

The Clean Energy Project: 2017-2020

Currently, only about 26.1% of the households in Uganda have access to electricity (Sustainable Energy for All Action Agenda for Uganda, 2015). The limited access to modern energy coupled with high levels of poverty incidence has resulted in over reliance on unsustainably produced biomass and use of rudimentary lighting and cooking technologies with serious implications on the environment and people. The use of rudimentary technologies such as the three stone stove and kerosene lanterns exposes family members especially women and children to numerous pollutants causing health problems such as acute respiratory infections.

As part of efforts to address the energy challenge in the country, The Energy, Climate and Extractives Programme is implementing the third phase of the Clean Energy Project (CEP) with funding from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad). This phase of the project is contributing to the goal of “Communities living in the Albertine Graben have adopted sustainable and renewable energy alternatives to reduce dependency on biomass for their energy needs” and seeks to address two key problems hindering energy access in the Albertine Graben:

- a) Weak capacity of CSOs and networks to meaningfully engage government and other stakeholders on decisions and practices towards sustainable and renewable energy development. CSOs lack skills and tools for effective advocacy on the development and adoption of policies, legislation and best practices by government and private sector. Additionally, there is absence of a strong civil society voice and convening power to ably hold government and renewable energy industry players accountable for decisions and practices towards sustainable and renewable energy delivery.
- b) Limited access to sustainable and renewable energy alternatives in the Albertine Graben which is contributing to forest loss and degradation in Uganda. The current demand for woody biomass (charcoal and firewood) is estimated at 44 million tons/year while current forests can sustainably supply only 26 million tons/year (Biomass Energy Strategy (BEST), 2015). The current heavy dependency on charcoal and firewood for energy is attributed to limited access to improved energy technologies, as well as use of inefficient energy conversion technologies and weak policy and legislative framework for renewable energy development in the country (BEST, 2015). Other barriers known to be limiting sustainable and renewable energy access are: few distribution centres, high costs of some of the available energy alternatives, low awareness on available alternatives, inadequate local technical capacity to design, install, operate and maintain renewable energy technologies.

The project aims to contribute to this goal by delivering on three outcomes in four years, which are:

1. Civil society in partnership with other agents of change is transforming government and private sector decisions and practices towards sustainable and renewable energy development to the benefit of women, men and youth,

2. Government, private sector, civil society actors and local communities have adopted effective strategies and practices that support sustainable and renewable energy access in Albertine Graben, and
3. Government and private sector have put in place an enabling framework that supports increased financing/ investment for sustainable and renewable energy development.

The desired change for this project is that communities living in the Albertine Graben have adopted sustainable and renewable energy alternatives to reduce dependency on biomass for their energy needs. It is anticipated that reduction on dependency of biomass should improve the living standards of communities through savings, increase public health by reducing on indoor pollution and bolster Uganda's economy. Sustainable use of biomass should also result in the conservation of the unique ecosystems (forests and wetlands) in the Albertine Graben to provide sufficient goods and services such as water, timber, non-timber forest products and fuelwood to communities living in this area.

The project is facilitating this change by scaling up energy access work from the Champion District (Kasese District) to the rest of Uganda, starting with the Albertine Graben. At subnational level, the project is working with civil society organizations from 20 districts in the Albertine Graben with three districts serving as centres (Hubs) for learning and distribution of sustainable and renewable energy solutions in the Albertine Graben. The different Hubs are characterized below:

- Northern Albertine Graben Hub: Arua (host), Nebbi, Koboko, Moyo, Adjumani and Maracha Districts
- Mid Albertine Graben Hub: Kagadi (host), Masindi, Hoima, Buliisa, , Kyenjojo and Kibaale Districts
- Southern Albertine Graben Hub: Kasese (host), Bushenyi, Rubirizi, Mitooma, Rukungiri, Kabarole, Kisoro and Bundibugyo Districts

At national level, the project is working with one CSO network and one multi-stakeholder platform to facilitate multi-stakeholder engagements (dialogues) with government, private sector and other civil society organisations on sustainable and renewable energy access related issues.