

National workshop on "Village Energy Security Programme"

June 9-10, 2009 New Delhi

TERI organized a National Workshop on the Village Energy Security Programme (VESP) on 9–10 June 2009 in New Delhi. As reported in an earlier issue, TERI has been involved as national consultant as well as one of the four regional consultants assisting the MNRE (Ministry of New and Renewable Energy) in implementation of the pilot phase of the VESP in India, under the World Bank supported project entitled 'Biomass for sustainable development' (see *CoSMiLE Update 2(3)*, September 2007). The VESP is a community based initiative that aims at providing energy security in remote villages/ hamlets through locally available renewable energy sources (preferably biomass) as well as technologies/ systems. The focus of the World Bank project has been on developing business models for small-scale biomass-based renewable applications that can meet energy needs related to productive uses, lighting, and cooking, and thereby bring about sustainable rural development and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The VESP has covered eight states, and around 67 test projects have either been implemented or are in various stages of implementation.

As a regional consultant, TERI has facilitated the implementation of 21 VESP test projects in Assam and West Bengal through technical assistance and capacity building initiatives targeted at various stakeholders (communities, NGOs, state and district-level implementing agencies, etc.). As national consultant, TERI developed the prototype village energy plan, community operations manual and monitoring framework for the entire project, and is now assessing the performance of all the VESP test projects in order to consolidate the lessons and experiences.

The participants at the National Workshop included representatives from state nodal agencies, village energy committees of VESP test projects, NGOs, panchayati raj institutions, community and rural development agencies, forest departments, multilateral/bilateral organizations, and manufacturers of renewable energy systems. Among those who shared their experiences in the five technical sessions were experts from Ankur Scientific Energy Technologies Pvt Ltd, ARTI (Appropriate Rural Technology Institute), DESI Power, FOSET (Forum of Scientists, Engineers and Technologists), Maharashtra Renewable Energy Development Agency, MNRE, Ministry of Power, Orissa Renewable Energy Development Agency, READ Foundation, Sambandh, SDC, TERI University, UNDP-SGP, Usha Martin Ltd, The World Bank, and Winrock International India.

The National Workshop focused on:

- Discussing the performance, experiences and lessons of the VESP test phase and other rural energy initiatives in India, and sharing of best practices and success stories.
- Exploring viable institutional and management models for strengthening and scaling up the dissemination of biomass energy technologies and rural energy services in India in a sustainable manner.