Conclusions

Applying an integrated focus to the energy demands of rural families, will enable more complete solutions, in environmental and economical terms, to be achieved, coupled with the possi-

bilities of alleviating the existing levels of poverty.

The projects involving rural electrification through conventional grids that are being developed by the Government require high levels of subsidies to cover the investment in grid extensions. If these projects are compared to the proposed project, Energética has estimated that with an increase of only 7 to 12% in the current subsidy level, that 98% of the energy demands of a rural family could be met. In other words with only a marginal increase in investment, a virtu-

ally total solution to the energy require-

ments of these families could be obtained.

The challenge is in proving the feasibil-

ity of this idea, a task which Energética has started to develop with the help of the EASE programme.

Within the framework of the EASE pro-

gramme, research activities concerning the impact of the conventional rural electrification programmes on the reduction of poverty, the evaluation of energy costs and potential revenues of rural families, as well as the specific con-

sumptions of energy (including bio-

mass) by these families have been planned. Based on this information, a project pilot in this area will be devel-

oped. Public and private local partners

will be selected to participate in the exec-

ution of this project and, jointly with the EASE programme and Energética, develop this experience further.

About Energética

Energética is a Bolivian non-profit organ-

isation working in the rural areas of the country, in the fields of energy, develop-

ment, the environment, and poverty. The principal areas of work are: Rural Energy Development, Natural Resources and Environment, Training and Promotion in Energy, and Institutional Development and Enterprise Management.

In these areas, the main role of Energética is to give technical assistance to end users, micro-enterprises, government offices and other institutions over a range of issues including energy plan-

ning, execution and evaluation of energy projects. The approach is focussed on the end users’ sociocom-

munity situation, their knowledge and social issues.

The main sources of energy in the pro-

jects are renewable (photovoltaic solar, thermal, solar dryers, microhydro, wind systems, biomass), but they are also working with extensions to the power grid, natural gas, liquefied gas and ener-

gy efficiency (illumination, Change of Fuels, efficient technologies, etc.).

Miguel Fernández Fuentes
Directo Energética
Calle La Paz No. E - 0375, Casilla 4964, Cocahamba, Bolivia;
Tel.: +591.442.53647; Fax: +591.442.53835; Email: miguel@energetica.info
Website: www.energetica.info

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1. The three-phase grid concept is associated with establishing a potential for industries, ignoring the fact that more conditions than the availability of a grid are necessary (for example a market for the products pro-

duced). Further in a revision of the potential for rural productivity, a much higher demand for thermal rather than electrical energy was found, but this is systematically ignored.

2. Pro-Loja Bolivia is a non-profit institution which aims to modernise the use and pro-
duction of wood energy in Bolivia.

CERES

SUPPORT IN DEVELOPING A RESEARCH FRAMEWORK FOR EASE

CERES has been the coordinating body for basic academic research on development in the Netherlands since 1992, and achieved recognition as a research school by the Royal Academy of Sciences in 1994. The core of this senior researchers from branches of the social and geographical sciences and from rel-

levant specialisations within economic and agro-ecological disciplines. CERES represents the vast majority of researchers in the Netherlands engaged in development-oriented studies.

The fundamental mission of CERES is to maintain high standards of academic research in particular, the research falling under CERES is the interaction between human and natural resources. Core research questions focus on the processes and principles under-

lying perception, access, control, and management of such resources in develop-

ing countries, and their implications for development. This orientation indica-

tes a multidisciplinary and comparative approach, using a range of paradigms and a multilevel methodology, covering case studies to global surveys.

CERES members in the EASE project

Under the overall management of the Director of CERES, Professor Ton Dietz, the Chair of Technology and Sustainable Development in a North South Perspec-

tive (TSD) of the University of Twente, Nico Schulte Nordholt, will coordinate the CERES input into EASE. TSD is an associate member of CERES, and the focus of its research is on the role of technology in the socioeconomic development of developing countries. Technology systems are studied within the institutional setting of both the public and the private sector. Research covers technical, institutional, organisa-

tional, socioeconomic and cultural aspects. One of the main themes has always been the role of energy in development.

The role of CERES in EASE

CERES’ role within EASE is to support partner organisations in their research activities. This will include establishing a multidisciplinary panel of CERES researchers, also from other universities in the Netherlands that will provide guidance and make suggestions on EASE research design and implementa-

tion. In addition, CERES will contribute to the newsletter and provide informa-

tion on lessons learnt in other projects.

One of the first activities that CERES is organising is a Summer School that members of the EASE project are wel-

come to attend. In the Summer School, CERES will present four position papers which will stress "what we know and what we do not know" within the themes of "energy", "gender", "environ-

ment" and "poverty". Through these papers we hope to draw out key issues that can guide the EASE research.

The concept of livelihoods in terms of EASE

The objective of the EASE research work is to develop recommendations on how energy interventions can contribute to poverty reduction. In order to develop such recommendations, the livelihoods framework will be used to analyse the impacts of energy interventions on poverty.

The impact of energy interventions on small end-users will be the standpoint from which research questions will be identified. Case studies on energy inter-

ventions will need to be identified and analysed in such a manner that results can be raised above the exemplary char-

acter of “potentially positive or negative impacts”. In this study, it will be impor-

tant to answer questions as to why energy interventions are successful.

The livelihoods framework enables one to study the various needs of house-

holds. In livelihoods research, a key con-

cept is that the poor are not victims but rather they actively shape their own lives by means of material and non-

material assets (social, cultural, human, produced and natural assets), depend-

ing on the context in which they have to make a living. The poor develop their own strategies to deal with the risks and insecurities in order to make their livel-

hoods sustainable. As livelihoods stud-

ies are people-centred, it is appropriate to ask questions as to if and how energy interventions impact on poverty and, in a wider sense, if they impact on the mate-

rial and non-material assets of the poor.

We hope that our contribution to the EASE project will be beneficial, and that it results in useful conclusions and recom-

mendations that deepen the under-

standing of the role that energy plays in reducing poverty and that, from this, ways in which energy interventions could be improved in the future will become apparent.

TSD

University of Twente, P.O. Box 217, 7500 AE Enschede, the Netherlands;
Tel: +31.53.4893545; Fax: +31.53.4893587;
Website CERES: ceres.fss.uu.nl
Website TSD: www.utwente.nl/tgd