

**AFREPREN/GDN Regional Seminar
18-19 March 2004
Nairobi, Kenya**

Short Seminar Report by Dr. Bereket Kebede

The African Energy Policy Research Network (AFREPREN) and Global Development Network (GDN) Regional Seminar started on the morning of March 18, 2004 with participants introducing themselves. Researchers from four project countries - Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe – were present. The researchers from Botswana – the fifth case study – were not able to attend the seminar.

Participants:

Dr Suma C.M. Kaare, Tanzania
Mr Geoffrey Nansove Kamese, Uganda
Dr Bereket Kebede, Ethiopia
Mr Maxwell Mapako, Zimbabwe
Mr Justus Mbithi, Kenya
Mr Paul Nzomo Mbuthi, Kenya
Mr Dison B. Okumu, Uganda
Mr Stephen Karekezi, AFREPREN Secretariat
Mr Jack Muthui, AFREPREN Secretariat
Mr John Kimani, AFREPREN Secretariat
Ms Susan Amenya, AFREPREN Secretariat
Ms Grace Rubiro, AFREPREN Secretariat



Group Photo of the seminar participants

After introductions, the director of AFREPREN Stephen Karekezi made a presentation on the GDN global project entitled ‘Bridging Research and Policy Project’. The global project focuses on three inter-related issues on the link between policy and research.

1. How can policy-makers best use research and move towards evidence-based policy making?
2. How can researchers best use their findings to influence policy?
3. How can interaction between researchers and policy-makers improve?

These issues are addressed in the project in two phases. In the first phase, surveys of policy-makers and researchers were done in 50 case studies. The results were disseminated through a GDN website at <http://www.gdnet.org>

In the second phase, four background papers on measurement of the impact of research on policy and three comparative studies on policy-making organisations were conducted. In addition, detailed research projects grouped into Action Research, Country Case Studies, Episode Studies, Sector Studies and Good Practice Studies are being undertaken. The current AFREPREN/GDN project is classified in the Sector Studies.

The relationship between research and policymaking is intermediated by four sets of factors or domains. The first set of factors, collectively termed 'Evidence', relates to the specific nature of research: relevance, credibility and methodology of the research, packaging of results and means of communication to policymakers. The second domain named 'Link', looks at the nature of the relationship between researchers on the one hand and policymakers and other stakeholders on the other. Voice, trust, networks, media and other intermediaries are some of the elements in this domain. Third, the overall political context within which researchers, policymakers and other stakeholders are located is an important factor. Finally, external factors like international conditions, economic and cultural influences constitute the fourth domain. As we move from the first to the fourth domains, the extent of influence/control of the researcher decreases. For example, researchers have generally a direct influence/control on the nature of the research ('Evidence') but barely do they have any influence on the international situation.

After discussing the above-mentioned domains in some detail, Stephen outlined important methodological challenges. Generally, it is very difficult to identify the impact of research on policy formulation and there is a need to work from both the side of the researchers as well as the policy-makers. Since policy formulation is affected by many variables, it is generally extremely difficult to isolate the net effect of research on policy. In addition, most of the evidence on the influence of research on policy is qualitative and subjective and hence requires triangulation using different approaches.

Parallel to the GDN project, AFREPREN is also involved in a UNDP project entitled 'Global Network on Energy for Sustainable Development' (GNESD). This project has the objective of enhancing the policy engagement in developing countries. The AFREPREN/UNDP project assesses the energy policy processes in Kenya and Uganda. It also attempts to identify intervention opportunities.

The second presentation by Bereket Kebede specifically focused on the AFREPREN/GDN project entitled 'Research and Policy Linkages in the Energy Sector of Eastern and Southern Africa' (covering Botswana, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe). These country studies will analyse the extent to which research influenced the formulation of national energy policies. All the case countries have either produced national energy policy documents or are in the process of producing it. Looking at the formulation of a specific energy policy instrument is necessary to give focus to the studies.

Methodologically, the studies will start by describing the key steps in the formulation of the national energy policy documents in each country. Next, the research inputs at each stage of the policy formulation have to be identified. These could be reflected in some 'objective' measures like the number of researchers participating in policy workshops, the number of commissioned papers for policy decisions, etc. In addition to looking at the policy formulation process, textual analysis of the national energy policy document itself is very important. The analysis of the content of the document helps to identify the channels through which research has influenced policy formulation. For example, the policy document may explicitly refer to some research output or some research result may be used to justify certain policy measures, etc.

But as indicated in the presentation of the global GDN programme, the influence of research on policy is affected by the political context, by the nature of the research and the link between researchers and policy-makers. The macro-political (quality of governance, structure of government, etc.), micro-political

(nature and evolution of government institutions, internal organisation of institutions, etc.), macro-economic (size of energy sector, size of the commercial energy sector, etc.) and micro-economic (the importance of the private sector, level of development of the private sector researcher/consultancy, etc.) contexts in the case countries affect how much research has influenced the formulation of national energy policies. The characteristics of research (whether it is regional or national, specialised or non-specialised, external or domestic, etc.) have also a bearing on the influence of research on policy. Finally, the nature of the link between researchers and policy-makers will also affect how influential research was.

The required information will be collected by means of the following instruments: interviews with policy-makers, questionnaires, textual analysis of reports, content analysis (for example, word search, etc.), write-shops of policy-makers and communicators and focus group discussions. The presentation by Bereket ended by outlining the main activities and key milestones in the project.

A summary of the main discussions during the remaining one-and-half day of the workshop are given below:

1. Government rules and regulations require certain procedures in the formulation of policies - what one can call 'ideal steps in policy formulation'. Understanding these 'ideal steps in policy formulation' helps to identify the possible research-policy links. For the sake of illustration, participants from Kenya outlined in detail the steps required in the formulation of energy policies in their country.
2. Even though rules and regulations require specific steps in the policy formulation process, in reality they may not be followed strictly or the timeframe actually needed may become longer than the 'ideal'. Again to give an example of an actual policy formulation process, the experience of Kenya in formulating the national energy policy document was highlighted in detail.
3. The researchers from the other three case countries - Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe - presented the main events in the formulation of the respective national energy policy documents.
4. The national energy policy documents cover all energy sub-sectors. The research-policy link in all these energy sub-sectors is too broad an issue to be covered in a short study. Hence, only two sub-sectors – renewables and the power sub-sector – will be covered. That means the project will focus on how research in renewables and the power sub-sector influenced the national energy policy in those specific areas. This increases the focus of the study.
5. Bereket Kebede presented a summary of the main methodological issues as well as instruments that will be used in the project. To identify the influence of research on the formulation of the national energy policy – particularly in relation to renewables and the power sub-sector - three methods should be employed. First, the text of the national energy policy document itself must be analysed. Possible influences by research on policy should be identified. Second, a description of the timeline of the formulation of the national energy policy will be done. This will help the identification of instances where research influenced policy. In addition, which of the explanatory variables played an important role in that process can be analysed. Third, a structured questionnaire will attempt to capture the nature of the link between research and the process of energy policy formulation. Since all the three methods help identify possible instances where research influenced policy, the results from the three instruments can also help triangulation.
6. Finally, Jack Muthui presented the work plan and details of administrative tasks.

Agenda

Day 1: Thursday, 18th March 2004

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| 9:00 – 9:30am | Introduction and background to the GDN Bridging Research and Policy Project & brief on related UNDP project (Mr. Stephen Karekezi) |
| 9:30 – 10:30am | GDN/AFREPREN study - “Research and Policy Linkages in the Energy Sector of Eastern and Southern Africa” (Mr. Jack Muthui) |
| 10:30 – 11:00am | <i>Coffee Break</i> |
| 11:00 – 11:45am | UNDP/AFREPREN study (Mr. John Kimani) |
| 11:45 – 12:30am | Group session guidelines & selection of explanatory variables |
| 11:15 – 12:30pm | Group session to develop country study approach |
| 12:30 – 2:00pm | <i>Lunch</i> |
| 2:00 – 3:30pm | Group session to develop country study approach |
| 3:30 – 4:00pm | <i>Coffee Break</i> |
| 4:00 – 5:00pm | Group session to develop country study approach |

Day 2: Friday, 19th March 2004

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| 9:00 – 9:30am | Zimbabwe country study presentation and discussion (Mr. Maxwell Mapako) |
| 9:30 – 10:00am | Uganda country study presentation and discussion (Mr. Geoffrey Kamese / Mr. Dison Okumu) |
| 10:00 – 10:30am | Tanzania country study presentation and discussion (Dr. Suma Kaare) |
| 10:00 – 10:30am | <i>Coffee Break</i> |
| 10:30 – 11:00am | Kenya country study presentation and discussion (Mr. Justus Mbithi / Mr. Paul Mbuthi) |
| 11:00 – 12:30am | Proposed Methodological Approach based on discussions (Dr. Bereket Kebede) |
| 12:30 – 2:00pm | <i>Lunch</i> |
| 2:00 – 3:30pm | Group session to refine country study approach and develop sample questionnaire |
| 3:30 – 4:00pm | <i>Coffee Break</i> |
| 4:00 – 4:40pm | Plenary Session: Coordination issues and work plan (GDN & UNDP study) |
| 4:40 – 5:00pm | Closing remarks and possible areas of collaboration |