

Renewable Energy in the Americas Initiative

Title: Renewable Energy in the Americas Initiative
 Program Area: Rural Energy
 Implementer: Sustainable Development and Environment Unit of the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States
 Geographic Focus: Latin America & the Caribbean
 Country: Regional
 Duration: April 1999 – September 2005



The Bouillante geothermal power plant in Guadeloupe – part of the Eastern Caribbean Geothermal Development Project that covers Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Dominica.

Project Background

The Renewable Energy in the Americas (REIA) Initiative is a hemispheric project based in the Unit for Sustainable Development and the Environment (USDE) at the Organization of American States (OAS). REIA assists public and private sector organizations throughout

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) in the development and use of renewable energy and energy efficiency systems. The use of clean, renewable and efficient energy technologies and services enables improvements in economic and social conditions. REIA actively supports activities including technical assistance, policy and regulatory reform, information dissemination, and financing brokering to address energy needs in isolated rural areas and grid tied-urban markets.

USAID works directly with OAS in:

- 1) The establishment of project priorities and initiatives;
- 2) Guidance regarding the execution of tasks;
- 3) Direct participation in several REIA activities; and
- 4) Facilitating access to local stakeholders, particularly through the in-country missions.

Development Objective

To advance sustainable solutions - particularly renewable energy and energy efficiency - for meeting the growing energy needs of the Hemisphere. Economic development will be achieved in participating countries, by: (1) increased access to electricity by unserved and under-served populations of Latin America and the Caribbean; and (2) the delivery of lower cost and more reliable electricity through power grids in Latin America and the Caribbean.



Renewable Energy in the Americas Initiative coordinates regional activities for the promotion of sustainable energy, such as the Global Village Energy Partnership.

Approach

The OAS has official mandates to assist member countries in areas of sustainable economic development through the delivery of technical assistance services. In the case of the REIA project the

services are targeted at reducing or eliminating barriers to the development and use of renewable energy technologies. The REIA project works directly with the governments, electric utilities, project developers, financiers, community representatives and other stakeholders in the area of sustainable energy throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. REIA approaches the barrier removal challenges through the delivery of support in four principal areas: (1) Identify and promote viable renewable energy and energy efficiency project opportunities; (2) Promote policy that will advance the use of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies; (3) Develop innovative financing mechanisms suited to the technical characteristics of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies and appropriate to the social and economic needs of the demographically diverse end-users; and (4) Provide technical assistance and training on matters related to sustainable energy development.

Project Partners

REIA project partners are multiple and include organizations that provide co-financing, as well as those that serve as partners in the execution of activities. A selected list of project partners includes: The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), The World Bank, Winrock International, National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), United Nations Foundation, and Energy and Security Group (ESG).



Project Activities

Key project activities undertaken during the past year include:

- 1) GVEP-LAC: REIA served as the regional coordinator for the Global Village Energy Partnership – Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative. This effort will result in the design and adoption of comprehensive village energy action plans for seven countries in the hemisphere. The target countries identified by the GVEP-LAC Steering Committee include: Bolivia, Peru, Brazil, Guatemala, Honduras, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, and selected states in Mexico.
- 2) GSEII: REIA is a lead collaborator for the Caribbean region in the Global Sustainable Energy Islands Initiative (GSEII). GSEII supports the interests of all small island states and potential donors by bringing renewable energy and energy efficiency projects, models, and concepts together in a sustainable plan for small island nations. Recent efforts led by REIA for the GSEII have focused on the island nations of St. Lucia, Grenada, and Dominica.
- 3) Energy Policy Analysis and Reform: The development and use of sustainable energy services is very dependent on the existence of appropriate energy/electricity policies. This includes the broad electricity structuring policies (level of private sector participation, planning strategies,


development policies, etc.) and specific policies for renewable energies. During the previous year, REIA undertook policy analysis/reform tasks in Guatemala and Grenada.

- 4) Implementation of Small Scale Solar and Pico Hydro Schemes in Rural Guatemala: Provided technical assistance to design and implement rural energy services to be managed by local organized groups in several rural villages in the Department of Quiche
- 5) Eastern Caribbean Geothermal Energy Development Project (Geo-Caraïbes): REIA is collaborating with three Eastern Caribbean countries – Dominica, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Lucia – for development of a regional geothermal energy development project. The project will work to overcome barriers to the development of geothermal resources in the region through capacity building, policy reform, geothermal resource evaluation, and the creation of a geothermal drilling risk fund.

Project Results

REIA achieved many positive results during its existence. These results include:

- Execution of the successful hemisphere GVEP-LAC conference (GVEP-LAC) to organize and catalyze Global Village Energy Partnership (GVEP) activities in the LAC region.

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- Preparation of draft rural energy action plans for nine countries in the hemisphere (GVEP-LAC)
 - Initial proposal for rural energy loan from the World Bank in preparation (GVEP-LAC)
 - Preparation of draft Electricity Supply Act – Grenada (GSEII)
 - Adoption by Guatemala of the Renewable Energy Law
 - Installation of 243 solar PV systems and one 156 kW micro hydro system in Guatemala
 - Preparation, submission, and receipt of recommendation for funding of the Eastern Caribbean Geothermal Development Project (GEF, UNEP, AFD, FFEM; total US\$1.5 million)

Development Impact

REIA activities have resulted in economic development through the delivery of lower cost, more reliable electricity services. This has resulted in new businesses based on increased access to affordable energy, and improvements in health and educational opportunities made possible by rural electricity delivery.

Lessons Learned

- Engage a wide range of local stakeholders in the design of activities
- Cooperate with multiple providers of technical assistance
- Convene the highest-level public authority appropriate for any in-country tasks
- Remain committed for the long term on activities (i.e. passage of Guatemala's renewable energy law took approximately 5 years).

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