**NEWS**

**Helping Tuvalu Move Toward 100 Percent Renewable Energy Generation**

April 24 2017

By 2020, the Pacific island state of Tuvalu aims to become the first country in the world to generate 100 percent of its electricity from renewable sources such as solar, wind, and biofuel. At present, some 77 percent of the country’s installed capacity comes from a power station on the island of Funafuti. On the country’s outer islands, antiquated and inefficient diesel-run generators run 12 to 18 hours per day, meaning that blackouts—most often the result of shortages of fuel and spare parts—are a frequent occurrence.

In FY2014, ASTAE support financed a team of experts to help the Tuvalu Electricity Corporation (TEC) ensure that the proposed World Bank Energy Sector Development Project provides a path for Tuvalu to achieve its 100 percent goal. This included a range of technical and social studies that are helping identify the optimal combination of solar- and wind-power generation and storage necessary to reach the renewable generation target. A number of other donors—including Japan, the European Union, the United Arab Emirates, New Zealand, and Australia—have activities underway to help Tuvalu replace diesel generation with renewable energy technologies. ASTAE financed a technical study to optimize the integration of renewables into the system in Funafuti in a way that best complements the existing efforts by donors.

ASTAE is also helping Tuvalu identify and evaluate a series of measures to bring about a 30 percent improvement in energy efficiency. This includes support for energy audits of buildings, public, and industrial and commercial facilities, and an evaluation of the availability of energy efficient electrical appliances and electric transport on the market.

In addition, ASTAE is supporting the design and installation of a satellite-based communications system in Funafuti and the outer islands that will enable the TEC—with continued support—to remotely monitor, control, and improve the operation and maintenance of its power systems. ASTAE support is also helping ensure that the TEC takes social issues into consideration as a part of the project planning process. An example of this was an ASTAE-financed gender scoping study, gender action plan, and gender monitoring and evaluation system that aims to improve the participation of women in energy sector planning, implementation, and evaluation. Based on interviews with more than 100 men, women, and youth, the study found that, despite considerable gender mainstreaming efforts in Tuvalu in recent years, the concepts of gender, gender equity, and equality have yet to be fully integrated into the community decision-making process. This gender work directly contributes to the proposed Energy Sector Development Project, as well as to implementation of the Tuvalu National Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Policy that was approved in early 2014.
Another major outcome of ASTAE assistance will be smoother and faster implementation of a World Bank project that could save the Tuvalu’s government significant resources through avoided petroleum fuel costs. At current fuel prices, a 20 percent reduction in fuel usage represents a cost saving of $460,000 per year.

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