Session 15: Energy Access Leaders and Voices from the Grassroots

Auditorium Zone C
8 June, 8:20 a.m. – 9:50 a.m.

The session, which will be co-organized by ADB, PFAN, and ENERGIA, will showcase real life experiences of four (4) women energy entrepreneurs from the grassroots. The selection has been made through a call for nominations for women-led businesses, followed by evaluation by a jury. The selected entrepreneurs have been invited (together with a representative from their parent organization) to attend and present at ACEF. At the same time, the parent organization is receiving mentoring support through the PFAN network, in order to help them develop business plans and secure funding for their businesses and initiatives.

Session Chair
Soma Dutta, Programme Coordinator, ENERGIA
MK Balaji, Chief of Party, PFAN Asia

Presenters
Kamala Dhakal, President
Aastha Engineering Solution Pvt.Ltd.
Solar Conduction Dryer for Value Addition in Cash Crops

The project, with an estimated cost of USD 2.7 million and a project life of 5 years, aims to establish a drying unit for 252 cash crops in 21 districts in Nepal. Each drying unit will consist of 10 solar conduction dryers that will dry out fruits and vegetables (cardamom, ginger, turmeric, green tea, etc.) to enable farmers to preserve and sell the products for a higher price. Collection, distribution and selling centers will be established at the local and regional levels with the main center located in Kathmandu. The technology to be used is the solar conduction dryer, an innovative technology introduced by Kamala and her team in collaboration with Science for Society Pvt. Ltd., India. The project will be able to generate local employment opportunities in rural Nepal while at the same time promote the utilization of innovative RE technologies. The project is especially designed to empower women by providing them with entrepreneurship opportunities at the local level. It will likewise establish a food processing industry that will be able to sell and promote products from Nepal in the global market.

Akansha Singh, Entrepreneur
Swayambhu Innovative Solutions Pvt. Ltd.
Decentralized Community Bio-gas Plant

The project, with an estimated cost of USD 47,000 and a project life of more than 40 years, aims to engage, promote and support un-electrified villages and small and marginal farmer’s communities in Bihar, India by installing biogas digesters that will provide them with low cost electricity for electrification and irrigation and also producing low-cost organic fertilizer and natural pesticide. It is envisioned that the project will be able to electrify at least 10,000 households per year and provide assistance to more than 5,000 farmers with the help of this low-cost, clean energy solution. It is also hoped that vehicles such as tractors used on farms and vehicles used for public transport will be run with the help of the biogas plant.
Naly Yang, Director
Naly Agriculture Pty Ltd
Cooking Fuel Alternative and Livelihood Development

The project, with an estimated cost of USD 55.2 million and a project life of 20 years, will involve the production and supply of alternative cooking fuel made of paddy husk in the Champasak Province of Lao PDR. In addition, the project will involve the creation of rice farmer networks and agribusiness involving noodle production, animal feed manufacturing and bio-fertilizer processing which will greatly benefit the farmers in the area. Specifically, the project will produce high-quality charcoal from paddy husk. The husk-to-charcoal solution will be more economically efficient and commercially viable, as the rice husk can be obtained at little or no cost. By the end of the project, it is envisioned that 60% of cooking fuel needs in the province will be met. The project will promote social and economic development through the development of commercial activities that will create employment opportunities, while increasing knowledge and capacity that will benefit rural farming communities in the province.

Kalpana Rai, Improved Cookstoves Woman Entrepreneur
Kalpana Kitchen Wares and General Store
Promoting Women-led Enterprises for Energy Access

Women in the rural areas of Nepal lack capacity and knowledge related to entrepreneurship. Access to clean cooking solutions is limited in these rural areas. The project, with an estimated cost of USD 539,000 and a project life of 3 years, aims to bring women into the value chain of improved cookstoves (ICS) as entrepreneurs, with the aim of increasing access for rural people to improved cooking solutions. It has a target of promoting 300 women entrepreneurs in the ICS business. The project’s skills and entrepreneurship training includes business mentoring support. It will also facilitate a link up with local financial institutions, if needed, as well as awareness raising activities. This project is the first of its kind in Nepal that aims to establish women as ICS entrepreneurs and this is crucial for the sustainability of the supply of ICS in remote rural communities of Nepal.