



## **Regional Implementation Workshop on Sustainable Energy in sub-Saharan Africa**

**Kenya, 7 – 8 May 2013**

**4 April 2013**

### **Introduction**

Energy is one of the critical factors for sustainable socio-economic development of any nation. In Africa, like in other parts of the globe, the energy demand is continuously growing. This challenge offers an excellent opportunity for exploring new avenues that would improve efficient energy production and use on the continent.

African countries, especially those in the sub-Saharan region, are way behind the world's average per capita electricity consumption, and have very low indices of electricity coverage. Many nations on the continent currently lack adequate and fully developed energy infrastructure, which is crucial in the provision of the foundation for developing energy sustainability. Effective energy production, management and planning on the continent are difficult due to lack of reliable data on energy demand, production and distribution; limited access to sustainable modern energy sources and technologies; lack of supportive coordinated energy planning infrastructure; absence of a strategy for coordinating the development of energy plans at institutional, national and regional levels; inefficient mechanisms to tap (by energy stakeholders in the region) into the knowledge available from other parts of the globe; lack of critical mass of skilled energy scientists and technologists as well as regional networking for effective collaboration on sustainable energy research.

The weaknesses in the existing energy situation on the continent and the challenges for energy planning call for a concerted and systematic effort to design urgent and consistent interventions through regional and international partnerships. There is an increasing complexity of energy production, planning and management practices due to interlacing of social and environmental factors with technical and economic ones. Moreover, this is compounded by the emergence of other confounding factors such as climate change and energy security. This calls for the development of an integrated approach that will be based on regional cooperation and will foster collaboration between stakeholders in the relevant scientific and technical fields within the continent, with technical support from their counterparts from other parts of the globe.

To address these and other challenges, ICSU, with financial support from Sida-Sweden, has embarked on a series of activities that seek to strengthening the involvement of developing countries in setting and implementing the research agenda for global sustainability in the developing nations. The initiative focuses on strengthening high-quality research in the regions and integrating regional and global research activities. It also seeks to enhance research capacity in developing countries (including that of early career scientists) as well as ensure impact of energy policy development and implementation. The effectiveness of these efforts depends mainly on the extent to which scientists in

developing countries participate in, and are able to contribute to the development of mitigation and adaptation strategies in their countries.

The planned regional implementation meeting is part of the efforts by ICSU to come up with an integrated approach that would foster research around 'Grand Challenges' in each of the regions. Sustainable energy is one of the four priority areas for each of the ICSU Regional Offices, although there is no global programme as yet. A regional-global integration meeting on sustainable energy will be held in April 2013, in Mexico City, Mexico. The purpose of the meeting is to align the ICSU Regional Offices' Science Plans on sustainable energy and bring together the researchers involved in the regional planning exercises to develop an overall energy implementation strategy, as well as to ensure proper linkages of activities between the regions.

The regional implementation meeting on sustainable energy in Africa will be held in Kenya, on 7 – 8 May 2013. This meeting will use background information and recommendations from the April 2013 regional-global integration meeting on sustainable energy, and will build on the work previously done by the energy scientific community in the region. The workshop will focus on harmonizing regional sustainable energy activities, taking into account the recommendations of the Mexico meeting. It will seek to understand the African landscape in the field of sustainable energy and to identify a niche where ICSU can contribute in the region as well as key partners to engage with.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of the regional implementation meeting on sustainable energy include the following:

- Understand and map the African landscape in the field of sustainable energy, and identify a niche where ICSU can contribute in the region
- Address the implementation needs of sustainable energy in Africa and align them with those from other developing regions.
- Identify regional and international sustainable energy expertise from within and outside the continent.
- Design specific energy projects to be implemented in the region in collaboration with scientists from the developing countries as well as from other developing regions, taking into account the work that has already been done in each region.
- Explore fundraising opportunities for sustainable energy initiatives in the region.
- Explore and exploit opportunities of synergy between and among ICSU Regional Offices' activities on sustainable energy.

### **Expected outcomes of the Regional Implementation Workshop**

This regional implementation workshop is one of a series of regional consultation/scoping and implementation meetings supported through the ICSU grant from the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida). This workshop will be organized by ICSU ROA in collaboration with partners on the continent, and will be attended by energy scientists from within the region, those from the other ICSU Regional Offices as well as other identified role players like funding agencies, intergovernmental agencies, and representatives of key regional energy initiatives from within the African region. The workshop will focus on achieving the following:

- Map of the African landscape in the field of sustainable energy to establish the niche where ICSU can contribute in the region.
- Research teams that will co-design specific multi-disciplinary and trans-boundary sustainable energy projects to be implemented at regional level in collaboration with international partners.

- A detailed work plan for the implementation of these projects, highlighting the time lines and milestones in the implementation.
- Potential regional and international role players and institutions crucial for the projects.
- Potential funding opportunities and fundraising avenues from within and outside the region.

The participants will include both natural and social scientists, including those representing other regional offices.

### **ICSU ROA Documents**

1. Report of the regional-global integration meeting on sustainable energy held in Mexico
2. Report of ICSU ROA Workshop to establish international consortia on Sustainable Energy, held in March 2012 in South Africa.
3. ICSU ROA Science Plan: Sustainable Energy in sub-Saharan Africa.
4. Key highlights from the Africa-EU Energy partnership.