namibia	No	Yes
42	Nepal	Yes	No
43	Niger	Yes	Yes
44	Nigeria	No	Yes
45	Rwanda	Yes	Yes
46	Samoa	Yes	No
47	Sao Tome and Principe	Yes	Yes
48	Senegal	Yes	Yes
49	Seychelles	No	Yes
50	Sierra Leone	Yes	Yes
51	Solomon Islands	Yes	No
52	Somalia	Yes	No
53	South Africa	No	Yes
54	Sudan	Yes	No
55	Swaziland	No	Yes
56	Tanzania, United Republic of	Yes	Yes
57	Timor-Leste	Yes	No
58	Togo	Yes	Yes
59	Tuvalu	Yes	No
60	Uganda	Yes	Yes
61	Vanuatu	Yes	No
62	Yemen	Yes	No
63	Zambia	Yes	Yes
64	Zimbabwe	No	Yes
Number of countries		**50**	**45**
Number of countries that fall under both		**31**	

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Most of the online sources were reviewed between October 2007 and March 2008. Some links may no longer be active, and some information found posted on web pages may no longer be accessible.

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