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SARI / Energy

Success Stories:

USAID SARI/Energy Small Grants Program – First Round

The USAID SARI/Energy Small Grants Program (SGP) seeks to build the capacity and increase the number of local institutions engaged in regional energy issues. The SGP has been one of the main vehicles for increasing public participation in SARI/E projects and for raising awareness and involvement at the grassroots, local, regional and national levels by improving business and livelihood practices in SARI/E countries.

PA has developed a Grants' Manual and posted the application process and application forms on the SARI/Energy website. The SGP became fully operational in the first quarter of 2009 with initial solicitations received via the South Asia Women in Energy (SAWIE) program, several of which were approved and selected for follow-up development.

SGP has since completed its first solicitation cycle resulting in the receipt of over forty project proposals from SARI member countries of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. An encouraging blend of NGOs, educational establishments, and Research and Development (R&D) institutes submitted applications. The applications were highly diversified in the range of issues they sought to address. A broad categorization would include:

- 1) renewable energy technology dissemination and awareness generation;
- 2) capacity building of rural beneficiaries for sustainable energy independence;
- 3) entrepreneurship development with specific emphasis on gender mainstreaming; and,
- 4) research studies and prototype assessment programs.

The SGP Evaluation Committee reviewed and evaluated the applications within the context of the small grants application process. Among the selection criteria, the committee gave particular attention to:

- Sustainability of the exercise after the project implementation period
- Cost realism/cost-effectiveness of the exercise
- Inclusion of women and underserved sections of society

The Evaluation Committee short-listed proposals for approval and follow-up development. A total of 25 projects funded at approximately US \$721,000 were selected for award under the first round. USAID's contribution through grants is expected to be about US \$335,000. The remaining funds (\$386,000) are provided by the grantees themselves.

The SGP is currently funding the ongoing projects. A second round of projects are now being awarded, and will be reported later.