



A LOBBY & ADVOCACY APPROACH
*to promote decentralized renewable energy solutions
to achieve universal energy access*



Hivos
people unlimited

Energy lies at the heart of human progress. Access to clean, renewable energy improves lives, alleviates poverty, promotes gender equality and propels economic development without destroying our planet.

But 'energy access for all' will remain a hollow phrase if leaders fail to significantly invest in decentralized renewable energy.

This is why the Green & Inclusive Energy program promotes decentralized renewable energy and clean cooking solutions to achieve energy access for all.

FOREWORD

The document in front of you is a description of our lobby & advocacy approach towards promoting green & inclusive energy. It is written to give an inside look into the often unpredictable and challenging but also exciting profession of advocates and to guide and strengthen our approach. The document describes how we think change happens and our strategies to arrive at our ultimate goal; providing clean and affordable energy to all.

The document describes the starting point of our joint advocacy and capacity development. But it also reflects the changes we have made over the years together with our partner organisations from all the regions and places we work in. The document will be updated regularly to reflect our learning and changing realities.

As we cannot achieve our objectives on our own, we stress the importance of Hivos' facilitating role, as we put quite some effort in creating partnerships and including the voice from communities, women and other civil society representatives. Moreover, as results rely for a great deal on individuals' passion and competences we invest in increasing our own and our partner's competencies, such as lobby skills, knowledge and network. How we do this is described later in this publication, but here I would like to emphasize the importance of devoting time in competence building. It is key for getting your voice heard and acquire authority in the energy field.

Finally, it is a privilege for me to lead the work and team on Green and Inclusive Energy. Change and happiness comes from working with this team of great professionals but also dear friends from all over the world. We find each other at formal events, in posh meeting places, but also in long and demanding gatherings in boring backroom offices. We also meet and work with many inspiring and strong individuals from other organisations, from local community leaders to people working at top positions in governments, including the effective partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Sharing the commitment for positive change and transformation of the energy sector with this team, gives me the energy and joy to continue working for a better world. Looking forward to continuing that journey together with Hivos and non-Hivos colleagues.

Eco Matser,
Program Manager Hivos' Green & Inclusive Energy program

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INTRODUCTION

The Green & Inclusive Energy program is a five-year lobby and advocacy (L&A) program of [Hivos](#), including [ENERGIA](#), and [IIED](#) in partnership with the Dutch Government that kicked off in 2016. It is part of a broader collaboration between Hivos, IIED, Article 19 and the Dutch Government called 'Citizen Agency Consortium' in which programs in four thematic areas are carried out.

The Green & Inclusive Energy program is being implemented with the strategic partners and civil society organizations (CSOs) in Indonesia, Nepal, Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Guatemala and at international level.

The program strives for making energy systems sustainable and fair: from policy and regulation, to energy providers and businesses, to financial institutions and consumers. The ultimate goal is to:

‘meet people's energy needs through green and inclusive energy systems that create economic opportunities for women and men while mitigating climate change.’

In order to reach this goal, the program carries out interventions on two levels; 1) influencing policy and finance at local, national, regional and international levels; and 2) increasing the lobby and advocacy capacity of the consortium and civil society partners.

This document aims to provide insights in how the Green & Inclusive Energy program team carries out activities on the two levels. It is structured into three parts. Part 1 provides information about the basic methodologies and concepts of the program. Part 2 describes the L&A strategies for implementation. Part 3 elaborates on the way capacities of all organizations involved in the partnership, including Hivos, are developed.

Box 1: Green & Inclusive

Why Green?

Green energy comes from a renewable source such as sun, wind, biomass or water, but also includes energy from (animal) waste. Off-grid energy from renewable sources is the fastest and most cost-effective way to deliver energy access and use. Clean cooking energy solutions are required to meet the energy needs of the poor, particularly women.

To protect our planet we need a rapid change away from fossil fuels. The extraction and consumption of oil, gas, and coal is a key driver of climate change and leads to instability and pollution across the world.

Why inclusive?

The energy we produce is not distributed evenly. The vast majority of people without access to energy live in poor countries and often in remote areas far from a central electricity grid and they are mostly women. Access to affordable and green energy leads to great improvements in health, education, and opportunities for women. It also spurs entrepreneurship and increases income because local businesses can use energy for productive uses and become last mile energy suppliers.

METHODOLOGIES & CONCEPTS

LOBBY & ADVOCACY

As lobby and advocacy is at the heart of the program, a clear understanding of the concept is vital. For Hivos, lobby and advocacy is: *a political process by which individuals or groups aim to influence the behavior, relationships, actions, activities, agendas, policies and/or practices of target actors for a particular cause or goal, within political, economic and social systems.*

*"Lobby is an art,
not a science."*

THEORY OF CHANGE

The complex and non-linear nature of social change processes makes outcomes of change interventions unpredictable. Therefore, strategic planning needs to be flexible but at the same time remain focusing on the goal. In this context, Hivos uses Theory of Change (ToC) as an appropriate approach to guide strategic thinking and action.

Hivos' definition of ToCs: *Theories of change are the ideas and hypotheses ('theories') people and organizations have about how change happens. These theories can be conscious or unconscious and are based on personal beliefs, assumptions and a necessarily limited, personal perception of reality.*

The Green & Inclusive Energy program uses a ToC as well. At the start of the program, a generic ToC was designed that describes on top level 1) what the desired change is, why and for whom, 2) what pathways lead to those changes, and 3) the assumptions underlying the cause-effect relations of the pathways. Moreover, the descriptions are based on an analysis of the external context, the power dynamics within the system, the contribution Hivos and partners envision to make, planning and the monitoring, evaluation and learning framework and process.

Derived from the generic ToC, all regions have designed specific country/ regional/ international ToCs. The ToCs guide the lobby and advocacy as well as the capacity development work, in that all actions can be traced back to choices made in the ToC.

As context changes, the ToC is not static. It is revised at least once a year based on the changes in the outside environment, the outcomes achieved and the lessons learned.

OUTCOME HARVESTING

The ToC is complemented with Outcome Harvesting (OH) as monitoring and evaluation approach. This helps to monitor at a strategic level beyond outputs. With OH evidence is collected ('harvested') of what has changed ('outcomes') and then, working backwards, determine whether and how an intervention has contributed to these changes. To elaborate, it describes a change in the behavior of target audience, its relevance to the ToC and the contribution the program has made towards that outcome.

Outcome harvesting encourages annual reflection on outcomes (intended and unintended), helps determine the relevance of these outcomes, and is the basis for annual revision of the ToC. Advocacy outcomes are defined as changes in the behavior, relationships, actions, activities, policies or practices of target actors.

LEARNING AGENDA

A learning agenda is informed by the core concept of dynamic learning, whereby learning questions are formulated on the key assumptions in the ToC. These learning questions are answered by program staff and/or reflected upon by people outside the partnership. The questions challenge the way it is believed change happens and answering them gives insights on the very same change processes.

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

Apart from methodological components, the program relies on specific notion of context and reality. As such, it is recognized that advocacy implies a windy, bumpy road. At times, the grounds shift beneath your feet as allies go after another target, foes change face, and the rules suddenly become opaque. In this continually shifting landscape, which is incredibly important to understand both in terms of political processes as well as in terms of who the powerful players are, there is no one-size-fits-all advocacy strategy. Therefore, continuously looking for windows of opportunity as timing is crucial, while considering different advocacy approaches and tools is key.



CITIZEN AGENCY

A key concept in the Green & Inclusive Energy program is 'citizen agency'. Citizen agency refers to the ability to exercise choice and to take action. In other words, people are agents of their own development. This can be implemented in different ways in a L&A strategy. It ranges from people-driven advocacy, advocacy alongside people, advocacy on behalf of people, or civil society advocacy based on citizen's needs.

In a 'people-driven advocacy' approach people have direct control over the advocacy agenda, lead the entire planning process and actively participate in collective L&A activities. In advocating alongside people, individuals are willing and active participants in setting the advocacy agenda and are engaged in the advocacy planning process. When advocating on behalf of people, civil society assess how individuals want to be involved, set the advocacy agenda with some input from individuals, elicit people's views and seek to include these in the advocacy planning process and civil society takes the lead in lobby and advocacy activities. Lastly, when civil society advocates based on citizen's needs, the advocacy planning process is conducted by civil society only and are leading all advocacy efforts. In this last approach, citizen's needs are assessed prior to the program. This can be done by research in the form of consultation meetings, or else.

In L&A strategies it is important to assess the willingness and the appropriateness of the extend people (need to) engage in policy influencing. Sometimes the complexity of an issue and processes does not allow for extensive citizen participation, but more often advocacy processes are rather long-term and the effect envisioned is benefiting the wider system rather than having an immediate effect on people's lives. Balancing engaging people in advocacy processes and standalone work of CSOs in delivering goals within the framework and timeframe of the program is therefore crucial.

The Green & Inclusive Energy program's approach to citizen agency is twofold:

Rooted civil society organizations

Before starting the Green and Inclusive advocacy program, Hivos had been working with national and local energy CSOs to provide affordable and clean energy for poor and remote communities. The needs and wants of those communities were the starting point of those interventions. The objectives of the advocacy program and ToC have been derived from that experience and collaboration. The main barriers for the desired change, were seen in the national policies, international policies, and finance. Having said that, it was concluded that CSOs must play a role to influence decision-makers at those identified levels. Hivos therefore partners up with strong CSOs and together take the lead in advocacy efforts. Hence, civil society advocates based on citizen's needs.

These CSOs have strong roots in society and are (potentially) capable of translating the needs of people into national and international policy and finance proposals. This is essential because Hivos and its partners are first and foremost accountable to the people whose lives the program aims to improve. This implies that all involved partners have an in-depth understanding of local realities and are capable of conveying peoples' interests. Some of them are working directly with constituencies due to their very nature of being a membership organization (e.g. consumer organizations). Others regularly convene meetings with constituencies to cross check if actions have the deliberate impact. Others base their planning process on priorities obtained from research or investigative journalism. Above all, all partners, including Hivos, adhere to a people-centered approach that never loses sight of the interests of those people the program aims to service.

In practice this means that CSOs and Hivos collaboratively design the ToC (including setting objectives and deciding on L&A interventions), outcome harvesting, and learning agenda and jointly adapt the ToC based on learnings. Also, all parties together strengthen their capacity to advocate and influence policy and practices and increase knowledge, including on context (more in chapter 3).

Enabling citizen agency through energy access

The second way the program addresses citizen agency is by contributing to its very expansion. To elaborate, access to energy is an enabler of citizen agency because it contributes to the ability to exercise choice and to take action. For instance, access to energy provides light to study at night, connects people and allows them to obtain information with communication technologies (e.g. television, mobile phones) and offers possibilities to operate all sorts of appliances used for economic activities (from milling machines to computers to irrigation systems for agriculture).

Moreover, decentralization of energy solutions and clean cooking solutions literally put power into people's hands. Citizens become independent from state utilities. They do not have to wait until government or private sector actors expand the electricity net, but gives them the opportunity to become owner of energy. In addition, women and children can become free from life threatening smoke.

In conclusion, access to decentralized and clean cooking energy solutions creates an environment that support women and men in becoming more independent and empowered, two attributes needed to exercise full control over their own development.

Box 2: Investing in women

Women and men are affected differently by energy access or the lack thereof. Women and girls are more exposed to indoor air pollution from using solid biomass and coal for cooking and from using candles, kerosene and other polluting fuels for lighting. This leads to severe health risks and 2.8 million premature deaths every year.

Women also spend an average of 1.4 hours every day collecting firewood and several hours cooking on inefficient stoves. This is valuable time that could be used for other activities to generate income or learn new skills.

Women usually spend most time in the household and are therefore also affected greater by the lack of electricity and clean cooking solutions. However, even where infrastructure is available, women are often denied finance and appliances.

At the same time, the potential benefits of energy access for women are big. Energy policies and programs that explicitly address gender issues while involving women in decision-making, planning and implementation have better outcomes and improve livelihoods of entire communities.

Green and Inclusive Energy creates space for both men and women while specifically increasing opportunities for women that will allow them greater and more productive participation in politics, society and the economy.

LOBBY & ADVOCACY

As the ToC describes the change pathways and interventions, it also implicitly shows a number of overarching choices made based on how Hivos believes change happens. In short these choices are 1) choosing unusual partners, 2) using daring advocacy and thought leadership, 3) making communication key, 4) building multi-stakeholder coalitions and networks, 5) conducting collaborative advocacy, 6) engaging with media, 7) using evidence and research, 8) seizing windows of opportunities, and 9) linking national, regional and international lobby agendas.

PARTNER CHOICE: WORKING WITH CROSS-SECTOR ACTORS

The theme 'renewable energy' has strong links with other areas. Energy is a pre-condition for e.g. health, safety, education, gender equality and economic development at large. However, experience with energy CSO partners has shown that these organizations do have an in-depth understanding of energy technologies and policy and regulation but that they are not always well connected to other sectors nor other CSOs and often lack strong lobby and advocacy experience.

By bringing representatives from other fields into the partnership the program increases its impact on policies and practice. Connecting with partners and sectors other than the energy sector opens up new networks, new financial opportunities and other viewpoints. Furthermore, when non-usual suspects start having an interest in energy issues the group of organizations pushing for an energy transition is simply bigger and effective in more fields. The objective is to break out of the silos consisting solely of likeminded organizations and institutions and invest in partnerships with cross-sector players.

The groups can roughly be divided into three groups. The first group consists of consumer organizations and business associations with members who are users of energy. Secondly, so-called 'nexus' organizations (health, water, education, agriculture, housing, etc.) are included to profile the interest and importance of other 'mainstream' sectors. Thirdly, the program involves women groups. These groups are equipped to bring the energy component into their more general gender work and vice versa the gender element into energy policies and programs. This is especially important because strengthening the role of women in the energy value chain improves the position of women in society (see text box below). Finally, the potential of cooperating with climate groups (e.g. Climate Action Network (CAN)) that share the same position on the need for renewable energy, but have less experience in linking energy with development and pro-poor policies in their strategies is vital.

Aside from working across sectors, actors from different levels of society are involved in the program. These are actors who either form policies, invest or have another stake in the energy sector, such as grassroots organizations defending the interests of those without energy access. In other words, the program seeks collaboration with civil society, private sector, governments as well as international institutions.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: ZERO

ZERO Regional Environment Organization is a regional non-governmental organization working in Southern Africa and headquartered in Zimbabwe. ZERO focuses on promoting development through the sustainable utilization and management of natural resources.

The organization has partnered with the Green & Inclusive Energy program in an effort to empower CSOs and media representatives to better understand and appreciate sustainable energy, energy efficiency and energy access. The goal is to increase effective advocacy efforts among governments and communities. ZERO accomplishes this through convening meetings, collaborating on statements and other publicity materials, and holding roundtable meetings with key stakeholders. ZERO educates and trains media representatives to report authoritatively on energy issues, even taking them on field tours to learn about challenges on the ground.

In 2016 and 2017, ZERO has focused on setting up so-called nexus networks between ministries in Zimbabwe to increase coherence in policies. In 2017, ZERO succeeded in connecting the different ministries under the auspices of the Zimbabwe Ministry of Energy and Power Development. Since then they have managed to put renewable energy on the agenda of several ministries. Various renewable energy proposals have been discussed among the wider group and agreements are made with regards to the dissemination of energy solutions, including the adoption of formal quality checks on imported renewable energy appliances. Furthermore, ministries have opened doors for CSOs to contribute to discussions on policy development. A clear example is the invitation extended to ZERO to present the link between agriculture and renewable energy during a food and nutrition meeting of the Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanization and Irrigation Development. Moreover, the Clerk of Parliament adopted a submission written by CSOs on the 2018 National Budget to the Parliament of Zimbabwe. The result was the increase of the budget on energy by 10% as compared to the 2017 National Budget.



DARING ADVOCACY AND THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

In general, Hivos believes bold ideas, innovation and standing out makes lobby and advocacy stronger. The program continuously looks for daring approaches that challenge the status quo and does not shy away from taking risks. In this regard, the program adopts *iconic* initiatives that might seem unrealistic at first but have a strong exemplary value when materialized.

Iconic initiatives

For the Green & Inclusive Energy program, there are a number of criteria that make an initiative iconic. It is a project that 1) shows boldness; 2) fits the sentence, "I have a dream"; 3) inspires others; 4) has symbolic value; 5) is high profile; and 6) challenges mainstream thinking. In other words, what iconic projects have in common is the dream and belief in what you do. Iconic thinking is not a fact-checking mission but innovative in all its senses – the approach, partners, way of working, techniques. It is used to inspire and motivate, to enable change.

This can be found in situations where emotions play a big role and mainstream actors may have a blind spot or are stuck. Iconic projects are characterized by their multi-stakeholder approach and multi-solution orientation which requires an open stance to new ideas and parties.

Box 3: Iconic examples

Sumba Iconic Island initiative

The Sumba Iconic Island (SII) is a bold initiative with a clear ambition: 100% renewable energy by 2025. Hivos started this multi-stakeholder initiative in 2010 with the aim to provide access to reliable renewable forms of energy to the population of Sumba island (located in the eastern part of Indonesia), and in doing so, ending their dependency on fossil fuels and support development and economic activities of the local population.

The contribution of the Green & Inclusive Energy program to the SII initiative is limited to activities related to gender mainstreaming. Rather, SII is often used in the Green & Inclusive Energy program as evidence and inspiring example to spark interest and raise public awareness on renewable energy, climate change and energy access.

Energy Change Lab

The Energy Change Lab works with pioneers and change makers to build an energy system that is sustainable and people-centered. We do this by developing leaders, incubating prototypes for sector change, building evidence, connecting people and sharing ideas.

Jointly initiated by Hivos and IIED, and working with local partners, the lab started in Tanzania in 2015. In Tanzania, we are focusing on three priority areas: accountability in the energy sector, job creation and improved coverage of decentralized energy solutions. We work with partners to run learning and leadership programs for young people, aspiring entrepreneurs and energy professionals. As we grow, we share our approach and results globally.

100% renewable energy in Central America

Central America has the opportunity to become the first region in the developing world to achieve 100% access to energy for its inhabitants. Hivos has entered a regional alliance aimed to achieving this goal. The alliance includes Hivos, OLADE, ECLAC and ACCESE (Central American Alliance for Energy Sustainability). Together these organizations will create a collaborative framework to coordinate regional efforts. The alliance will work together with the governments of SICA (Central American Integration System) member countries.



The Hivos team in Kenya

Thought leadership

'Crazy' ideas alone however are not enough. Getting others to listen and buy in, and thus being successful as an advocate, you need to be recognized as an expert in the field. Therefore, becoming a *thought leader* on decentralized renewable energy and clean cooking solutions is essential. A thought leader is someone who has the relevant knowledge and experience but can also act as an ambassador for the program. Thought leadership implies becoming known and outspoken but also creating balance:

- taking both the front and back seat (leading from behind)
- engaging with higher level and lower level targets
- involving different types of actors
- making proactive and reactive moves

Examples of activities contributing to Hivos' distinctive positioning and thought leadership are: writing op-eds, conducting new approaches to events (e.g. design of the event), who we invite (e.g. CSOs), who we work with (e.g. journalists), and being ahead of developments (e.g. crowd-grid, people-centered energy systems, women economic empowerment in energy value chains, renewable energy curricula for primary school education).

COMMUNICATION

Communication is at the heart of the program's strategy as changing perceptions and narratives is core to advocacy. Strong narratives and convincing images usually have more impact than mere facts. Therefore, the program puts a lot of emphasis on the way of communicating and making sure that the communication responds to the world view of the different audiences.

Next to influencing current narratives, communication supports the credibility and the notion of becoming a thought leader.

To help articulating L&A messages, a position document summarizes the program's position and the changes it wants to bring about. This document is annexed to this paper and includes both the challenges with regards to a particular topic and presents a possible solution. Furthermore, it describes the actions our audiences should take. This document guides all of the specific, tailored messages that are directed at the audiences in different occasions.

Box 4: Knowing your audience

Effective engagement requires communicators to recognize and reflect the worldview of their target audience. Attempts by Non-Governmental Organizations to project their own motivations are rarely successful. Therefore Hivos conducted a research to find language that accurately reflects the values and motivations reported by people from our audiences. This study guides all program's communication efforts and can be found [here](#).

Apart from this overall communication research, the program commissioned a research in Nepal on Effective Communication Tools to Promote Energy Access in Nepal. This research can be found [here](#).

Apart from the content, the appropriate communication means are strategically chosen. This includes considerations of who should be the sender of a certain message and what channel should be used. If Hivos is the sender, time is invested in positioning Hivos on- and offline by voicing the program's agenda strongly (e.g. with opinion pieces, via social media [@HivosEnergy](#) and directly in meetings/events).

When Hivos believes others should be the sender, the team strategizes on who that should be and supports that actor in voicing the agenda, or strategically works with them in coalitions (e.g. Brooklyn Coalition, [see page 17](#)) to let their perspective be heard. These 'other actors' are either Hivos' partner CSOs, private sector actors, journalists, government officials or others. More on the program's work with independent journalists and media on [page 18](#). [Engaging with the 1](#)

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER COALITION & NETWORKS

No single actor can change the world by itself. Advocacy results are stronger and more durable if stakeholders, such as governments, businesses and other CSOs work together. In 'coalitions of the willing', ideas are transformed into solutions. More specifically, together there is more convening power, a greater chance to impact high level discussions, you are better equipped to take a stance, have more and better examples of good practices, and have bigger, widespread networks and audiences. Likewise, coalition partners might have access to specific processes and open doors that would have stayed closed for Hivos and partner CSOs. Knowing influential persons in the institutions the program aims to influence helps as well.

Acknowledging these benefits, the program builds and leads coalitions in which creating strategies (on who to target, what to promote and what approach to use, e.g. policy briefs, best practices paper, events etc.) is done collaboratively.

Hivos and partners are also members of coalitions and networks led by others. Supporting these coalitions in terms of advice and by devoting time and money in relationship building, and investing financially to make sure instrumental persons can attend important meetings are several of the activities conducted. The program for instance, supports partner CSOs, but also private sector or government officials, to attend international meetings and alert them about influencing opportunities for policy processes. In short, Hivos intermediates to secure a seat at the table for different stakeholders.

Working with governments

In engaging with governments, specifically, the program emphasizes:

- cooperating in a flexible manner
- exploring a range of entry points: engaging not only with the top-level
- seeking champions who are willing to go the extra mile
- making sure both know their responsibility and added value
- formalizing relationship where possible and relevant
- linking sub-national to national, and national to regional, and international

It should be noted that Hivos is very grateful for strategically cooperating with the Dutch Government. Their role have been instrumental in the cooperation as described in this chapter.

Working with the private sector

In terms of working with non-usual suspects, trusted 'senders' and on the experience the consortium has, Hivos searches collaboration with private sector in different ways:

- Hivos works closely with renewable energy associations since long time: Renovables (Central America), TAREA (East Africa), and ARE, AMDA, etc.
- Hivos collaborates with private sector in government initiated working groups such as the SEforALL Technical Team in Kenya
- in direct lobby efforts towards governments and regulators (e.g. biogas sector in Kenya)
- in hosting and organizing events
- as likeminded organizations striving for the same ideas on energy access for all – e.g. Selco India and Schneider Electric in the Brooklyn Coalition, strategically cooperating, taking best roles, as 'trusted' sender

Box 5: Linking communities and private sector

In their work raising awareness on renewable energy issues and technologies, with women in Kajiado County, the Kenya Climate Change Working Group (KCCWG) realized that one of the reasons households were not purchasing renewable energy equipment such as solar lanterns and chargers was because they did not know where to purchase them. They then played a connecting role between the private sector and the communities by linking the two at their sessions, allowing the women access to the technologies.

COLLABORATIVE ADVOCACY

Lobby and advocacy strategies often adopt one of two approaches: 1) challenging and confrontational tactics towards established interests ('outside track'); or 2) cooperative, working with institutional and private sector actors to help develop their capacities to act more responsively and accountably ('inside track').

Both approaches have advantages and disadvantages. An outsider approach uses public pressure that can contribute to push those we wish to influence into taking action. But at the same time, we may alienate those we are trying to influence if we are perceived too critical to engage with. In contrast, an insider approach gives the opportunity to build a constructive relationship with decision makers but our independence might be at risk.

Hivos' experience in building coalitions and knowing the field of operations and targets is leading in making the decision for an insider or outsider approach. As such, creating space where others feel comfortable to speak out and engaging target audiences has proved to be a far more successful approach than criticizing them from the outside. Therefore, the program mostly choose to the inside

track. This is reflected in the choice to build coalitions as well as engaging a range of stakeholders in iconic initiatives, but also on a more practical level by directly supporting policy makers with concrete suggestions for policies.

However, depending on the context, any organization in the partnership, including Hivos, may decide to take on different roles at different times. If this is the case, all partners within the specific context (e.g. region) need to jointly agree and carefully manage such an approach to ensure it does not undermine the shared agenda and collective objectives.

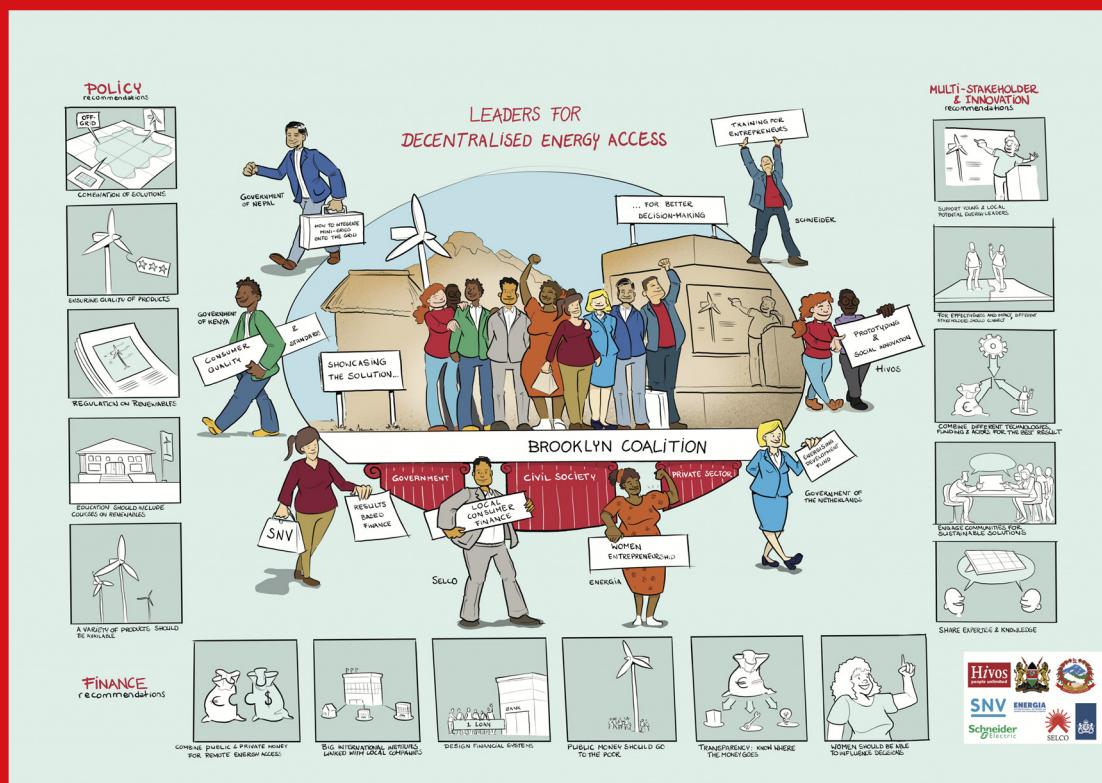


BROOKLYN COALITION

The government of Kenya, Nepal and the Netherlands and Germany, private sector actors Selco India and Schneider Electric and non-governmental organizations Hivos, Energia and SNV form the Brooklyn Coalition. All actors see the need to boost progress on access to energy through decentralized renewable energy and agreed to work together towards this goal.

The nature of the coalition as a multi-stakeholder coalition opens doors that normally would be hard to open for CSOs. Contributing to official UN events for instance becomes an option because of the membership of three governments. Moreover, the coalition gives its members a stronger backing for interaction with actors like the EU and World Bank or the Green Climate Fund.

In terms of results, the coalition has paved the way to be involved in the Ad Hoc Technical Working Group (now Technical Advisory Group) for the review of SDG7. This involvement included Hivos' participation in sessions during the SDG7 preparatory conference (Feb 2018, Bangkok), co-authoring one of the official policy briefs informing the SDG7 process and hosting of two significant events at the UN and German permanent mission during the HLPF 2018 during which progress on SDG7 was being reviewed.





Hivos colleagues and trained journalists at UNHLPF conference in New York

ENGAGING WITH THE MEDIA

Although adhering to a collaborative approach is leading, sometimes situations ask for a strong push from the outside to move things forward. Public opinion can be the final tipping point or even driving force for taking action, as can be seen with governments. This is why the uptake of the program's messages by the (social) media is important. For instance, the number of articles about climate change and renewable energy has increased significantly in the last ten years. This has boosted the pressure on governments, international institutions and businesses to invest in climate action and the energy transition. It has also contributed to the public's acceptance of these investments and, in general, has raised awareness – herewith increasing people's agency - and shifted opinions of the wider public. Journalists simply put a topic on the agenda. More about the role of journalists and the media is written in [this opinion piece](#).

Additionally, the media can help strengthen the program's profile and allows to be stronger in advocacy and have a louder voice.

In engaging with the media different activities are carried out: 1) map out media outlets in the different countries and select some of them as partners in the program, 2) conduct journalist trainings to improve and enhance reporting on renewable energy issues and encourage these journalists to apply for different writing competitions, especially internationally, 3) invite journalists to (international) events to report negotiations, processes etc. and 4) pitch articles/opinion pieces and give interviews to be published in the (social) media and on radio shows that reach millions of listeners in developing countries.

EVIDENCE BASED

Evidence plays a central role in L&A work; solid research that underpins the lobby and advocacy arguments as well as the possible solutions to 'thick problems' is crucial to exert influence. Knowledge and research developed within and outside this strategic partnership is used to strengthen the influencing agenda. Aggregating and using this evidence plays an important role as does generating evidence by targeted research; research that is specifically used to influence the L&A efforts.

The program's consortium partner IIED is instrumental in this through:

- sharing their knowledge and experience for our strategy (ToC)
- producing policy papers and research
- presenting and networking at international events
- working on new solutions in the Hivos-IIED Energy Change Lab
- supporting partners and staff to develop adequate Terms of Reference (ToR) while commissioning research and reports to generate evidence by research of third parties

Next to commissioning own research with IIED, Hivos assigns strategically relevant institutions, e.g. ECDPM (EU), ECEFI (LA), to perform studies. The same message coming from an acknowledged and respected institute sometimes has much more impact (unexpected sender). In addition, Hivos also conveniently uses studies performed by others.

Examples of research conducted, and derived policy briefs:

- [Unlocking Climate Finance for Decentralised Energy Access](#)¹
- [EU's financial instruments for access to energy](#)²
- [Beyond Fire: How to Achieve Sustainable Cooking](#)³
- [Bridging the gap: how inclusive finance boosts access to off-grid energy](#)⁴
- [Facilitating International Climate Finance Flows to Kenya's Decentralised Renewable Energy Sector](#)
- [Financing For Green and Inclusive Energy In Nepal](#)⁵
- [Effective Communication Tools To Promote Energy Access In Nepal](#)⁶
- [Role of good governance for green and inclusive energy access in Nepal](#)⁷

WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITIES

Experience has shown that greater impact is created when windows of opportunity are used. Seizing windows of opportunity is prominent in the strategy. As processes are not always predictable and timing is important to succeed, it is important to always keep an eye on emergent developments. This means that strategies are flexible and that Hivos jumps on the bandwagon when opportunities arise.

**“Diverge from your plan
by keeping *your eyes on the ball*”**

¹ Rai, N, Best, S and Soanes, M (2016) *Unlocking climate finance for decentralised energy access*. IIED, London.

² Grosse-Puppendahl, S., Bilal, S. and Karaki, K (2017) *EU's financial instruments for access to energy*, ECDPM, Brussels

³ Couture, T. D., Jacobs, D. (2016) *Beyond Fire: How to Achieve Sustainable Cooking*, World Future Council, Hamburg

⁴ Garside, B., Perera, N. (2019) *Bridging the gap: how inclusive finance boosts access to off-grid energy*. Policy briefing IIED-Hivos

⁵ Practical Action (2018) *Financing for Green And Inclusive Energy In Nepal*. Policy Brief

⁶ Practical Action (2018) *Effective Communication Tools to Promote Energy Access In Nepal*, Policy Brief

⁷ Practical Action(2018) *Role of good governance for green and inclusive energy access in Nepal*

However, what may look like an opportunity can in fact be the opposite, luring the organizations into the pitfall of spending time and efforts on a mirage. Based on experiences, there are therefore a few practical and pragmatic questions that help make decisions:

- a. Will it bring us **faster or more effectively** to the desired advocacy change? In other words, does it contribute to our ToC?
- b. Do we as Hivos have an **added value** over others and are we **able to influence** the process?
- c. What are the **assumptions** that come with this?
- d. How much will it **cost** in terms of money and time?
- e. What does it **require from others**: internally in our organization; externally from our allies, or stakeholders?
- f. What can be possible **risks** if we step into this?
- g. Can **synergies** be created with what we already do?
- h. What are **Go – No Go criteria** and moments: e.g. how and when will we decide that it is not going to work or that it is not bringing us what we expected?

Examples of opportunities Hivos grabs hold of are side events during major conferences such as the High Level Political Forum, stocktaking exercises as in the case of the SDG7 review, shifting targets to tap into e.g. political processes, such as elections, and publications.

Box 7: Grab hold of opportunities

An opportunity to link gender and energy arose when the review of the SDG 7 during the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF) was forthcoming. ENERGIA received an invitation to contribute to the review, hence influencing the process. ENERGIA also became co-lead of the so-called Technical Advisory Group tasked to prepare the review. As an outcome, for the first time in a report of the UN Secretary-General on SDG7, gender was included as crosscutting theme.

SETTING AGENDAS LOCALLY

With relative small budget, team and partner capacity the need to choose strategically for a specific topic and goal is clear. The focus on Green & Inclusive Energy, and more specifically DRE and clean cooking, maximizes impact. This focus is the same for all regions and internationally. However, the way the program works on this joint theme differentiates largely between the regions, based on local realities and opportunities. While in Nepal and Kenya for example local government and Counties getting more and more important, in Zimbabwe the new renewable energy policy offered most changes for impact. From a global perspective intergovernmental process and finance remains key while at the same time opportunities have been created in Central America to work on a regional level with regional institutions and governments. Hence, the focus is decided upon jointly but program's agendas are set locally.

CONNECTING NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL L&A AGENDAS

The advantage of doing lobby at different levels is that it gives knowledge about policies and practices at these different levels. It provides, for instance, real examples from countries that can be used at international level to showcase impact and change needed. Vice versa, ensure proper translation of international agreements into regional and national implementation.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FOR L&A

CSOs are catalysts for green and inclusive energy transitions. They connect citizens to advocacy. The challenges are complex, urgent and defy 'business as usual' approaches. Capacity development seeks to enable CSOs to raise and change their game: to find new ways to change the debate and challenge governments, donors and companies with alternative solutions, smarter use of knowledge and provocative ways of working and communicating.

In order to find a balance between ambition and resources, the capacity development vision for this program is to:

- concentrate resources to a limited number of CSOs
- create multiplier effects through multi-actor engagement, creation of CSO energy networks and through working with non-energy CSOs
- reserve capacity to engage with opportunities as they arise

Related to the previous point, the capacity development efforts of this program focus more on approaches to change and less on technical energy issues including multi-actor engagement, transition approaches, linking grassroots reality to high-level policy and effective L&A strategies in a highly politicized and sensitive context.

LEARNING BY DOING

While the capacity development approach includes a number of general interventions across countries, such as training on energy and gender, the program's vision is an approach based on learning by doing. Context specific interventions, enabling partners and programs to create space for real-time learning and responding to capacity development needs as and when they arise from program practices is leading. This has been especially useful for raising non-energy partners' understanding of energy. But also to raise capacity in advocacy, communications and influencing at regional and even international levels.

SHARED LEARNING

Furthermore, capacities of CSOs cannot be built from outside. They (must) develop 'endogenously', i.e. as a result of a conscious process and effort of these CSOs themselves. Taking 'endogenous' capacity development seriously means that the program has defined specific capacity development support interventions together with partner CSOs at the start of the program. Besides, the capacities of Hivos, IIED and ENERGIA are also part of the collective capacities. We therefore emphasize shared learning. We all self-assess our own capacities to define our capacity development needs and plans.

Box 9: Partner to partner learning

While Hivos organizes regular learning sessions for the partners in Kenya and Tanzania, both at national and regional levels, in Tanzania, the partners have also taken the initiative to organize their own sessions. They selected a coordinator amongst themselves, who then crafted a learning agenda that the organizations follow. They host own meetings, and conduct their own review of the theory of change.

5C model

Hivos uses the 5Capabilities model; capability to adapt and self-renew; capability to carry out technical, service delivery and logistical tasks; capability to balance diversity and coherence; capability to commit and engage; and capability to relate and to attract resources and support. Within the self-assessments, focus lies on the capacities that are relevant to lobby and advocacy. The following areas are considered to be important:

- knowledge: Specific knowledge on Green and Inclusive Energy, both on the 'current situation/problem' as well as the 'desired situation/solution'. This explicitly includes knowledge about the situation of affected citizens and ways to empower and engage them
- evidence: capacity to generate, aggregate and work with evidence on the issue
- gender: gender analysis, i.e. knowledge on the differential impacts of changes on women and men
- multi-stakeholder: network and coalition strengthening at national and international levels
- relational skills: relating to lobby and advocacy targets and to public opinion/media
- citizen based: campaigning, influencing public opinion, empowering and involving citizens

EXAMPLES OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

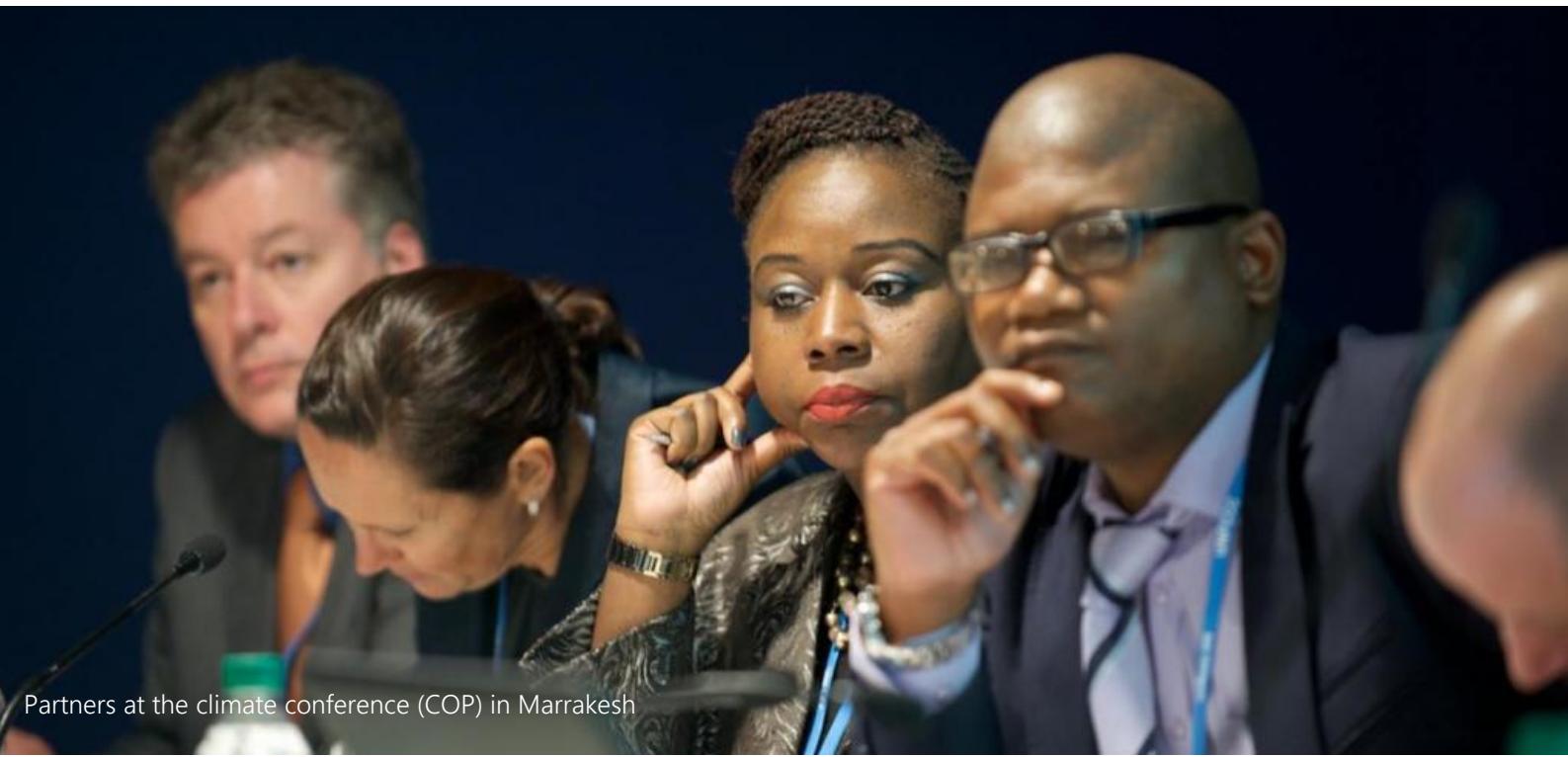
Derived from self-assessments, the following areas are considered – so far - as important capacities to work on:

- National L&A without losing local context
- Collaborative L&A (rather than confrontational)
- Innovative L&A
- Use of ToC for reflection and planning
- Innovations by nexus organisations
- Non-energy organizations: basic energy knowledge
- Energy organizations: gender and social inclusion
- Use of research and evidence
- Communication and media
- Strategic networking

The following methods for capacity development are used:

- Learning by doing: Letting partners lead in national events: instilling confidence/ownership
- Continuous training: Ensures that learning "sticks". Trainings so far have focused on:
 - The use of methodologies used in the program, e.g. ToC, OH
 - Gender and social inclusion
 - Energy sector, governance and processes

- Communication
- (thought) leadership
- Peer-to-peer training: Leveraging experience of different partners
- Safaris: a five-day learning journey following a problem-solving process to explore and experience the main challenges related to energy access. These safaris are critical because they give an opportunity for in-depth learning about the issue.
- South-south learning: though partners visits to best practice solutions in different country
- Regular meetings and reflections: Ensure that long-term objectives are in line and achieved
- Attending events: Letting partners participate in regional, national and international energy platforms as an opportunity to interact with high-level advocacy targets



Partners at the climate conference (COP) in Marrakesh

ANNEX 1: HIVOS' POSITION ON DECENTRALIZED RENEWABLE ENERGY

Energy access

Access to renewable energy **improves living conditions, alleviates poverty and propels economic development** without destroying the environment.

However, the energy we produce is not distributed evenly. The vast majority of people who live without access to energy live in poor countries and often in remote areas far from a central electricity grid.

Access to energy is not just an end in itself. Access to clean, affordable and reliable energy **transforms people's lives, bringing health, education, jobs, and economic opportunities, especially for women**. It spurs **entrepreneurship and increases income** as local businesses use energy for **productive uses**.

However, especially in rural areas, the **delivery of energy access is slow** and not at all on track for achieving universal energy access by 2030, as adopted by the United Nations (UN) in Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG7). Still one in five people lacks access to modern electricity and 3 billion people rely on wood, coal, charcoal or animal waste for cooking and heating.

Access to renewable energy is a **catalyst for the achievement of most other SDGs**. By its very nature, energy is a strong enabler of better health, education, jobs, food production and conservation, as well as water use and quality.

Renewable energy

In order to protect our planet and **mitigate climate change** we need a rapid change to 100% renewable energy away from fossil fuels. The extraction and consumption of oil, gas and coal is a key driver of climate change and leads to instability (in terms of climate and conflict) and pollution across the world.

Climate change

Renewable energy is truly **environmentally sustainable**. It offers an opportunity for sustainable development while **leapfrogging fossil fuels** and avoiding the increase of future emissions.

Decentralized renewable energy

To speed up the delivery of energy across the world, **decentralized renewable energy (DRE)** is the **fastest and most flexible solution**, as DRE can be installed and brought into production much faster

than traditional power generation. Decentralized systems are also the most **cost-effective** solutions for the majority of those who gain access in rural areas.

Locally generated through mini-grids and off-grid solutions, DRE is a '**leapfrog**' technology that is already **transforming the energy sector**. It is changing the energy production, making it environmentally and financially sustainable and more reliable; it is **transforming markets**, opening them to wider participation and competition; and it is reaching a much wider scope of delivery, providing access to people living in remote areas and ensuring they are enabled to participate in the new energy market.

DRE enables and encourages new **initiatives and enterprises**. In the communities it supplies, it enhances capabilities of people to take matters into their own hands and achieve their potential.

The current energy transformation with decentralized solutions is changing the way people interact with each other and their energy providers. It influences the role of citizens. They are no longer only consumer, but also **prosumer or energy entrepreneur**. Decentralized energy solutions therefore **democratizes** the energy sector.

Clean cooking

Traditional cooking on firewood has immense negative impact on the climate (e.g. deforestation) and people preparing food (e.g. smoke related diseases), mostly affecting women and children. Household air pollution from the use of inefficient stoves, charcoal, firewood and kerosene are responsible for some four million deaths a year. If we continue business-as-usual, 2.3 billion people will keep using traditional cooking by 2030 (World Bank 2018).

Clean cooking solutions, such as biogas, have the potential to reduce deaths from smoke-related illnesses, reduce emissions, and lower air pollution. They can provide new sources of livelihoods for women while reducing the time spent on fuel collection, and can lower household expenditures on cooking fuel.

Still, clean cooking has been **severely neglected** in the global energy space. It is underrepresented in policy debates and only receives a fraction of the investments in renewable energy.

Gender

Women and men are affected differently by energy access or the lack thereof. For example, women are more exposed to health risks when using firewood or charcoal for cooking because of indoor air pollution. Men often have a stronger decision-making role over energy products and services in the household, and even where infrastructure is available, women are denied finance and appliances.

At the same time, energy policies and programs that explicitly address gender issues and **involve women in decision-making, planning and implementation** have better outcomes and **improve livelihoods** of entire communities.

Including women in energy is of crucial value for SDG7, for business, for development, and is fundamental for a **just energy transition**. Women are strong change agents if: 1) an enabling environment that facilitates entrepreneurship is secured; 2) efforts are aligned with national priorities; 3) access to finance is paired with access to technology, business skills training, and individual tailor-made mentoring; 4) there is collaboration with a network of different stakeholders, including entrepreneurs themselves, renewable energy product suppliers, banks, MFIs, cooperatives and village savings, loan associations, national government agencies and local authorities; 5) family members including men are engaged in the process.

Finance

Currently, the main problem is **not a lack of finance, but how finance flows**: mainly to on-grid in cities in higher income countries, while the greatest need is for off-grid in lower income areas. It also flows mostly to international companies, not reaching those smaller businesses in developing countries.

International climate mitigation funds are not designed in a way that prioritizes decentralized energy access for all; **subsidies still favor fossil fuels**; investments are channeled through loans that assure returns; investment mechanisms favor big on-grid investments with low transaction costs and risks, while uncertain policy environment keep investors hesitant to invest in DRE.

We need to enable and support the flow of both private and public finance into DRE to overcome these structural and institutional obstacles. **Blending finance** provides the opportunity to **leverage private sector investment into DRE**. However, blending finance will **not act as a silver bullet** since both public and private finance still needs to be directed to the areas that need it most but where profits are delayed and business is difficult to uphold.

Market activation

Growth of DRE is **inevitable** and has moved beyond solely development assistance into the realm of **new models of competitive and free markets**. It also enables a new generation of local operating **entrepreneurs and SMEs**.

However, the market alone will not solve the issue of energy access adequately because private sector remains unlikely to focus on the last mile. The need for public investment will remain. Especially the infrastructure needed for reaching the last mile requires public investments in the form of subsidies.

Scale

DRE is **growing in scale**. DRE brings major opportunities for ambitious investors seeking to work at the bottom of the pyramid, where large numbers of lower income people can represent huge market opportunities and where mini-grids and off-grid systems consolidate into large numbers.

DRE is also growing in terms of people reached. Around 60% of the people becoming electrified between 2017 and 2030 will do so through decentralized energy systems (IEA Energy for All).

Role of international organizations

International organizations such as the Multilateral Development Banks, the Green Climate Fund and OECD countries including the European Union should **allocate a significantly larger budget** to green and inclusive energy solutions and should actively support the development and implementation of financial instruments and models that enable the use of large funds locally and in smaller portions. In addition, these institutions should invest in **strong implementation and adequate reporting** so that progress on SDG7 can be measured.

Role of governments

Governments should **increase investments** in domestic renewable energy and **reform detrimental fossil fuel subsidies**. They hold the responsibility of providing an infrastructure to support energy access but also activate local markets by providing subsidies (or soft loans) to locally operating entrepreneurs and SMEs.

They also play a key role in creating **a supportive investment climate for private sector** to adopt innovative business models that enhance the uptake of decentralized renewable energy solutions through **improved regulations and making finance available**.

Role of the private sector

Many donors believe that private sector will solve the energy access problem and it should be noted that provision of energy is opening up to the prospect of reaching universal energy access assisted by the private sector. The benefits of including the private sector is that it can develop new **innovative business models** that deliver energy access in both easy and hard to reach areas. Furthermore, private sector can contribute on 1) implementation level, offering support and training to small-scale entrepreneurs, 2) lobby and advocacy level which includes a push for better regulations and overall business environment in countries with large energy deficiency, and 3) assessment and engagement level in order to hold fossil companies and investors accountable.

Role of civil society organizations

To increase the uptake of decentralized renewable energy, including for the last mile, CSOs have to support national governments and the international community first and foremost by **voicing the interest of people and communities**, with a focus on household energy consumption as well as productive use of energy.

Next, CSOs should support policy makers with **concrete suggestions** for finance, energy and nexus policies and regulations, making sure policy and implementation is connected to the needs of communities.

Finally, CSOs should **lead by example**, by developing inspiring and daring new solutions, using a multi stakeholder approach.

ANNEX 2: THE COALITION

Hivos



Hivos was founded in 1968, inspired by humanist values. We believe that every human being has the right to live in freedom and dignity, and that we are all free to be who we are, with respect for our individual gender and sexual identity. Living such a life means feeling free to believe and say what you want, to challenge governments and influence the established order. In exercising that freedom, we also carry the responsibility of not impinging on the freedom of others, and of respecting the natural limitations of the earth.

We believe in *open societies*, in which freedom and diversity are valued individually and collectively. Such a society welcomes diversity and offers equal opportunities to all. We also believe in *green societies*, in which the environment and the planet's natural resources are protected and used sustainably to the benefit of every living creature on the planet. Open and green societies are interwoven: together they create a free, fair and sustainable world.

"Our mission is to innovate for social change. With smart projects in the right places, we work towards more open and green societies."

www.hivos.org

ENERGIA



ENERGIA was founded in 1996 by a group of women involved in gender and energy work in developing countries. To date, ENERGIA Networks have been established in 22 African and Asian countries. ENERGIA is hosted by Hivos since 2016.

We believe that projects, programs and policies that explicitly address gender and energy issues have better outcomes and improve the livelihood of entire communities. By involving women in the development, delivery and use of modern energy, sustainability and adoption rates of these services are enhanced.

In order to provide continued support and have gender be part of the developmental process, ENERGIA also creates unique training modules and tools for the energy sector. This way, we connect local initiatives in a global context, creating an environment where groups can learn from each other and inspire across communities.

"Women and men have equal and equitable access to and control over sustainable energy services as an essential human right to development."

www.energia.org

IIED



IIED, International Institute for Environment and Development, is a policy and action research organization. We promote sustainable development to improve livelihoods and protect the environments on which these livelihoods are built. We specialize in linking local priorities to global challenges. IIED is based in London and works in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and the Pacific, with some of the world's most vulnerable people. We work with them to strengthen their voice in the decision-making arenas that affect them — from village councils to international conventions.

"Our mission is to build a fairer, more sustainable world, using evidence, action and influence in partnership with others"

www.iied.org

ANNEX 3: PARTNERS

Zimbabwe



Malawi



Tanzania



Kenya



Indonesia



Nepal



Guatemala



El Salvador



Colophon

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