

EMPOWERING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS TO DRIVE RURAL CLEAN ENERGY SOLUTIONS

Background

South Asia accounts for 652 million people (32% of the global total) without access to clean cooking fuels and technologies. Despite near-universal electricity access, rural families face unreliable and unaffordable power. For example, India's rural areas experience an average of 2.1 hours of daily outages, and Sri Lankan households pay 254% to 298% more for electricity than their regional counterparts.

Reaching rural households with clean energy remains a challenge due to high market access costs and the time needed to build awareness and trust. However, networks of rural women entrepreneurs, like the one established by Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP), are addressing these challenges. With over 20 years of experience, SSP has collaborated with USAID's wPOWER India program, creating a network of 1,000 women entrepreneurs and reaching 1 million people. Under USAID's SAREP, SSP operates in 500 villages in Maharashtra and Bihar, providing clean energy solutions, reducing 36,000 MT of carbon emissions, and generating additional income for women.

This session will explore the broader impact of connecting rural communities to clean energy solutions and discuss the challenges and opportunities in scaling these efforts to create more sustainable access in the future.

DATE: OCTOBER 23, 2024
TIME: 11:30 - 13:00

Session Objectives

- Highlight the role of innovative market-based last-mile distribution models like a network of women entrepreneurs for clean energy access
- Discuss strategies to address ecosystem barriers, with a focus on market access, trust-building, and financing.

Agenda

11:30 - 11:40	<p>Welcome Address by Aaron Schubert, Director, Indo-Pacific Office, USAID/India</p>
11:40 - 11:45	<p>Collateral Release</p>
11:45 - 12:00	<p>Presentation on Women Micro-entrepreneur Led Clean Energy Access Model by Upmanyu Patil, Program Director, Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP)</p>
12:00 - 12:45	<p>Panel Discussion on Empowering Rural Clean Energy: Tackling Barriers and Enabling Access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for rural clean energy solutions to address affordability and access gaps. • Barriers for clean energy companies in accessing rural markets. • Role of women micro-entrepreneurs in rural clean energy. • Identifying ecosystem barriers to clean energy adoption. • Role of stakeholders in overcoming barriers. <p>Moderator: Atul Dhir, USAID's SAREP</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fathmath Fizna Yoosuf, Director, Utility Regulatory Authority, Maldives • Umesh Chand Joshi, Joint Director, Department of Information Technology & Communication (DoIT&C), Government of Rajasthan • Dechen Pema Yangki, Executive Engineer, Department of Energy, Bhutan • Atul Mittal, South Asia Director, Sistema.bio • Samir M. Patel, Agni Solar • Kalpana Sonkavade, Clean Energy Micro-entrepreneur • Jayashri Mali, Clean Energy Product End User • Tabassum Momin, Project Manager, SSP • Avik Roy, Managing Director, Re-emerging World
12:45 - 12:55	<p>Q&A Session</p>
12:55 - 13:00	<p>Closing Session by Tatyana Marshall, USAID's SAREP</p>

