

**Sida Supported
Programme within the
African Energy Policy
Research Network
(AFREPREN)**

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**Department for Research
Cooperation**

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Sida Evaluation 02/23

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Cooperation**

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Executive Summary

AFREPREN: A Brief Overview and Objectives of the Evaluation

The African Energy Policy Research Network (AFREPREN) was launched in March 1989, after a planning period of nearly two years, with the primary objectives of:

- Undertaking energy policy research work that can lead to practical policies for sustainable energy development;
- Strengthening research capacity in energy policy in the Eastern and Southern African region; and
- Disseminating its research results, in particular to energy policy-making organs in the region, with the aim of making a policy impact.

AFREPREN is a research network encompassing 10 countries: Botswana, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The current Programme Cycle comprises a Core Research Programme and two sub-programmes. The Core Research Programme is made up of three theme groups:

- Renewables and Energy for Rural Development
- Energy Services for the Urban Poor
- Energy Sector Reform

And the two sub-programmes deal with:

- Energy Efficiency, Environment and Climate
- Special Studies of Strategic Significance

AFREPREN complements its central mission of conducting policy research work and the strengthening of policy research capacity with a range of associated activities. These include publication and dissemination of its research output, national and regional policy seminars, a Masters training programme, training workshops for its core membership, updating its African energy database and library and documentation services.

AFREPREN is a uniquely African research institution, providing an effective and appropriate perspective in light of the current and anticipated future African energy policy agenda. The fact that AFREPREN is African – that is, a research agenda set and implemented by Africans and not dominated by Northerners – is extremely significant; it is also critical. Relatively few research institutions currently exist in Africa. Moreover, in terms of energy policy research, those potential African candidates for conducting policy research – namely, universities, ministries of energy and utilities – are facing various crises which preclude them from developing and supporting extensive indigenous research capabilities. All too often in the past, energy policy research has been conducted by Northern consultants on short-term attachment. Without AFREPREN, African voices would find it that much more difficult to be heard in energy policy discussions – both inside and outside the continent. Indeed, it is local experts – those who clearly know the social, cultural, economic and political realities of African countries – who are more likely to produce implementable recommendations that reflect this understanding. The evaluators feel strongly that if AFREPREN did not exist, various ‘experts’ would probably be calling for its

creation. The evaluators also believe that the foci of AFREPREN's attentions are appropriate, given the factors that are driving the African energy policy agenda.

In addition to 're-directing' the dominant agenda, AFREPREN also appears to be trying to introduce new items onto the African and international energy policy agendas – items that directly reflect African concerns and priorities. AFREPREN's core research programme entitled 'energy services for the urban poor' is an excellent example. This programme has effectively brought together two of Africa's key issues – poverty alleviation and growing urbanisation – against an energy background.

There were two main reasons for this evaluation:

- To assess how far AFREPREN has been able to fulfil, under the period in review (July 1999 – February 2002), the research, dissemination, capacity-strengthening and policy-impact objectives set out in its Programme Proposals of March 1999 and July 2000 (see in particular the LFA and Expected Results matrices annexed, respectively, to the Programme Proposals and the current contract between Sida and AFREPREN (Sida, 1999));
- To present views and recommendations on the future direction, scope, content, functioning and funding of AFREPREN, including greater decentralisation of AFREPREN's future activities to AFREPREN's national focal points in selected countries of the Eastern and Southern African region.

Research Activities

The Research Process

AFREPREN researchers for the core research programmes were selected in 1999. A 'call for proposals' was disseminated throughout the Eastern and Southern African region. Thirty-nine proposals were subsequently received, and they were evaluated by a three-person panel of independent experts (a 'Research Advisory Panel').¹

The Panel recommended that 23 proposals be given further consideration. The final decision on selection of principal researchers for the core research programmes was made by Sida: the 23 aforementioned proposals were approved, along with a number of others, for a total of 35 researchers in the network.

Selected principal researchers met in Nairobi in August 1999 to develop their proposals further, and to explore the potential for synergies among groups of researchers. The intention was to reach agreement on common frameworks at this time, so that primary research could subsequently commence. It was not, however, until mid-2000 that the common frameworks (and associated hypotheses) were actually agreed. This delay had consequences for the implementation of the work-plan, and this point is returned to below.

AFREPREN documents note that core research programme theme areas were selected on the basis of [the 1998 African Energy] Conference recommendations and suggestions from earlier AFREPREN regional policy seminars'. While there was reportedly consultation with stakeholders, the evaluators also notice the apparently-pivotal role that AFREPREN's General Assembly, Steering Committee and

¹ The Research Advisory Panel had the following characteristics:

gender: 2 male; 1 female

institutional base: 1 utility; 1 university; 1 private sector

geographical base: 2 west Africa; 1 southern Africa

The Panel had reports from 'international experts' to consider as well. (In most cases, one report per proposal.)

Secretariat played in the process of setting the agenda for AFREPREN's subsequent research phase. Given that the individual members of these bodies may want to participate in the subsequent phase, they may have an incentive to identify themes closely related to their own research interests and expertise. This may inadvertently encourage replication of research themes from phase to phase. While some degree of continuity is certainly desirable, there is also a need to introduce new themes and approaches over time.

Once themes are established, AFREPREN has implemented largely open, rigorous and transparent means of selecting principal researchers. While the involvement of a multistakeholder Research Advisory Panel is highly desirable, the evaluators would want to ensure the presence of sufficient number of individuals with extensive research experience. The importance of having the Panel members at 'arms-length' from AFREPREN cannot be overstated and any member of the Research Advisory Panel should remain at 'arm's length' from AFREPREN's research for a period of time after his/her last involvement in the work of the Panel.

Researchers for the 'Special Studies of Strategic Significance' theme group were selected at different times during the period under evaluation. The selection process has involved the 'rating' of each proposal by two reviewers: one a member of the AFREPREN Steering Committee and the other an (outside) 'international expert'. Applicants were then ranked on the basis of the average score received. Although the Steering Committee / expert review mechanism is probably not 'perfect', it is rigorous, incorporates what the evaluators perceive to be the key factors determining the 'value' of a proposal and, perhaps most importantly, blends both African and international expertise in the selection of Network researchers. Subsequent review by another layer of 'international' expertise is not appropriate for a network that is developing effective capacity in these kinds of procedures.

The evaluators would encourage continued reflection by the Secretariat and the Steering Committee upon the processes associated with selecting participants in AFREPREN. The use of many different experts to review one or two proposals each should be discouraged. Instead, it is important for a small number of experts to review all of the proposals. The evaluations of African and international experts should both be considered when determining the selection of principal researchers for the core research programme.

For studies of shorter duration (for example, the 'Special Studies of Strategic Significance'), the present system (with Steering Committee members providing African perspectives and a variety of outside experts providing international perspectives) should continue.

AFREPREN is made up of researchers with different institutional bases. They are also a generally well-qualified group, with over one-third holding a post-graduate degree. Although the gender mix is not evenly-balanced, almost one-quarter are female, which compares favourably with other associations of energy professionals. AFREPREN's decision to discriminate positively in favour of women in the mid-term selection process has helped to increase the number of women in the Network and appears to be accepted by male researchers within the Network. There are also few researchers with a social science background and the evaluators believe that more effort should be made to encourage their participation.

Although, there are a relatively equal number of researchers based inside and outside of government, AFREPREN has not achieved its own goal of striking this balance in every country of the region.

Research Quality

AFREPREN's principal researchers (and their associated research assistants) have produced topical and interesting research, some of it ground-breaking. The main strength of the research is undoubtedly the wealth of primary data and information. AFREPREN's studies are now regularly reviewed by 'interna-

tional referees', and they too commended many researchers upon their work. It is confirmation that AFREPREN is producing some of the best energy policy research, both in Africa and internationally, that a Special Issue of *Energy Policy*, entitled 'Africa: Improving Modern Energy Services for the Poor' will appear, with 15 of the 18 articles by individuals centrally involved at present in AFREPREN.

As is the case for virtually any set of researchers (or individual researcher), there is still room for improvement in the quality of AFREPREN's research. The evaluators have identified, in particular, three areas that warrant specific attention:

- The means by which research hypotheses are structured, presented and used could be improved. The hypotheses were generally perceived, by principal researchers, to have been imposed upon the Network 'from above'. The evaluators believe that there is an important role for hypotheses. Nevertheless, the hypotheses for the next programme cycle of AFREPREN should differ in three important respects: first, they should be testable; second, they should be sufficiently flexible so as to recognise that different African countries have different circumstances; and third, their development – at every stage – should involve the researchers who will ultimately be using them
- The persuasiveness (and thus the potential impact) of the policy recommendations should be increased. In many AFREPREN reports, the rich data that have been gathered could be subject to a more critical analysis so that all relevant conclusions (including concrete policy recommendations and their prioritisation) that emphasise 'means' rather than 'ends' are effectively drawn.
- The potential for valuable regional comparisons has yet to fully exploited, although there may be time constraints in the present phase to enable this.

In addition to these three 'primary' areas, two additional 'secondary' areas for improvement are also identified.

- A more systematic (and transparent) process for their collection and presentation of data is encouraged.
- Greater communication across groups is encouraged.

Research-related recommendations

To encourage further improvement in the quality (and potential impact) of AFREPREN's research, three recommendations are made:

- a deeper involvement of a smaller number of international 'experts' throughout the 'life-cycle' of the research – from the development of research hypotheses through to the dissemination of research products.
- a more formal role for the Theme Group Coordinator. Principal researchers, had no sense of what the individual's 'formal role' was supposed to be. Specifically, such an individual should have both expertise in energy policy issues and research processes more broadly as well as leadership skills so as to help direct the researchers towards their final goals. Their mandate should be not only to chair meetings of the theme group, but also to encourage and aid in the development of the research and the researcher between formal meetings and to develop cross-national comparisons through the utilisation of group members' research results.
- more attention be paid to research training – particularly the process of conducting 'social science research' in general,² and 'policy research' in particular.

² Including gender analysis and data collection.

In summary, AFREPREN's research activities have, for the most part, met their objectives (Sida, 1999). With respect to the 'Energy Efficiency, Environment and Climate Change' theme group, it does not appear that original targets will be met (Sida, 1999) due to resource constraints. With respect to the 'Special Studies of Strategic Significance' theme group, the evaluators do not believe that the research objectives for the period have been met. The evaluators have reviewed 14 studies that have been produced by the members of this theme group. Although most have academic and policy merit, they are not consistent with the intentions of the theme group. Instead, the material that has been produced is conventional and traditional.

An opportunity was missed to respond to key regional and international events (e.g., the formation of the 'African Union', the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the G8 Declarations or the agreement and implementation of NEPAD) and key regional and international phenomena more broadly (e.g., the diffusion of ISO 14001, debates about democratisation, corporate reporting or stakeholder capitalism).

The evaluators would encourage Sida, the AFREPREN Secretariat and the AFREPREN Steering Committee to consider funding a similar sub-programme again.

Policy impact

The Process of Policy Impact

At present, AFREPREN appears to be influencing policy-making through four different kinds of activities: national and regional seminars, dissemination of written material and the activities of individual members, both in their formal employment and through their 'outreach activities'.

National policy seminars are to be held in each country annually.³ Their primary objectives are to:

- disseminate AFREPREN research findings; and
- garner the energy policy research priorities of key stakeholders in their respective national energy sectors (AFREPREN, n.d.).

Seminars, which last two days, bring together approximately 20–30 individuals, representing a variety of key stakeholders in the energy sector.

A particular theme – closely related to one of AFREPREN's core research programmes – is usually used at the seminar to focus the deliberations. Participants usually come from within the country in which the seminar is taking place, though a small number of regional participants may also participate, in order to encourage trans-national sharing of experiences. Participants come from a broad cross-section of stakeholder groups both from within the energy sector or where energy is a major factor of interest and they can be senior figures, for example, MPs. However, perhaps more could be done to encourage the participation of social scientists as speakers and participants, which might be achieved by all national researchers, rather than only the national focal point, contributing to the invitation list.

The approach used in the seminars is one of interactive discussion amongst participants and speakers. The evaluators are of the opinion that the quality of the speakers is generally of an international standard with appropriate professional status. The use of speakers from outside the region and the continent is in general prohibited by the cost.

³ A smaller number of regional seminars are also to be organised.

Reports of the national and regional seminars are published as Occasional Papers. These form a useful record of the papers presented and the seminar participants. The evaluators consider that the Secretariat is to be congratulated on instilling a sense of discipline in authors to be brief. A suggestion for enriching the seminar reports is the inclusion of elements of the discussions.

In addition to the Occasional papers, AFREPREN issues a number of other publications both in-house (a newsletter, which is published quarterly; and Working Papers, of which, together with the Occasional Papers, approximately 20–25 are published annually either in hard copy or are down loadable from the web site), and externally (in particular, a series of books that has been published by Zed Books in London, United Kingdom), as well as in third-party publications (journal articles and chapters in books). The varied formats for dissemination (for example, the shorter policy-oriented pieces in newsletters and the longer research-oriented pieces in academic journals) are meant to reach and to meet the needs of different audiences (or ‘users’ of the research).

AFREPREN members also appear to be influencing policy-making through their individual actions, in many cases, through their ‘daily job’. It is not unreasonable to conclude that AFREPREN has been able to exert a direct influence upon policy-making through the actions of some of its individual members.

Finally, individual members through their other ‘outreach’ activities, for example, professional associations or informal discussions with well-connected colleagues, also have the potential to influence policy.

The Extent of Policy Impact

It is extremely difficult, methodologically, to evaluate the impact of policy recommendations. For one, causation is hard to trace.

Indicators by which AFREPREN activities can be considered to have had an impact upon energy policy-making in Eastern and Southern Africa include.

- national policy seminars
- distribution of 9,008 AFREPREN publications as hard copies between 1999 and 2001 and 44,000 hits on the web site since 1999. The target group for distribution of printed material has covered all the strategic stakeholders in the energy sector: Ministers, heads of utilities, University researchers/lecturers, students and field project NGO officers, key regional and international policy makers and researchers on the Network mailing list.
- The Special Issue of *Energy Policy*, this journal is one of the most important – if not the single most influential – international energy policy journal
- Individuals who work in government departments and utilities reported that their involvement in AFREPREN had helped to shape their actions at work.
- The AFREPREN Director has been invited to a number of elite-level conferences and workshops, most notably, the Governing Council of UNEP/Second Global Ministerial Environment Forum (February 2001) and a NEPAD Conference in Uganda (April 2002).

Policy Impact-Related Recommendations

National seminars:

- Cast the net as widely as possible in terms of stakeholders: not solely to governments but also parliamentarians, people’s organizations (trade union, women, youth and grassroots organizations, etc.) and NGOs to help them shape their own policies and decisions, ‘but also to assist them in influencing and evaluating the outcome of the processes of national policy making’. (Rasheed, 1994 p. 109).

- More regular engagement with the national media is encouraged.
- A more systematic follow-up of the conclusions reached at national policy seminars is needed. The seminar should be seen as part of a process – not solely as an end-product.
- Related to national-level dissemination, reflection upon the appropriate role for ‘national focal points’ is encouraged. The evaluators are not convinced that AFREPREN should necessarily move in the direction of greater decentralisation, however, that there needs to be greater clarity with respect to the role of the ‘national focal point’.
- The use of different ‘approaches’ to national seminars is encouraged in order to explore the ways in which policy impact could be maximised. (e.g., an evening lecture or debate).

Publications:

- The AFREPREN newsletter should be revamped, so as to update its appearance and make it more eye-catching.
- More diverse fora for publication of research results should be used. Members should be encouraged to contribute not only to internationally refereed journals but also to other kinds of publications – including professional associations’ journals, political and economic ‘magazines’ and other organisations’ newsletters.

Individuals networking:

- A more systematic approach to research results dissemination is required to anticipate and react to key external events for example, participating in the lead-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

Energy Policy Research Capacity Building and Strengthening

AFREPREN is primarily engaged in capabilities building of individuals rather than institutions. It also has a small component that creates technical resources through its books, reports and website for those outside the network to draw upon.

The Secretariat (the human resource) is staffed by a team of dedicated professionals working at a high international standard and is complimented for this both by researchers and others outside the network. The offices are modest and the office equipment is up to date.

In terms of individual capabilities building, there is no doubt that involvement in AFREPREN is highly valued by the individual researchers. Researchers considered that they had become better researchers and can do their own work better. It is the opinion of the evaluators that AFREPREN has made an important contribution to the empowerment and mobilisation of African researchers and has made a significant contribution to creating an effective African voice on energy issues.

In terms of institution building, with the exception of the Secretariat, the involvement of AFREPREN has been modest and indirect. However, there still exists a need for strong institutions capable of conducting energy policy research within the region covered by AFREPREN. At the moment, the capacity is mainly concentrated in South Africa and for a number of reasons this is not healthy. However, institution building requires a different strategy than merely training a few individuals in a random fashion.

During this third phase the Network has taken steps to address weaknesses in research methodologies through a two pronged approach: supporting students in the Masters programme in Energy Policy at

the Energy and Development Research Centre (EDRC) in the University of Cape Town and short training courses.

The evaluators have no reason to doubt the academic quality of the Masters Programme. This was also the impression given by those interviewed. The candidates supported appear appropriate in terms of their background and attempts have been made in the selection process to ensure regional and gender balance. However, there were a number of concerns:

- The intake appears to be limited to only candidates with a technical background.
- There is a need to build academic institutions outside of South Africa to contribute to a more equitable balance and other perspectives on energy policy from within the region. It is therefore recommended that Sida consider the funding of a University Chair in the region.
- The evaluators would question the wisdom of selecting Steering Committee members as candidates although there are no doubts about the transparency of the selection process. It is inappropriate for Sida to be involved in this process and recommend that an alternative procedure be set up.

In terms of the *short courses*, these have been divided between knowledge and skills. There have been two courses in the former category (Renewable Energy Technologies and Cogeneration) and seven in the latter (IT, Research Methodology, and Proposal Writing). Participants have come from a broad cross-section of stakeholders (government, utility, NGOs, universities and the private sector). Although it is of concern that there were a lack of participants from utilities in the renewable energy technologies course. This might reflect the way in which participants are selected which relies on national focal points and researchers to identify appropriate candidates. This places too much reliance on the particular networks of individuals and can be open to criticisms of largesse. It is recommended that a more open selection procedure be adopted.

There continue to be major weaknesses in research methodology and in analysis. It is also recognised by the researchers themselves and they are keen to improve their skills in these areas. The Network has taken steps during this phase to address these weaknesses through training courses and researchers have commented on the positive value this has had for their skills development. The evaluators consider it positive that AFREPREN used regional institutions to provide the skills training. However, there are reservations about the type of training provided in research methodology. The organisation used has a very commercial focus. There is no question about the quality of training offered by this organisation, however, it is directed at contract research rather than academic research. This is probably appropriate for the researchers from utilities and government but not for those in academic institutions and those who wish to publish in international academic journals. It is therefore strongly recommended that in future, academic researchers be involved to deliver capacity building in research methodology, particularly in relation to social sciences perspectives including gender, as well as policy analysis and development.

Governance

Introduction

Good governance of any network is important for ensuring the smooth functioning of the network on a day-to-day basis, enabling the network to reach its goals, providing legitimacy and creating confidence in funding agencies. This requires clear structures and transparent ways of working. The procedures and decision making mechanisms have to be transparent both to those inside the network and those outside the network. AFREPREN is a relative young organization in a region where good governance has sometimes left much to be desired. AFREPREN has responded to these concerns, some of which

were expressed in the first evaluation and begun to develop innovative new structures which assist in decision making around research directions and allocation of resources (Steering Committee and Research Advisory Panel) and ensuring research relevance and quality (Policy Advisory Panel and International Expert Review Panel). A new development is the establishment of national focal points which play a role in the dissemination of research output.

AFREPREN Steering Committee

The membership of the AFREPREN Steering Committee is made up of the six researchers elected by the General Assembly of all members. The Steering Committee members elect a Chair from amongst themselves. The Director and a representative of Sida also attend meetings. It is not clear what their status in relation to this committee is: advisory or full member. The Steering Committee is considered to be the major decision making body of the Network.

The Steering Committee has been finding its feet and Sida has been critical of its members' contribution in the past, considering it too passive. However, there are signs of change. The evaluators consider that the development of the Steering Committee is hampered from being more pro-active by a number of factors. There are no clear terms of reference that lay down what exactly the roles of the Steering Committee, the Chair and the relationship with the Director and Secretariat. There was some disquiet about lack of transparency on decision making in relation to resource allocation (e.g., funding for national seminars, travel to conferences). If decision-making is not clear to those within the Network it will certainly not be clear to those outside the Network. Whilst there continues to exist fuzziness around decision-making, this lays the ground ripe for own agenda setting by Network members and those outside the Network. The evaluators strongly recommend the establishment of a working group to develop a set of terms of reference that define the role of the Director, Secretariat, Steering Committee (including the Chair), as well as guidelines for ways of working and resolution of disputes. It is of concern to the evaluators that the need for clearly stating procedures was recommended in the first evaluation and yet nearly 10 years later does not appear to have been done.

Sida's role in relation to the Steering Committee also needs to be reconsidered. The presence of the donor is not conducive to open discussion and there is a feeling amongst Steering Committee members that suggestions by the donor are accepted automatically. The evaluators consider that funding agency influence on transparency and good governance should be done during contract negotiations and through proper audited accounting procedures and not through micro-management. Too close an involvement in running the network also opens up the funding agency to manipulation by stakeholders and avoidance of difficult decision-making by the Steering Committee and the Director, enabling transference of blame to outsiders. This stifles the organization from developing and learning from its own mistakes and in terms of institution building Southern organizations need to break this dependency on Northern organisations. It is part of institution building that the organization itself develops its own guidelines on ways of working.

Role of the Secretariat

The present role of the Secretariat is both administrative (co-ordination, organisation, reporting and sourcing for funds), research (back-stopping for principal researchers and contributing to papers and meetings) and representational (particularly the Director). The evaluators are of the opinion that the present Secretariat is staffed by a highly competent, well qualified group of professionals who work to an international standard. This is an opinion expressed by both AFREPREN researchers and others from outside the Network. Indeed, the principal researchers interviewed voiced no criticism about the role of the Secretariat and felt that their work would be much more difficult without the backstopping provided by the Secretariat members.

In the past, a number of the 'Working Papers' issued by AFREPREN have been authored by the staff of the secretariat. However, the evaluators heard no criticism from the interviewed researchers about 'intellectual copyright' issues. The practice of including individual Secretariat Staff names on publications has changed since the beginning of the current programme.

Perhaps concerns about the role of the Nairobi staff arise because of the confusing name 'Secretariat' which implies an administrative function whereas they clearly at present have a multi-purpose role. The question therefore arises: is this an appropriate structure for the efficient and effective, particularly in terms of cost, operation of a decentralised research network in the South? There is no 'one size fits all' model for running a research network – members have to design a structure and ways of working which best suit their own circumstances. The evaluators are of the opinion that many of the concerns about the role of the Secretariat and the Director would be most easily addressed by transparency of operation.

Advisory Committee and Policy Advisory Panel

The evaluators would recommend a governance structure similar to that used by the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC). An

Advisory Committee (AC) consisting of the representatives of the major financing organisations, the AFREPREN Director and two members of the Steering Committee. This committee would meet annually to receive and comment on work plans, progress reports (including finance) and proposals from the Secretariat and Steering Committee. The AC would have no decision-making powers. The Network continues to own the research activities and output but at the same time has a channel for ensuring accountability to its funders. The evaluators would propose institutionalising the existing *Policy Advisory Panel (PAP)*, but broaden it to around 10 members of senior African academics, policy analysts, policy makers and international resource persons in the energy sector plus the Theme Group Chairs. The panel would advise on trends and priorities for energy policy research and ensure the network continued to meet the region's needs. The Steering Committee should continue as it is currently formulated and be responsible for the implementation of AFREPREN's research programme.

Cost-effectiveness: Giving Value for Money

The methodological challenges of finding appropriate benchmarks to appraise AFREPREN against have already been addressed by the evaluators from Phase I (Christensen and McCall, 1994, pp. 12–15). The evaluators for Phase III come to the same conclusion: that no objective assessment is possible. There is a lack of a network with a similar structure and function to act as a benchmark. The closest at least in terms of research objectives is probably the first phase of The Review of Policies in the Traditional Energy Sector (RPTES), based in five countries in West Africa, was started in 1993 by the World Bank. Its objective was to assist African countries to prepare sound policies, strategies and operational instruments for the development of the traditional energy sector. The first phase of RPTES cost around US \$3.5 million over three years – it would not be unreasonable to assume that a significant part of the funding has been used to cover World Bank costs. One could conclude that AFREPREN scores favourably compared to RPTES in a number of areas: more countries are covered; material is developed primarily by African researchers which can lead to a greater sense of ownership; material exists in the public domain; democratic selection process of researchers; and a significant proportion of development funds have been spent in developing countries.

AFREPREN's uniqueness as an entity makes it difficult to undertake cross-organisational comparisons of various 'research productivity/efficiency' measures. So any measures of productivity across organisations should be viewed as suggestive, rather than conclusive. With these caveats, the AFREPREN

Secretariat estimate that an AFREPREN researcher costs approximately US \$30,000 to train. The Secretariat also maintain that, in terms of three efficiency measures (dollar per researcher, dollar per publication and administration costs as a percentage of total costs), AFREPREN compares favourably with other African research organisations.

The Network output does in general reach international standards and in general does meet the targets set by Sida. Based on this qualitative assessment, it is the opinion of the evaluators that in relation to the budget allocation between headings, the evaluators are of the general impression that the allocation is reasonable. The research programme rightly makes up the bulk of the expenditure and administration costs (including co-ordination) are modest.

The only reservation the evaluators have with regards to the budget items is the amount of resources devoted to supporting participants in the Masters programme at the University of Cape Town. Although the support does not take up more than 10 per cent of the budget, the total number of researchers who can benefit from this support is small (15), and there are other ways of increasing the critical mass of researchers involved in energy policy.

The Future: Broadening the Research Agenda and the Funding Base

Sida has expressed concern that AFREPREN has so far failed to achieve substantial funding from other donors. The Secretariat reports that in the past it has received significant support from NORAD plus small grants for specific activities from a variety of sponsors. However, it is acknowledged that previous efforts have been ad-hoc and unfocused. Explanations for lack of progress in finding fresh sources of funds lie both within and outside the network. The Secretariat considers that in part it has been hindered by time constraints due to the efforts needed to try to meet the contracted targets which had been jeopardised owing to the late start in getting the research underway arising from time taken to resolve the hypotheses issue.

There is an explicit assumption in Sida's concern that other donors are willing to fund *policy* research whereas the trend in the energy sector appears to be more towards funding implementation either of a structural nature (energy sector reform – privatisation and commercialisation) or support to creating a market for renewables (particularly PV). Also the current AFREPREN research topics might not overlap with donor concerns; climate change would seem the most obvious omission. There may also be structural difficulties in funding a *regional* network. Donors are tending to work much more at the national level and channel funding through embassies and national offices whereas AFREPREN is operating at a regional level making it difficult to identify who exactly to approach or that it is even an option.

However, the evaluators are of the opinion that the message to find other donors has now been taken on board by the Director and the Steering Committee and a number of initiatives are underway.

What are the implications of multiple funding sources? The Secretariat is the heart of the network and provides an essential and proficient service to support the researchers. The Secretariat also provides continuity. Unfortunately, such core funding is difficult to source. If the Network is to continue to operate in the same way, being run by the researchers carrying out research around different themes in parallel, it will involve considerable co-ordination effort and an element of luck to ensure that all funding comes on stream at the same time. The evaluators therefore recommend that Sida commit for the next phase sufficient funds to support the present secretariat and at least one research theme. This funding should be conditional on AFREPREN producing a clear terms of reference of the key actors in the Network. The evaluators also recommend that Sida organise a donors conference on behalf of AFREPREN where the researchers are able to present their programme as a unified whole.

Success with funding applications is also linked to identifying key areas of research in the energy sector. The evaluators would like to recommend the following themes:

- Energy and sustainable livelihoods
- Critical review of WSSD and the implications for the energy sector in Africa
- Climate change
- Productive use of modern forms of energy
- Does the ESCO model deliver its promises

1. Introduction

1.1 AFREPREN: A Brief Overview

The African Energy Policy Research Network (AFREPREN)⁴ was launched in March 1989, after a planning period of nearly two years, with the primary objectives of:

- Undertaking energy policy research work that can lead to practical policies for sustainable energy development;
- Strengthening research capacity in energy policy in the Eastern and Southern African region; and
- Disseminating its research results, in particular to energy policy-making organs in the region, with the aim of making a policy impact.

Central to AFREPREN's approach is the bringing together of energy policy researchers and energy policy-makers in the Eastern and Southern African region, so that they can work together on the problems that they jointly identify as being important.

AFREPREN is structured and organised as a research network encompassing 10 countries: Botswana, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Between 1989 and 1999, it completed two Programme Cycles (1989–94 and 1995–99), and is now in the latter half of the Third Programme Cycle (July 1999–December 2002). The current Programme Cycle comprises a Core Research Programme and two sub-programmes. The Core Research Programme is made up of three theme groups, one each on:

- Renewables and Energy for Rural Development
- Energy Services for the Urban Poor
- Energy Sector Reform

And the two sub-programmes deal with:

- Energy Efficiency, Environment and Climate
- Special Studies of Strategic Significance

AFREPREN complements its central mission of conducting policy research work and the strengthening of policy research capacity with a range of associated activities. These include publication and dissemination of its research output, national and regional policy seminars, a Masters training programme, training workshops for its core membership, updating its African energy database and library and documentation services.

AFREPREN has been evaluated twice, in 1993/94 (Christensen and McCall, 1994) and 1998/99 (Hvelplund and Worrell, 1999). The evaluations were commissioned by the Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation with Developing Countries (SAREC) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)/SAREC, respectively, and carried out by two separate teams of two independent international experts.

⁴ This introductory section is adapted from Sida (2002), pp. 1–2.

1.2 The Purpose and Process of this Evaluation

The purpose of this report is to present the results of this evaluation of AFREPREN. More specifically, there were two main reasons for this evaluation (Sida, 2002, p. 3):

- To assess how far AFREPREN has been able to fulfil, under the period in review (July 1999 – February 2002), the research, dissemination, capacity-strengthening and policy-impact objectives set out in its Programme Proposals of March 1999 and July 2000 (see in particular the LFA and Expected Results matrices annexed, respectively, to the Programme Proposals and the current contract between Sida and AFREPREN (Sida, 1999));
- To present views and recommendations on the future direction, scope, content, functioning and funding of AFREPREN, including greater decentralisation of AFREPREN's future activities to AFREPREN's national focal points in selected countries of the Eastern and Southern African region.

To complete this report, the evaluators examined written documents, observed meetings and seminars, conducted formal interviews, held informal discussions, completed a small sample survey and reviewed secondary literature.

The Terms of Reference for this evaluation, which are reproduced in Appendix 4 of this report, list the documentation that was provided to the evaluators (Sida, 2002, pp. 11–13). The evaluators also had the opportunity to attend two key AFREPREN meetings: the first was the AFREPREN Regional Evaluation Workshop, which was held 4–7 June 2002 in Nairobi, Kenya. At this, most of AFREPREN's principal researchers presented the results of their medium-term studies. This workshop also provided the evaluators with the opportunity to see the Network 'in action' and to meet most of its core members, including the Steering Committee and two students of the Masters programme.

The second AFREPREN meeting that the evaluators attended was the Tanzania National Policy Seminar, which was held 10–11 June 2002 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. At this, a smaller number of AFREPREN principal researchers (along with others) presented their work to a group of energy policy stakeholders. Many individuals from different stakeholder groups (from within the energy sector or beneficiaries of energy services) who were not closely associated with AFREPREN also attended. Not only did this seminar provide the evaluators with an opportunity to see, first-hand, another dimension of AFREPREN's activities, but also a chance to speak with individuals who were not centrally involved in AFREPREN. Full details of the evaluators' activities while in Africa are presented in Appendix 2 of this report.

While in Africa, the evaluators also had the opportunity to conduct 30 semi-structured interviews (see Appendix 4). These interviews usually involved both evaluators and a single interviewee and lasted for approximately one-half hour. At both meetings, there were also many chances to interact informally with participants, and the evaluators used these opportunities to develop further understanding of the Network.

The evaluators spent two days at the AFREPREN Secretariat in Nairobi. The first day (3 June 2002) was structured around a number of presentations made by the AFREPREN Director and other Secretariat staff. The second day (8 June 2002) was spent in further discussion with the Director about various issues arising from the evaluation; it also provided an opportunity to review additional documentation.

Finally, the evaluators conducted a survey of other African energy researchers and policy-makers – 'other', that is, than those who the evaluators had met during their time in Africa. Names and e-mail

addresses of potential survey respondents were collected by reviewing lists of past participants in AFREPREN's core activities, unsuccessful applications to AFREPREN and lists of participants in different AFREPREN events, as well as contacts known to the evaluators active in the energy sector within Africa. Appendix 3 provides a copy of the survey that was circulated (by email and fax on 24 June 2002 to 25 individuals). Ten responses to this survey were received.

1.3 Report Outline

This report is divided into nine main sections. Following this introduction to both AFREPREN and this report, AFREPREN's present activities are placed within a broader context in Section 2. AFREPREN's research activities are then investigated in Section 3. In Section 4, the policy impact of the Network's activities is examined.

In Section 5, the extent to which AFREPREN has been able to fulfil its capacity-building goals is considered. Attention is turned to the management of the Network's activities in Section 6, examining AFREPREN's means of governance. In Section 7, the Network's cost-effectiveness is considered. The focus is upon the future, in Section 8, in which potential funding sources and possible areas of research for AFREPREN are investigated. Finally, major conclusions and main recommendations are summarised in Section 9.

At the end of this report, a number of appendices, containing additional information regarding the way in which the evaluation was carried out, are presented.

2. Context

2.1 Introduction

In this section, AFREPREN's activities (both their general form and their specific foci) are placed within a broader context. More specifically, some of the elements that appear to be driving the African energy policy agenda are examined. The appropriateness of AFREPREN's response, by considering both AFREPREN's structure and its priorities, is then considered.

2.2 Factors Driving the African Energy Policy Agenda

Space limitations preclude a full discussion of all of the factors that appear to be driving the African energy policy agenda. Instead, presented here are some of what many perceive to be amongst the most influential ones. Accepting that it is not only 'energy-specific' themes that will continue to affect the structure of the African energy policy agenda, this brief list is divided into 'cross-cutting' themes and 'energy' themes.

Cross-cutting themes

- poverty alleviation
- 'In Africa, 340 million people, or half the population, live on less than US \$1 per day.' (NEPAD, 2001, p. 1) This is agreed to be unacceptable, and most concur that poverty alleviation is the highest priority for Africa. Poverty has also a gender dimension, with the majority of poor households having women as the sole provider.
- sustainability
- 'Sustainable development' and 'sustainability' have become key watchwords for societies around the world and have been strongly associated with development goals. Widely popularised in the late 1980s and early 1990s, many members of the international community recently recommitted themselves – in the United Nations Millennium Declaration – to the principles of sustainable development agreed at the 1992 Earth Summit. The World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002) is intended to advance further the implementation of those same principles.
- urbanisation
- Africa's cities are growing at an even greater rate than the continent's population as a whole. With annual growth in urban population between the years 2000 and 2015 predicted to be 3.5 per cent, the number of Africans living in urban areas could almost double during this period, from 297 million to 501 million (United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (HABITAT), 2001, pp. 271–73).
- globalisation
- Held and McGrew (1999) argue that '... globalization can be thought of as the widening, intensifying, speeding up, and growing impact of world-wide interconnectedness'. Encompassing more than just financial and economic phenomena, globalisation acknowledges the growth in worldwide links and relations across 'all key domains of human activity' (Held and McGrew, 1999).
- NEPAD

- NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) was agreed in 2001. It is a pledge by African leaders 'that they have a pressing duty to eradicate poverty and to place their countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development, and at the same time to participate actively in the world economy and body politic' (NEPAD, 2001, p. 1). Formally supported by the recent Group of 8 Summit in Canada (June 2002), NEPAD appears set to be the dominant framework for the world's interactions with Africa during the coming years.

Energy themes

- energy sector reform
- Globally, energy sectors (particularly electricity systems) are being 'restructured'. This means many things: unbundling, corporatisation of constituent parts, the introduction of competition into sections of the industry and/or the partial or full privatisation of utilities. Africa is no exception. Numerous electric (and other) utilities are in the process of being 'restructured', along different kinds of lines.
- supply-side transition
- Some argue that the world is about to enter a new 'energy transition' (for a discussion, see Nakixxenovix et al (2000)). In the past, some societies have changed the primary source of their energy supply, from animal power to biomass, biomass to coal, and coal to oil and natural gas. A movement to distributed systems based on renewables may be imminent; alternatively, increased attention to demand-side considerations may be forthcoming. In any case, smaller-scale generating systems are increasingly being used; moreover, 'energy service' (rather than 'energy supply') is also increasingly dominating the energy discourse.
- continued reliance on biomass
- Poor people mostly use biomass as their energy carrier. In many areas, there are increasing supply shortages of biomass, which adds to the burden of the women whose responsibility it is to collect it. The fuel quality of biomass is low, and when burnt, it gives off quantities of smoke and particulates that are recognised as having negative effects on health. Several hours a day spent in collecting fuel mean that this time cannot be used for other livelihood activities.
- transportation
- Transportation accounts for approximately one-quarter of global energy use, and it 'is one of the most rapidly growing sectors' (Michaelis et al, 1996, p. 681). Transportation is not only critical – it 'is needed for basic survival and social interaction as well as cultural and economic activity and development' (Michaelis et al, 1996, p. 686) – it can also have significant environmental and social impacts.
- global climate change
- It is widely accepted that not only is global climate change a 'real' threat, but also that it is more than just an environmental issue – instead, it 'is part of the larger challenge of sustainable development' (Watson, 2001). With the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol potentially impacting societies in numerous economic, social and political ways, both action and inaction in the face of global climate change will have significant ramifications.

2.3 The AFREPREN Response

AFREPREN is a uniquely African research institution, providing an effective and appropriate perspective in light of the current and anticipated future African energy policy agenda.

The fact that AFREPREN is African – that is, a research agenda set and implemented by Africans and not dominated by Northerners – is extremely significant; it is also critical. Relatively few research institutions currently exist in Africa. Moreover, in terms of energy policy research, those potential African candidates for conducting policy research – namely, universities, ministries of energy and utilities – are facing various crises which preclude them from developing and supporting extensive indigenous research capabilities. All too often in the past, energy policy research has been conducted by Northern consultants on short-term attachment. As such, AFREPREN is unique, building capacity for African energy research and actively contributing to African energy policy discussions.

AFREPREN's contributions are also critical. Without them, African voices would find it that much more difficult to be heard in energy policy discussions – both inside and outside the continent. The increasing globalisation of energy service industries (driven by a combination of economic and environmental forces) and the environmental effects of energy use mean that virtually all energy decisions now have local ramifications. In Africa, therefore, there needs to be those who appreciate the continent's interests and can act on them.

Indeed, it is local experts – those who clearly know the social, cultural, economic and political realities of African countries – who are more likely to produce recommendations that reflect this understanding. Local experts 'also have a better grasp of [the peoples'] problems and easier access to information necessary for their solutions' (Ingalls, 1997, p. 504). Indeed, it is widely accepted that, without local voices in policy debates, the chances of successfully implementing policy proposals are slim. It appears, therefore, that AFREPREN's activities – a regional network to increase knowledge, augment expertise and share ideas – are critical preconditions for sustainable energy development in Africa. Indeed, the evaluators feel strongly that if AFREPREN did not exist, various 'experts' would probably be calling for its creation.

The evaluators also believe that the foci of AFREPREN's attentions are appropriate, given the factors that are driving the African energy policy agenda. Recalling AFREPREN's three core research programmes and two sub-programmes (see Section 1.1 of this report), they reflect AFREPREN's unique ability both to respond to the present African energy policy agenda and to attempt to broaden that same agenda to encompass other areas.

Consider, for instance, AFREPREN research conducted under the core research programme entitled 'energy sector reform'. Most of the activities therein have focused upon electricity industry restructuring. As argued above, this is presently an important part of the energy agenda in Africa. In operationalising this research programme, however, AFREPREN has not solely reacted to the 'dominant agenda' (which may largely be set by forces based outside of Africa and which may have encouraged a focus on, for example, 'economic efficiency through privatisation in African power sectors'). Instead, AFREPREN has also directed attention towards other areas – for example, exploring appropriate regulatory structures in a restructuring environment and analysing the impact of reforms upon the continent's poorest people. AFREPREN, therefore, should be complemented for integrating African priorities into the agenda of others (including Sida). This is politically astute and extremely pragmatic. Indeed, it is an appropriate and effective strategy.

In addition to 're-directing' the dominant agenda, AFREPREN also appears to be trying to introduce new items onto the African and international energy policy agendas – items that directly reflect African concerns and priorities. AFREPREN's core research programme entitled 'energy services for the urban poor' is an excellent example. Although examining a set of problems that is not necessarily as 'popular' as other issues with outsiders, this programme has effectively brought together two of Africa's key issues – poverty alleviation and growing urbanisation – against an energy background. Surely the work done

within this research programme will be seen as invaluable once more individuals and organisations 'awake' to the importance of this issue.

In subsequent sections of this report, specifics of AFREPREN's activities (both their general form and their explicit substance) are investigated in more detail. At an abstract level, however, the evaluators believe that AFREPREN is an extremely relevant – nay, critical – programme to the energy problems facing the Eastern and Southern African region.

3. Research Activities

3.1 Introduction

Research is central to AFREPREN's activities. The main objectives of the Network include undertaking policy research, strengthening research capacity and disseminating research results. (See, for example, the current agreement between Sida and AFREPREN (Sida, 1999, Article II, p. 2).) In this section, AFREPREN's process for conducting research is briefly described and the quality of the research products considered.

3.2 The Research Process

AFREPREN researchers for the core research programmes were selected in 1999. A 'call for proposals' was disseminated throughout the Eastern and Southern African region by means of the AFREPREN mailing list and website. Interested individuals were invited to submit proposals. Thirty-nine proposals were subsequently received, and they were evaluated by a three-person panel of independent experts (a 'Research Advisory Panel').⁵ This Panel's terms of reference meant that Panel members were expected to consider not only the 'academic' quality and the potential policy-impact of each research proposal, but also the desire to have balance in terms of geography, gender, institutional base and disciplinary background within AFREPREN as a whole. The Panel recommended that 23 proposals be given further consideration. The final decision on selection of principal researchers for the core research programmes was made by Sida: the 23 aforementioned proposals were approved, along with a number of others, for a total of 35 researchers in the network.⁶ Membership of the different core research programmes is described in Table 3.1. Details about the membership of AFREPREN as a whole are presented in Table 3.2.⁷

Selected principal researchers met in Nairobi in August 1999 to develop their proposals further, and to explore the potential for synergies among groups of researchers. The intention was to reach agreement on common frameworks at this time, so that primary research could subsequently commence. It was not, however, until mid-2000 that the common frameworks (and associated hypotheses) were actually agreed. This delay had consequences for the implementation of the work-plan, and this point is returned to below.

⁵ The Research Advisory Panel had the following characteristics:

gender: 2 male; 1 female

institutional base: 1 utility; 1 university; 1 private sector

geographical base: 2 west Africa; 1 southern Africa

The Panel had reports from 'international experts' to consider as well. (In most cases, one report per proposal.)

⁶ Note that the process for selecting researchers in the 'Special Studies of Strategic Significance' theme group was different. It is described below.

⁷ The reader should also recognise that a few researchers left the Network between the beginning of this phase (1999) and the end of this evaluation period (February 2002). They were replaced by new researchers who were each contracted to complete a 'medium-term study' only.

Table 3.1: Membership of research programmes, by gender, academic qualification, institutional base and disciplinary background

	Energy Services for the Urban Poor	Renewables and Energy for Rural Development	Energy Sector Reform	Special Studies of Strategic Significance
Total number of researchers	16	22	21	15
<i>by gender</i>				
female	16%	21%	29%	20%
male	84%	79%	71%	80%
<i>by academic qualification</i>				
PhD	0%	22%	5%	7%
MSc/MA	64%	45%	43%	73%
BSc/BA	36%	33%	42%	13%
< BSc/BA	0%	0%	10%	7%
<i>by institutional base</i>				
Government	47%	38%	24%	34%
Utility	26%	0%	38%	27%
NGO	5%	10%	0%	13%
University/IRC	22%	33%	19%	13%
Private	0%	19%	19%	13%
<i>by disciplinary background</i>				
Natural science	44%	62%	64%	73%
Social science	56%	38%	36%	27%

Source: AFREPREN presentations, 3 June 2002.

Note: Figures consider principal researchers, associate researchers, assistant researchers, but excludes Masters students and principal researchers of the Theme Group on 'Special Projects on Energy Efficiency, Environment and Climate Change'.

AFREPREN documents note that core research programme theme areas were selected on the basis of '[the 1998 African Energy] Conference recommendations and suggestions from earlier AFREPREN regional policy seminars. The [themes also dovetail] with several important elements of the important donor agencies such as the Swedish International Cooperation Agency (Sida) that are important supporters of the African energy sector.' (AFREPREN, 1999, pp. v–vi). While there was reportedly consultation with stakeholders, the evaluators also notice the apparently-pivotal role that AFREPREN's General Assembly, Steering Committee and Secretariat played in the process of setting the agenda for AFREPREN's subsequent research phase. Given that the individual members of these bodies may want to participate in the subsequent phase, they may have an incentive to identify themes closely related to their own research interests and expertise. This may inadvertently encourage replication of research themes from phase to phase. While some degree of continuity is certainly desirable, there is also a need to introduce new themes and approaches over time. The evaluators do not criticise the actual themes undertaken in this phase of AFREPREN's activities; indeed, they appear highly appropriate (see the discussion in Section 2 of this report). Rather, the evaluators encourage the Network to continue to accept and incorporate 'outside perspectives' into Network decision-making (as presented

not only by non-AFREPREN members in national and regional seminars, for example, but also by non-AFREPREN analysts and policy-makers writing in newspapers, magazines, academic journals and the like). The recommended ‘Policy Advisory Panel’ (see Section 7 of this report) could thus play a central role in this process.

Table 3.2: AFREPREN Membership (including principal researchers, research assistants, Masters students)

<i>by gender</i>		<i>by academic qualification</i>	
female	23%	PhD	9%
male	77%	MSc/MA	38%
<i>by institutional base</i>		BSc/BA	43%
Government	42%	< BSc/BA	10%
Utility	18%	<i>by disciplinary background</i>	
NGO/IRC	16%	Natural science	54%
University	13%	Social science	46%
Private	11%		

source: AFREPREN presentation, 3 June 2002.

Once themes are established, AFREPREN has implemented largely open, rigorous and transparent means of selecting principal researchers. The process associated with selecting the principal researchers for the core research areas in 1999 has been described above. While the involvement of a multistakeholder Research Advisory Panel is highly desirable, the evaluators would want to ensure the presence of sufficient number of individuals with extensive research experience. The importance of having the Panel members at ‘arms-length’ from AFREPREN can not be overstated. In this regard, the evaluators are somewhat concerned that one of the members of the Panel was put in the position of considering the application of a work-colleague. Moreover, a Panel member subsequently submitted a proposal to AFREPREN in late-2000, to one of the ‘Special Studies of Strategic Significance’ competitions. Any member of the Research Advisory Panel should remain at ‘arm’s length’ from AFREPREN’s research for a period of time after his/her last involvement in the work of the Panel.

Researchers for the ‘Special Studies of Strategic Significance’ theme group were selected at different times during the period under evaluation. (This is appropriate, given that these studies were intended to respond to ‘new and emerging issues’ (Sida, 1999) that arose.) The selection process has involved the ‘rating’ of each proposal by two reviewers: one a member of the AFREPREN Steering Committee and the other an (outside) ‘international expert’. Applicants were then ranked on the basis of the average score received.

When rankings after the November 2000 competition were submitted to Sida, they were reconsidered by a Sida consultant. This reconsideration resulted in one proposal that had been judged ‘to be fundable’ by the Steering Committee / expert review mechanism not being funded, while a number of others judged ‘not fundable’ were indeed funded. Alternatively, in a more recent review process (early 2002), Sida simply accepted the recommendations of the Steering Committee / expert review mechanism.

The evaluators favour the latter kind of approach, and are pleased that it appears to be the current method also preferred by Sida. Although the Steering Committee / expert review mechanism is probably not ‘perfect’ (nor, however, is any review mechanism ‘perfect’), it is rigorous, incorporates what the evaluators perceive to be the key factors determining the ‘value’ of a proposal and, perhaps most

importantly, blends both African and international expertise in the selection of Network researchers. Subsequent review by another layer of 'international' expertise is not appropriate for a network that is developing effective capacity in these kinds of procedures.

That having been said, the evaluators would encourage continued reflection by the Secretariat and the Steering Committee upon the processes associated with selecting participants in AFREPREN. Clearly, the stakes are highest for the selection of principal researchers at the beginning of any individual programme cycle of AFREPREN. Therefore, in addition to the Research Advisory Panel's participation in this process, the evaluators would encourage involvement of every expert in a more comprehensive manner. Different individuals will – virtually inevitably – give different numerical values to proposals that they actually consider to be of the same 'value'. (This is a result of the fact that different individuals will interpret the same 'marking scale' differently.) Consequently, the use of many different experts to review one or two proposals each should be discouraged. Instead, it is important for a small number of experts to review all of the proposals. The evaluations of African and international experts should both be considered when determining the selection of principal researchers for the core research programme.⁸

For studies of shorter duration (for example, the 'Special Studies of Strategic Significance' during this phase of AFREPREN's activities), the present system (with Steering Committee members providing African perspectives and a variety of outside experts providing international perspectives) should continue. The problems, however, with different numbers meaning the same level of quality should be recognised. Perhaps Secretariat staff members could revisit past rankings and consider different techniques for 'normalising' all scores.⁹

As Table 3.2 reveals, AFREPREN is made up of researchers with different institutional bases. They are also a generally well-qualified group, with over one-third holding a post-graduate degree. And, although the gender mix is not evenly-balanced, the fact that almost one-quarter of AFREPREN's members are female compares favourably with other associations of energy professionals. AFREPREN's decision to discriminate positively in favour of women in the mid-term selection process (women applicants automatically received five more points than their male counterparts) has helped to increase the number of women in the Network. The need for female positive discrimination appears to be accepted by male researchers within the network. There are also fewer researchers with a social science background and the evaluators believe that more effort should be made to encourage their participation. The lack of this disciplinary expertise can be seen in the lack of attention to social dimensions of the research and the lack of skills in social science research methodologies.

Although Tables 3.1 and 3.2 suggest a relatively equal number of researchers based inside and outside of government, AFREPREN has not achieved its own goal of striking this balance in every country of the region. As AFREPREN tries to continue to balance many characteristics of the Network as a whole

⁸ As part of the process of selecting researchers, there should always be a sufficient period of time between the time at which the Call for Proposals is issued (and widely distributed) and the due date for receipt of proposals. There was one instance in which this period appeared to be less than one month (7 February 2002 to 5 March 2002 for one of the 'Special Studies of Strategic Significance' competitions), and the evaluators think this too short.

⁹ Even though the two reviewers (that is, the Steering Committee member and international expert) were using somewhat different criteria when evaluating the same proposal (the Steering Committee member's score also considered the applicant's background and gender, institutional and disciplinary characteristics), the two scores were expected to be fairly-closely related. They were in the first competition examined (the year 2000 competition, in which, from a sample of 22, the Pearson's correlation coefficient had a value of +0.481, which was significant at the 5% level), but not in the second (the year 2002 competition, in which, from a sample of 21, the Pearson's correlation coefficient had a value of -0.044, which was not significant at even the 10% level).

(that is, geography, gender, institutional base and disciplinary background), it will be difficult to guarantee the presence of both a government-based researcher and a non-government-based researcher in every country. Nevertheless, the evaluators would encourage AFREPREN to continue to have this as a goal, for the synergy between the two kinds of researchers is one of the unique strengths of the Network.

3.3 Research Quality

AFREPREN's principal researchers (and their associated research assistants) have produced topical and interesting research, some of it ground-breaking. The main strength of the research is undoubtedly the wealth of primary data and information contained within virtually every one of the studies. The researchers are also to be commended on the structure given most of their reports. The purpose of the report is usually clearly laid out, relevant literature often identified, primary data collection reported upon and analysed, and conclusions offered. Indeed, given that two of the key research recommendations made in the 1999 evaluation have been at least partially addressed (namely, that 'more primary data and information' be collected and that the value of a 'methodological framework' be discussed (Hvelplund and Worrell, 1999, p. 32)), the Network is to be congratulated for its quick response.

The quality of the research is confirmed not only by this evaluation, but also by the evaluation of independent international experts. AFREPREN's studies are now regularly reviewed by 'international referees', and they too commended many researchers upon their work. Moreover, many of them thought that the reports they had read could be reworked into journal articles for refereed international journals.¹⁰

These referees' conclusions have more recently been confirmed by other international experts. Scheduled to appear in the second half of 2002 is a Special Issue of *Energy Policy*, entitled 'Africa: Improving Modern Energy Services for the Poor'. *Energy Policy* is, arguably, the most important and influential international energy policy journal and is read by many policy makers in the energy sector. This Special Issue will contain 18 articles (15 by individuals centrally involved AFREPREN at present) and it represents the first time that the journal – in its 30-year existence – has had a special issue edited and largely authored by African researchers. AFREPREN is right to be extremely proud of this achievement, for it can be interpreted as an academic 'coming of age' for the Network. It is confirmation that AFREPREN is producing some of the best energy policy research, both in Africa and internationally.

As is the case for virtually any set of researchers (or individual researcher), there is still room for improvement in the quality of AFREPREN's research. The evaluators have identified, in particular, three areas that warrant specific attention.

First, notwithstanding the aforementioned appreciation for the clear structure given to many of the reports, the means by which research hypotheses are structured, presented and used could be improved. Indeed, this is something that was often raised by international referees as a major concern in their reports on individual articles.

Through discussions with AFREPREN researchers, however, the evaluators have come to believe that the problems associated with the hypotheses were not entirely of the researchers' own making. The hypotheses were presented to the Network by the Sida consultant in early 2000, and they were generally perceived, by principal researchers, to have been imposed upon the Network 'from above'. Many

¹⁰ Of 13 reviews of 'short-term studies' from the three core research programmes examined, five were deemed, by international reviewers, to be of a quality suitable for an 'international journal article (after suitable editing)'. Moreover, all but three of the 13 reports were judged to be of at least 'very good' quality.

researchers argued that the hypotheses were not appropriate for their particular country, and even if they were, the hypotheses were not worded clearly enough to be helpful in conducting research and reaching policy-related conclusions. In any case, researchers persevered with the hypotheses (some of which were slightly re-worded during the course of the research), and they are to be commended for these efforts.

The evaluators believe that there is an important role for hypotheses – or at least some kind of framework to ensure rigorous research and to promote cross-national comparisons. Nevertheless, the hypotheses for the next programme cycle of AFREPREN should differ in three important respects: first, they should be testable; second, they should be sufficiently flexible so as to recognise that different African countries have different circumstances; and third, their development – at every stage – should involve the researchers who will ultimately be using them. The use of hypotheses in this way would also serve to engage AFREPREN researchers with broader debates in the relevant literature(s) more directly. This, in turn, would help to ensure that all 'products' of AFREPREN's research activities advance academic knowledge by critically analysing existing work. In summary, given that many African researchers are sensitised to the value of hypotheses – and indeed, are supportive of their use – the evaluators are optimistic about the role that hypotheses can play in future AFREPREN work.

A second area for potential improvement consists of increasing the persuasiveness (and thus the potential impact) of the policy recommendations. In many AFREPREN reports, the rich data that have been gathered by researchers are not used to their full potential in the development of the policy recommendations. The AFREPREN researchers have undertaken considerable effort to ensure that their respective research teams have collected valuable primary data. Indeed, these data are occasionally the 'first of their kind' – that is, there exists no comparable data set at all. The evaluators believe, however, that these data could be subject to a more critical analysis so that all relevant conclusions (including concrete policy recommendations) are effectively drawn from them. This is an area where some expert guidance might be valuable in assisting researchers from a non-academic background.

Moreover, policy recommendations are usually simply listed, with little sense of the relative priority of each individual policy option (let alone how any sense of priority was arrived at). In fact, alternative policy options usually have different costs – costs which can be defined in many different ways. (These costs may be in terms of direct and/or indirect financial, economic, social, political and/or environmental costs for different actors, across both space and time. Consequently, it is no simple task to determine the 'cost' of a particular policy recommendation.) Important debates could be stimulated if AFREPREN researchers were to prioritise different policy options, on the basis of different kinds of cost analysis. Therefore, AFREPREN researchers should be encouraged to reflect upon the priority of different policy options.

Additionally, the policy recommendations that are offered in AFREPREN reports usually emphasise 'ends', while paying relatively little attention to 'means'. A complete policy recommendation should consist not only of the policy goal (along with a justification for the particular goal), but also guidance as to how that goal should be achieved (along, of course, with a justification for the selection of that particular path for policy implementation). Policy-makers are looking for 'how to' information from researchers, and such information is not always on offer in AFREPREN's reports. Given, therefore, the emphasis that is placed – in AFREPREN's terms of reference – upon research that has a 'policy impact' (Sida, 1999, Article II), the way in which policy recommendations are developed and presented warrants further attention.

Third, the potential for valuable regional comparisons has yet to be fully exploited. The evaluators are more hesitant in advancing this comment, for it is fully recognised that the appropriate time for cross-national comparisons is towards the end of the research cycle. Given that there remains almost a year

of research between the end of the period of evaluation (February 2002) and the end of the current phase of AFREPREN (December 2002), that work may still be forthcoming. Still, it is not clear as to who will undertake the cross-national comparisons. The regional reports that were under review simply present data from across Africa on the particular theme-area. There is little in the reports that related directly to the specific questions (or hypotheses) being investigated by the national researchers. Thus, the link between the national and regional reports remains unclear. It is hoped that this potential for illuminating cross-national comparisons (all the more feasible, given the common set of research hypotheses being used) does not end up being lost.

In addition to these three 'primary' areas, two additional – although 'secondary' – areas for improvement are also identified. First, notwithstanding the aforementioned praise for the increased role of primary data in the research, a more systematic (and transparent) process for their collection and presentation is encouraged. In most AFREPREN reports, information about the procedures (including the questionnaires) associated with selecting the survey sample (and the limitations arising from the same) is not presented. Moreover, only selected pieces of data are usually presented. Given the nature of the AFREPREN reports, a comprehensive presentation of survey results (including gender disaggregation, something that is particularly noticeable by its absence) is recommended. This would provide the research and policy communities with a valuable resource, and it would also serve to make the methodology more transparent (and thus contestable and reproducible).

Second, the evaluators would like to encourage greater communication across groups. Although the evaluators were struck – at the Regional Evaluation Workshop they attended – by the strong sense of community that appeared to exist among all principal researchers, there could still be important policy recommendations that arise out of increased contact across groups. It is recognised, however, that researchers are already extremely busy, so this is simply stated so that it remains one of AFREPREN's ambitions. Any efforts that can be made to further that goal would, the evaluators believe, yield valuable returns.

3.4 Research-related recommendations

To encourage further improvement in the quality (and potential impact) of AFREPREN's research, three recommendations are made. First, the evaluators suggest that serious consideration be given to the deeper involvement of a smaller number of international 'experts'. The Network would benefit immensely from having energy policy experts of international standing involved throughout the 'life-cycle' of the research – from the development of research hypotheses through to the dissemination of research products. Like existing 'international referees' in the AFREPREN process, these international experts would review work produced by researchers and provide comments in response. But their responsibilities would go beyond those of existing international referees. Most importantly, they would not make isolated comments on individual reports. Instead, they would be continuously involved with a group of AFREPREN researchers over a three or four year period. Additionally, they would not simply comment from afar, but instead would travel to at least two meetings in Africa during the three- or four-year life-span of a research project, so that input could be made in an interactive context, stronger bonds could be developed and mutual respect could be nurtured. Two such individuals for each core research programme could be an appropriate level of input. This is not so high so as to have the 'non-African' presence be 'overwhelming', but is sufficiently high (greater than one, more specifically) so as to encourage a plurality of views and so as to, quite practically, help to ensure some input, were one member not able to participate at any given time.

Successful implementation of this model would clearly be challenging. Most importantly, it requires a set of international researchers who each have a particular collection of attributes: each individual

needs not only expertise in energy policy issues and research processes more broadly, but also sufficient international stature and personal confidence so as to work effectively in a capabilities building context as a ‘facilitator’ or ‘guide’ (rather than a ‘leader’ or ‘director’) with AFREPREN members. Moreover, each would have to be acceptable to the AFREPREN researchers. The evaluators believe that the researchers are highly appreciative of the comments that the international reviewers provide and the value that they add to their research.

The potential benefits of such an arrangement, however, are great. Having consistent input over the entire course of the research would increase the quality of the research.¹¹ It would also serve to raise the profile of AFREPREN by creating AFREPREN ‘champions’ who could promote the Network in various fora around the world.

The evaluators recognise that this type of review system would add significantly to AFREPREN’s costs and this might be an area that Sida would consider ear-marking funding for in any further support.

A second recommendation is to have a more formal role for the Theme Group Coordinator. In discussions with principal researchers, the evaluators found that many of them – though often full of praise for their Theme Group Coordinator – had no sense of what the individual’s ‘formal role’ was supposed to be. The paragraph in the 1999 agreement between Sida and AFREPREN (Sida, 1999)¹² suggests an administrative and time-limited role for the Theme Group Coordinator. This individual’s responsibilities could be increased and the role formalised. Specifically, such an individual should have both expertise in energy policy issues and research processes more broadly as well as leadership skills so as to help direct the researchers towards their final goals. Their mandate should be not only to chair meetings of the theme group (something that appears to be happening widely now), but also to encourage and aid in the development of the research and the researcher between formal meetings and to develop cross-national comparisons through the utilisation of group members’ research results.¹³ The latter would certainly help to address what is identified above as a key area for attention – namely, the need to develop cross-national comparisons. Moreover, there would also be the potential for the Theme Group Coordinators to foster cross-sectoral deliberations. Again, this is an area for attention identified by the evaluators above. In summary, the evaluators believe that Theme Group Coordinators could play an important role in helping to utilise better the synergies that are offered by AFREPREN’s structure – especially across countries, though also across issues.

Finally, the evaluators recommend that more attention be paid to research training – particularly the process of conducting ‘social science research’ in general,¹⁴ and ‘policy research’ in particular. There was a training course for researchers that was held in Nairobi in early 2002 (Regional Training Course on ‘Proposal Writing and Presentation Skills’). Many researchers spoke highly of their exposure in this course. Next time, however, any course should be held earlier in the ‘research life-cycle’. It should also examine (among other things) the role of hypotheses, the purpose of a literature review, the process of primary research, the development of findings, conclusions and policy recommendations.

¹¹ The reader should recognise that one of the main problems that international reviewers had with many of the reports was the structure of the hypotheses that were used. Were these reviewers aware of the circumstances leading to the inclusion of the hypotheses, they might have phrased their comments differently.

¹² ‘Each theme group will nominate a theme group co-ordinator. Acting on the mandate conferred by the theme groups and the SC [Steering Committee], the theme group coordinator will finalise the groups’ proposals and submit them, through the Secretariat, to Sida/SAREC.’ (Sida, 1999)

¹³ They would also be members of the Policy Advisory Panel proposed in Section 6 of this report.

¹⁴ Including gender analysis and data collection.

In summary, AFREPREN's research activities have, for the most part, met their objectives (Sida, 1999). With respect to the three core research programmes, many of the 'research objectives' (Sida, 1999) have been fulfilled. Moreover, for those research objectives that have not been explicitly fulfilled this is as much a result of the particular focus of the research hypotheses (which were selected by the Sida consultant) than any kind of 'underperformance' by AFREPREN researchers. The Network, moreover, appears to be set to fulfill its quantitative goals for reports and publications, as agreed in the same document (Sida, 1999).

With respect to the 'Energy Efficiency, Environment and Climate Change' theme group, it does not appear that original targets will be met (Sida, 1999). Although this programme was initially envisaged to run until December 2002 (like the three core research programmes), its activities were terminated in the year 2000. Given that resources are limited, this is certainly understandable, though it nevertheless remains unfortunate. Indeed, it is all the more unfortunate given the potential of the subject-area that was clearly evident: one researcher was successful in his efforts to secure outside funding for his research and policy proposals (in this case, from the Global Environment Facility).

With respect to the 'Special Studies of Strategic Significance' theme group, the evaluators do not believe that the research objectives for the period have been met. The two research objectives for this programme were (Sida, 1999):

- 'Identify new and emerging issues that are likely to be important to the African energy sector'; and
- 'Assess implications of new and emerging issues and trends on the African energy sector'

The evaluators have reviewed 14 studies that have been produced by the members of this theme group. Although most have academic and policy merit,¹⁵ they are not consistent with the intentions of the theme group. Instead, the material that has been produced is conventional and traditional. For the most part, the studies consist of relatively narrow 'assessments' of particular projects (usually) or broader policies (occasionally). In some instances, lessons for the future are drawn, but most of the work is relatively case-specific and broader strategic implications are not elaborated.

An opportunity was missed here. There was the potential for AFREPREN members to produce timely work, in response to key regional and international events (e.g., the formation of the 'African Union', the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the G8 Declarations or the agreement and implementation of NEPAD) and key regional and international phenomena more broadly (e.g., the diffusion of ISO 14001, debates about democratisation, corporate reporting or stakeholder capitalism). The theme group provided a key opportunity for African reflection upon regional and global trends, and a chance for Africans to think about how the continent could position itself, strategically, in response to these trends. It is disappointing that this chance was not taken.

The evaluators would encourage Sida, the AFREPREN Secretariat and the AFREPREN Steering Committee to consider funding a similar sub-programme again. Any successor, however, to the 'Special Studies of Strategic Significance' theme group should be 'positioned' differently than it was during this programme cycle.¹⁶ Instead, emphasis should be placed upon creative, 'out-of-the-box' thinking and approaches to emerging issues.

¹⁵ Four have been reviewed by international referees: two were found to be 'good', one 'very good' and one 'excellent'.

¹⁶ The AFREPREN Steering Committee sent somewhat conflicting signals in its communications about this programme. While noting (in its draft minutes of October 2001, Section 1.4) that '... The Special Studies of Strategic Significance would tackle other new and emerging issues that are not covered by the aforementioned theme groups', the evaluators nevertheless find later in the same section, five 'key issues that could be addressed by the proposed studies'. Three of the five are simple replication of the three core research programmes. This did not serve to encourage research into 'new and emerging issues'.

4. Policy impact

4.1 Introduction

AFREPREN's activities are intended to have a 'policy impact' – specifically, to lead to 'practical policies for sustainable energy development in the Eastern and Southern African region' (Sida, 1999, Article II). In this section, the means by which the Network attempts to influence policy is briefly described. The effectiveness of various existing and alternative methods is also considered.

4.2 The Process of Policy Impact

At present, AFREPREN appears to be influencing policy-making through four different kinds of activities: national and regional seminars, dissemination of written material and the activities of individual members, both in their formal employment and through their 'outreach activities'. Each is described in turn.

National policy seminars are to be held in each country annually.¹⁷ Their primary objectives are to:

- disseminate AFREPREN research findings; and
- garner the energy policy research priorities of key stakeholders in their respective national energy sectors (AFREPREN, n.d.).

Seminars, which last two days, bring together approximately 20–30 individuals, representing a variety of key stakeholders in the energy sector.

A particular theme – closely related to one of AFREPREN's core research programmes – is usually used at the seminar to focus the deliberations. Most seminar participants usually come from within the country in which the seminar is taking place, though a small number of regional participants may also participate, in order to encourage trans-national sharing of experiences. The selection of participants is made by the national focal point, who issues the invitations and often follows-up by personal contact to encourage participation. The evaluators are of the opinion that the participants come from a broad cross-section of stakeholder groups both from within the energy sector or where energy is a major factor of interest and they are can be senior figures, for example, MPs. Participants are not drawn only from the capital city. However, perhaps more could be done to encourage the participation of social scientists as speakers and participants, which might be achieved by all national researchers contributing to the invitation list.

The approach used in the seminars is one of interactive discussion amongst participants and speakers. To encourage this, the first day of the seminar is often structured around 'set presentations' (followed by question-and-answer periods) by AFREPREN researchers, both national and external – past and present, plus appropriate regional experts. The evaluators are of the opinion that the quality of the speakers is generally of an international standard with appropriate professional status¹⁸. The use of speakers from outside the region and the continent is in general prohibited by the cost, although there have been a number of notable successes, for example, from the World Bank.

¹⁷ A smaller number of regional seminars are also to be organised.

¹⁸ For example, the evaluators attended the Tanzanian National Seminar, where one of the speakers was the Chief Executive of an Electricity Utility from the SADC region and another speaker had been an AFREPREN researcher in Phase I.

The second day often consists of group discussion within different ‘break-out groups’ (following the broader theme of the seminar). Participants are given copies of papers and presentations made during the seminar and also have the opportunity to take away any number of AFREPREN publications (books, reports, working papers, etc.). It was reported that 13 national and regional seminars have been held to date (of the 33 required).

The evaluators had the opportunity to participate in the Tanzania National Policy Seminar and considered it professionally organised to a good international standard. Speakers were kept to time – which is to be congratulated.

Reports of the national and regional seminars are published as Occasional Papers. These form a useful record of the papers presented and the seminar participants. The evaluators consider that the Secretariat is to be congratulated on instilling a sense of discipline in authors to be brief (and wish that the practice would become more universally widespread!). A suggestion for enriching the seminar reports is the inclusion of elements of the discussions. The reports are distributed by both National Focal Points and the Secretariat both to participants and a wider audience. As of August 2002, 2155 copies have been distributed.

In addition to the Occasional papers, AFREPREN issues a number of other publications both in-house (a newsletter, which is published quarterly; and Working Papers, of which, together with the Occasional Papers, approximately 20–25 are published annually either in hard copy or are down loadable from the web site), and externally (in particular, a series of books that has been published by Zed Books in London, United Kingdom), as well as in third-party publications (journal articles and chapters in books).¹⁹ The varied formats for dissemination (for example, the shorter policy-oriented pieces in newsletters and the longer research-oriented pieces in academic journals) are meant to reach and to meet the needs of different audiences (or ‘users’ of the research). The distribution of the results of its research is the second way in which AFREPREN has an impact upon policy.

AFREPREN members also appear to be influencing policy-making through their individual actions (as opposed to their collective actions through a national or regional policy seminar or an AFREPREN-produced, or -facilitated, publication). In many cases, this consists of those individual AFREPREN members who are directly involved in policy-making, either in government or the utility, using their AFREPREN experience to help them in their ‘daily job’. In other words, by virtue of their experience in AFREPREN, these individuals, arguably, ‘see things differently’ and therefore take different actions than they otherwise would have. The end result is, the argument continues, that AFREPREN has been able to exert a direct influence upon policy-making through the actions of some of its individual members.

And finally, individual members through their other ‘outreach’ activities also have the potential to influence policy. This may take the form of formal presentations to professional associations or informal discussions with well-connected colleagues. Again, the argument is that by virtue of their AFREPREN experience, these individuals are better equipped to affect peoples’ views. Thus, every AFREPREN member has the potential to influence others (including potentially powerful stakeholders) through their formal and informal, professional and personal, networking.

¹⁹ AFREPREN reports that they have produced 32 articles in international journals (against a target of 21) and 107 reports, working papers and occasional papers (target of 62). They have yet to produce any of the three promised books, but – given the long lead-time associated with books – this is not particularly surprising. The evaluators consider it a mark of the quality of the research output that a leading international publisher publishes AFREPREN’s work.

4.3 The Extent of Policy Impact

It is extremely difficult, methodologically, to evaluate the impact of policy recommendations. For one, causation is hard to trace. If a particular policy recommendation appears to have been followed, there might be many who claim ‘influence’ in the process. Nor can counter-factuals be easily developed. Thus, even if a particular policy recommendation is not pursued, it may still be the case that the (apparently ignored) policy recommendation exerted an influence, perhaps by encouraging the ‘least bad’ of other options to be followed. The point is simply that any conclusions about policy impact can at best be only suggestive and tentative.

Referring to the four aforementioned ways in which policy can be influenced, instances are identified in which it appears that AFREPREN activities have had an impact upon energy policy-making in Eastern and Southern Africa.

First, national policy seminars can, with the right mixture of participants and presenters, be a catalyst for change. The evaluators heard reports, from various AFREPREN researchers, of ways in which policy-makers clearly had their intellectual horizons expanded through participation in a national seminar. Consideration of gender in policy-making and more systematic attention to renewable energy technologies were just two such examples. Indeed, through attendance at the Tanzania National Policy Seminar, the evaluators saw, first-hand, the power of a persuasive presentation: more specifically, all participants at that seminar were clearly enraptured by the remarks of the chief executive from a national utility in southern Africa. Although not necessarily ‘the norm’, there is little doubt that there have been other equally powerful presentations during this programme cycle of AFREPREN.

AFREPREN is clearly proficient at distributing its materials. The figures that were cited about the volume of material circulated were impressive: 9,008 AFREPREN publications as hard copies were distributed between 1999 and 2001 and since 1999 there have been 44,000 hits on the web site. The target group for distribution of printed material has covered all the strategic stakeholders in the energy sector: Ministers, heads of utilities, University researchers/lecturers, students and field project NGO officers, key regional and international policy makers and researchers on the Network mailing list. Unfortunately, one does not know if any of the material is actually read (although interviewees from outside the network claim to refer to the material²⁰), let alone acted upon, the sheer volume of distributed material would suggest that at least some of the AFREPREN materials are, inevitably, influencing policy-making.

The Special Issue of *Energy Policy* (see Section 3.3 of this report) will probably also have considerable impact. As argued above, this journal is one of the most important – if not the single most influential – international energy policy journal. Thus, it is important to cite this particular journal publication as a key element of AFREPREN’s policy impact activities.

Those individuals who work in government departments and utilities reported that their involvement in AFREPREN had helped to shape their actions at work. In both interviews and the plenary session at the Regional Evaluation Workshop, examples were given of the ways in which AFREPREN research had found its way into national policy documents. They include:

- inputs into national development plans (Botswana)
- creation of new regional energy units in government (Eritrea)
- policies for rural electrification (Eritrea)

²⁰ The evaluators have themselves used AFREPREN material in teaching and have referenced research findings in papers.

- information to international development agencies based locally (Tanzania)
- socio-economic assessment of utility privatisation (Uganda)
- inputs into national energy policy document to include urban poor (Zimbabwe)
- contributions to biomass energy strategy (Zimbabwe)

Finally, the profile of AFREPREN in Africa, and internationally, is sufficiently high so as to have its Director invited to a number of elite-level conferences and workshops. Two of these struck the evaluators as particularly impressive: the Governing Council of UNEP/Second Global Ministerial Environment Forum (February 2001) and a NEPAD Conference in Uganda (April 2002). At these, presentations by the AFREPREN Director were made to audiences of key policy-makers. As AFREPREN's standing continues to rise, these kinds of invitations will probably increase in number, so the potential for the Network to encourage informed energy policy debate in Africa can only increase.

Notwithstanding these 'successes', it remains that 'sustainable energy policy making' does not yet exist in Eastern and Southern Africa (nor anywhere else in the world, for that matter). Consequently, there is still a need for developing effective ways of influencing policy, and thus it is right to reflect upon the means by which AFREPREN might be able to do this in the future.

4.4 Policy Impact-Related Recommendations

Below, a number of recommendations for increasing further the policy impact of AFREPREN's activities are laid out. Although the four-fold categorisation introduced in Section 4.2 above is broadly followed, the reader should note that there is significant overlap amongst these categories. (In other words, what is presented as a recommendation in one area may also apply in other areas.)

National seminars:

- Although most seminars have been able to attract a broad cross-section of energy stakeholders, the evaluators would continue to encourage the 'net to be cast' as widely as possible. 'Important to stress here is that policy-oriented research is not only meaningful for and should not be directed solely to governments. Parliamentarians, people's organizations (trade union, women, youth and grassroots organizations, etc.) and NGOs have a great need for policy research not only to help them shape their own policies and decisions, but also to assist them in influencing and evaluating the outcome of the processes of national policy making.' (Rasheed, 1994 p. 109) These same kind of sentiments have been voiced more recently by Johnson (2000, 477).
- More regular engagement with the national media is encouraged. This is something that AFREPREN's Steering Committee has been thinking about in a general sense (see section 1.7.2. of the August 1999 Steering Committee Meeting Minutes and section 2.8.1. of the May 2000 Steering Committee Meeting Minutes). The evaluators would, however, encourage it to be a 'required' part of national seminars, at least.
- The evaluators encourage more systematic follow-up of the conclusions reached at national policy seminars. From reviewing the documents associated with these seminars, it is not always clear that individuals were given responsibility for 'championing' particular decisions. The seminar should be seen as part of a process – not solely as an end-product.
- Related to national-level dissemination, reflection upon the appropriate role for 'national focal points' is encouraged. The evaluators are not convinced that AFREPREN should necessarily move in the direction of greater decentralisation. This is a sentiment shared by most AFREPREN re-

searchers. The evaluators do feel, however, that there needs to be greater clarity with respect to the role of the ‘national focal point’. (Many researchers had no clear idea regarding the role of the national focal points, and one or two suspected that they exercised undue influence on the way resources were used, bypassing the Steering Committee.) All responsibilities deemed appropriate should be formalised, for this would aid transparency and remove the type of suspicions referred to above.

- The use of different ‘approaches’ to national seminars is encouraged in order to explore the ways in which policy impact could be maximised. Some organisers of national seminars might consider having an ‘open’ component (e.g., an evening lecture or debate). Others might try a one-day session, to see what different kind of feedback (if any) that inspires. Given the number of national seminars, the potential for exploring (as a research investigation in itself) the policy impact of different approaches is great.

Publications:

- The AFREPREN newsletter should be revamped, so as to update its appearance and make it more eye-catching.
- More diverse fora for publication of research results should be used. It is the evaluators’ understanding that the Network has been encouraged by Sida to publish in international refereed energy journals. Although this might be appropriate for some AFREPREN members, the evaluators do not feel that it is necessarily the most appropriate goal towards which all members should be working. Members should be encouraged to contribute to other kinds of publications – including professional associations’ journals, political and economic ‘magazines’ and other organisations’ newsletters. Moreover, for those interested in publishing in international journals (and at least a minimal percentage of the Network should continue to do so), consideration of policy journals and African-focused multidisciplinary journals as additional candidates for publication is encouraged.
- Finally, the evaluators note that their recommendations about policy research (see Section 3 of this report) also have relevance here.

Individuals working in government and utilities:

- The way in which AFREPREN is encouraging those of its members who are government or utility employees to use research findings in their regular employment is supported by the evaluators.

Individuals networking:

- The evaluators encourage the Network to think more systematically about how it could have its research results disseminated through presentations and informal and formal consultation processes. AFREPREN has not explored fully the way in which it could monitor, anticipate and react to key external events. (For example, participating in the lead-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development or the development of key policy documents by international organisations and Northern governments through, for example, formal written submissions or releasing press statements.) It may well be appropriate for AFREPREN to assign a Secretariat ‘backstopping officer’ with the task of ‘scanning’ current developments, so as to be able to alert members to the future possibility of providing input. Such pro-active engagement in policy processes might provide an appropriate alternative means of disseminating research results (as opposed to submitting an article to an international journal).

5. Energy Policy Research Capacity Building and Strengthening

5.1 Introduction

Capabilities should not be confused with capacity. Capabilities are skills and knowledge. Capabilities form a key component of an individual's or organisation's capacity to achieve goals, objectives and aims. The capacity of an individual or organisation is a much wider concept including human, financial and technical resources, which enables the organisation or individuals to:

- implement activities;
- communicate effectively (for an organisation this means both internally and with others outside); and
- participate in socio-economic and political arenas.

5.2 AFREPREN's Capabilities Building

AFREPREN is primarily engaged in capabilities building of individuals rather than institutions. It also has a small component that creates technical resources through its books, reports and website for those outside the network to draw upon. The latter should not be overlooked in terms of a broader institutional capacity building within Eastern and Southern Africa (and wider), particularly in light of the privatisation of utilities, which either stop altogether with data collection or no longer allow what will be regarded as commercially sensitive data into the public domain. AFREPREN is filling this gap; in fact, utilities make use of AFREPREN data to make cross comparisons with other utilities in the region.

AFREPREN itself is an established African institution and the Network is now recognised, both within and outside the region, as an important organisation carrying out policy research and giving a much needed African voice to international debates. The Secretariat (the human resource) is staffed by a team of dedicated professionals working at a high international standard and is complimented for this both by researchers and others outside the network. The offices are modest and the office equipment is up to date, which creates a favourable impression on the visitor. The Secretariat is concerned that the lack of their own internet server is slowing down access to their website. However, the evaluation team wonders if the cost of such an item is justifiable in light of the variable quality, and cost, of access by the primary target audience (African policy makers) to the internet.

The first evaluation of AFREPREN discussed in detail the advantages and disadvantages of individual versus institutional development (Christensen and McCall, 1994, pp. 33–35). The evaluators for Phase III are in general agreement with their analysis. The strongest argument for working with individuals as opposed to institutions is that the Network is able to ensure that the researcher meets their requirements in terms of expertise and suitability for the topic to be researched. When working directly with institutions there is less control over the selection process. The disadvantage of working with individuals is their mobility and the risk that they take their skills elsewhere. This risk will always be present; it is a global phenomenon – researchers move to where they consider conditions (in terms of remuneration and availability of resources to research subjects that interest and stimulate them) are best. Within Africa there is not yet the critical mass of researchers in energy policy which creates the labour pool that institutions are able to draw on for plugging the gaps in their own human resources.

AFREPREN is contributing to the development of this pool. The inclusion of researchers from government departments and utilities has the advantage that these individuals have less international mobility than academics and even if they leave their home institution they will probably continue to form part of the pool of skilled researchers in energy policy in the AFREPREN region.

It would appear that government ministries and utilities do perceive some institutional benefit by their employees' participation in AFREPREN since no successful applicant has been refused outright permission to participate. A number of ministries and utilities allow staff time during work hours and the use of resources (for example, telephone and photocopier) to carry out their research and to attend AFREPREN meetings. However, it has also to be said that not everyone is so fortunate and some researchers have to carry out their work at weekends and during their holidays. It is the evaluators' opinion that this is shortsighted of the institutions since it is not unreasonable to assume that the 'week-end' researchers would be more likely to leave than their counterparts in a supportive institution due to tiredness and a sense of frustration and feeling of lack of appreciation by their employer.

It was outside of the scope of this evaluation to investigate the reasons behind negative institutional behaviour towards the AFREPREN researchers. However, it is likely to be due to a number of complex reasons and one can speculate that this ranges from petty jealousy through general poor appreciation of the need for human resource development to a lack of understanding of the value of the research being conducted. Again, this type of behaviour is not something specific to African institutions and not all of these are within the control of AFREPREN and the individual researchers. However, some are and can be addressed by better communication. The first evaluation commented that in some cases colleagues did not know about the involvement of a researcher in AFREPREN (Christensen and McCall, 1994, p. 34). In part, this depends upon individual personalities and motives. An individual might wish to be 'secretive' to avoid all kinds of personal pressures, particularly in institutions where salaries are low and benefits scarce. This type of behaviour will not diminish until there is a general improvement in institutional salaries and working conditions throughout – developments that are outside of AFREPREN's control. To overcome the lack of understanding of the value of the research, the Secretariat should develop a strategy of contacting the appropriate person in the organisation and discussing the value of staff network membership to the institution. There are examples of researchers who do actively promote the involvement of their colleagues in AFREPREN either through sharing results by distributing publications, or involving them in national seminars, or engaging them as research assistant or associates. This has a number of benefits. It contributes to dissemination of findings and impacting on policy and to institution building. It has also encouraged junior researchers to develop their own proposals and become principal researchers (a number of the current researchers have come via this route).

In terms of individual capabilities building, there is no doubt that involvement in AFREPREN is highly valued by the individual researchers and the Secretariat staff. All the researchers interviewed by the evaluators commented on the positive benefits as researchers they had gained from involvement in the network; growth in confidence, increased self-esteem and intellectual capacity. Researchers considered that they had become better researchers and can do their own work better. It is the opinion of the evaluators that AFREPREN has made an important contribution to the empowerment and mobilisation of African researchers and has made a significant contribution to creating an effective African voice on energy issues. That this has been recognised by academic peers outside the region can be seen from the Special Issue of *Energy Policy*, one of the major international refereed journals in the field, to be edited by AFREPREN. Any academic working in energy policy would regard this as an honour and a significant recognition of their research work.

In terms of institution building, with the exception of the Secretariat, the involvement of AFREPREN has been modest and indirect. However, there still exist a need for strong institutions capable of con-

ducting energy policy research within the region covered by AFREPREN. At the moment, the capacity is mainly concentrated in South Africa and for a number of reasons this is not healthy. However, institution building requires a different strategy than merely training a few individuals in a random fashion. It might be an option for the next phase for AFREPREN to contract with specific individual institutions in the region a capacity building programme. This would also fit with the recommendation from the second evaluation: to integrate the network's research activities with those of other universities and research institutes (Hvelplund and Worrell, 1999, p. 41). Certainly, within the partnerships being planned as follow-ups to the climate change negotiations and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, there are likely to be funds for capacity building in energy and climate change.

5.3 Building Researchers' Capabilities

The need to improve research methodologies was strongly recommended in both previous evaluations. During this third phase the Network has taken steps to address weaknesses through a two pronged approach: supporting students in the Masters programme in Energy Policy at the Energy and Development Research Centre (EDRC) in the University of Cape Town and short training courses.

The Terms of Reference for this evaluation call for an assessment of the Masters programme (Sida, 2002, pp. 6–7). The resources for a full academic assessment were not included in the budget and the evaluators have had to base their findings on limited secondary sources (documentation and interviews). No direct contact has been made with EDRC. Therefore, the evaluators' comments should be viewed in this light. Within their own working experience, the evaluators have had direct contact with EDRC but not with the Masters Programme. The evaluators consider that EDRC has an excellent reputation and is judged by its academic peers to conduct good research at an international standard. Therefore, by extension, the evaluators consider that it not be unreasonable to assume that the Masters Programme is also delivered at a good level. This was also the impression given by those interviewed. The candidates supported appear appropriate in terms of their background and attempts have been made in the selection process to ensure regional and gender balance. It can also be viewed positively that AFREPREN/Sida are not funding all participants in the programme. However, there were a number of concerns:

- The intake appears to be limited to only candidates with a technical background. Researchers from non-technical backgrounds have also an important contribution to make in energy policy development. Indeed, AFREPREN has been criticised in the past for not engaging enough researchers from social science backgrounds and there are insufficient social science researchers in the region as a whole engaged in energy policy development.
- Considerable efforts were made to identify an appropriate Masters level course and the evaluators accept that the EDRC course is the only one available in the region dealing with energy policy. However, it has not been possible to evaluate whether or not the course content reflects the region's reality or focuses more specifically on the South African situation which differs significantly in a number of respects to that found elsewhere in the region. The evaluators are also of the opinion that there is a need to build academic institutions outside of South Africa to contribute to a more equitable balance and other perspectives on energy policy from within the region. It is therefore recommended that Sida consider the funding of a University Chair in the region, for example in gender and energy at the University of Makerere, Uganda or climate change at the University of Dar es Salaam.
- The evaluators would question the wisdom of selecting Steering Committee members as candidates (although there are no doubts about the appropriateness of the candidates selected). The evaluators

consider that the selection process has been transparent (candidates left the room during the discussion and Sida endorsed the selection list). However, one should keep in mind how this appears to those outside the network who are not privy to the minutiae of the selection process. It is inappropriate for Sida to be involved in this process and recommend that an alternative procedure be set up.

In terms of the *short courses*, these have been divided between knowledge and skills. There have been two courses in the former category (Renewable Energy Technologies and Cogeneration) and seven in the latter (IT, Research Methodology, and Proposal Writing). There have been 87 different participants in these courses.²¹ Participants have come from a broad cross-section of stakeholders (government, utility, NGOs, universities and the private sector). Although it is of concern that there were a lack of participants from utilities in the renewable energy technologies course; the technologies represent serious options, often neglected by utilities, for stand-alone systems and small isolated grids. This might reflect the way in which participants are selected which relies on national focal points and researchers to identify appropriate candidates. This places too much reliance on the particular networks of individuals and can be open to criticisms of largesse. It is recommended that a more open selection procedure be adopted.

Unfortunately, there is no information on gender balance amongst participants. However, it is dispiriting that the resource persons (at least for the knowledge based courses) were all men. There are women experts with technical backgrounds in the region who could have made excellent resource persons. The background of the experts would also indicate that the topics covered were hardware orientated and so many of the important social aspects might have been neglected.

There continue to be major weaknesses in research methodology and in analysis. This has been commented on in previous evaluations and in Section 3 of this report. It is also recognised by the researchers themselves and they are keen to improve their skills in these areas. The Network has taken steps during this phase to address these weaknesses through training courses and researchers have commented on the positive value this has had for their skills development. The evaluators consider it positive that AFREPREN used regional institutions to provide the skills training. However, there are reservations about the type of training provided in research methodology. The organisation used has a very commercial focus. Based on an evaluation of the training material and comments from researchers, there is no question about the quality of training offered by this organisation, however, it is directed at contract research rather than academic research. This is probably appropriate for the researchers from utilities and government but not for those in academic institutions and those who wish to publish in international academic journals. As noted in Section 3 of this report, the level of analysis in the majority of researchers' work is weak and there is often little attempt to develop anything more than generic recommendations. There is also very little understanding of social science research methodologies, and in particular how to incorporate a gender dimension into all aspects of the research work. It is therefore strongly recommended that in future, academic researchers be involved to deliver capacity building in research methodology, particularly in relation to social sciences perspectives including gender, as well as policy analysis and development.

²¹ Because some individuals attended two or more courses, there were a total of 175 participants across all courses.

6. Governance

6.1 Introduction

Good governance of any network is important for ensuring the smooth functioning of the network on a day-to-day basis, enabling the network to reach its goals, providing legitimacy and creating confidence in funding agencies. This requires clear structures and transparent ways of working. The procedures and decision making mechanisms have to be transparent both to those inside the network and those outside the network. AFREPREN is a relative young organization in a region where good governance has sometimes left much to be desired. It is also a dynamic organization which is evolving and responding to new challenges, including the development of appropriate governance structures. The first evaluation expressed concern about a number of aspects of transparency around decision-making (Christensen and McCall, 1994, pp. 52–53). AFREPREN has responded to these concerns and begun to develop innovative new structures which assist in decision making around research directions and allocation of resources (Steering Committee and Research Advisory Panel) and ensuring research relevance and quality (Policy Advisory Panel and International Expert Review Panel). A new development is the establishment of national focal points which play a role in the dissemination of research output.

6.2 AFREPREN Steering Committee

The membership of the AFREPREN Steering Committee is made up of the six researchers elected by the General Assembly of all members. The Steering Committee members elect a Chair from amongst themselves. The Director and a representative of the Sida also attend meetings. It is not clear what their status in relation to this committee is: advisory or full member. The Steering Committee is considered to be the major decision making body of the Network.

The Steering Committee has been finding its feet and Sida has been critical of its members' contribution in the past, considering it too passive. However, there are signs of change, for example, the Steering Committee recently took the decision to set up a working group to develop a long-term vision and strategic plan for the Network (something the Network clearly needs for its sustainability). The origin of this idea came not from the Director, which has been another area of complaint. The evaluators consider that the development of the Steering Committee is hampered from being more pro-active by a number of factors. When interviewed, Steering Committee members gave different accounts of what they thought their roles are and what they should be deciding about. There was some disquiet about lack of transparency on decision making in relation to resource allocation (e.g., funding for national seminars, travel to conferences). If decision-making is not clear to those within the Network it will certainly not be clear to those outside the Network. Whilst there continues to exist fuzziness around decision-making, this lays the ground ripe for own agenda setting by Network members and those outside the Network. It is therefore in everyone's best interests that specified procedures and decision-making mechanisms are put in place without undue delay. The evaluators consider that the existing TOR do not adequately fulfil these tasks. The evaluators therefore strongly recommend the establishment of a working group to develop a set of terms of reference that define more clearly the role of the Director, Secretariat, Steering Committee (including the Chair), as well as guidelines for ways of working and resolution of disputes. It is of concern to the evaluators that the need for clearly stating procedures was recommended in the first evaluation and yet nearly 10 years later does not appear to have been done.

Sida's role in relation to the Steering Committee also needs to be reconsidered. There are signs that Sida itself wishes to change the nature of its involvement in the running of the network. In addition, if future AFREPREN funding comes from multiple donors, it will not be feasible nor desirable to have each one represented on the body which is responsible for the general functioning of the network. The presence of the donor is not conducive to open discussion and there is a feeling amongst Steering Committee members that suggestions by the donor are accepted automatically (which the evaluators would phrase the 'don't bite the hand that feeds you' syndrome). The origins of this type of reaction can be that the members lack experience and confidence in dealing with outside agencies. Alternatively, there might also be a strong sense of loyalty to an African institution (whatever they may privately feel about its strengths and weaknesses), resulting in a closing of ranks to outsiders. It is understandable that any funding agency wishes to be assured that its funds are being used in a right and appropriate manner. However, it is not necessary, nor is it appropriate, that this is done through micro-management. The evaluators consider that funding agency influence on transparency and good governance should be done during contract negotiations and through proper audited accounting procedures. Too close an involvement in running the network also opens up the funding agency to manipulation by stakeholders and avoidance of difficult decision-making by the Steering Committee and the Director, enabling transference of blame to outsiders. This stifles the organization from developing and learning from its own mistakes and in terms of institution building Southern organizations need to break this dependency on Northern organisations. It is part of institution building that the organization itself develops its own guidelines on ways of working (although of course it is free to seek advice from outside expertise).

6.3 Role of the Secretariat

The present role of the Secretariat is both administrative (co-ordination, organisation, reporting and sourcing for funds), research (back-stopping for principal researchers and contributing to papers and meetings) and representational (particularly the Director). The Secretariat is the heart of the network and there needs to be a balance between an effective functioning administration and decentralised research – in particular so that the former does not stifle nor control the latter. The evaluators are of the opinion that the present Secretariat is staffed by a highly competent, well qualified group of professionals who work to an international standard. This is an opinion expressed by both AFREPREN researchers and others from outside the Network. Indeed, the principal researchers interviewed voiced no criticism about the role of the Secretariat and felt that their work would be much more difficult without the backstopping, including the delivery of timely and relevant information (often unsolicited), provided by the Secretariat members.

In the past, a number of the 'Working Papers' issued by AFREPREN have been authored by the staff of the secretariat²². Concern has been expressed that a considerable part of the data and information used in these papers might have been supplied by the principal researchers and their research assistants as part of their contractual undertaking and as such are not receiving due recognition for their work. However, the evaluators heard no criticism from the interviewed researchers about 'intellectual copyright' issues. The evaluators have been assured by the Director that the practice of including individual Secretariat Staff names on publications has changed since the beginning of the current programme and that a conscious effort has been made to avoid Secretariat Staff writing on national issues and instead to concentrate on regional reports. Individual Secretariat Staff no longer receive recognition for

²² Total no. of Working Papers from 1999 to date: 96

- Total no. featuring names of AFREPREN Principal researchers: 42 (44%)

- Total no. featuring generic AFREPREN/FWD Corporate name: 45 (47%)

- Total no. featuring names of AFREPREN Secretariat members: 9 (9%) (data supplied by the AFREPREN Secretariat)

the quarterly and annual reports and theme group proceedings, which it is their task to compile, instead these publications appear under the generic corporate name. The evaluators consider that the young researchers in the Secretariat also deserve recognition and encouragement and consider that the common practice could be used of including a statement on the inside flyleaf stating which individual(s) had had responsibility, on behalf of AFREPREN, for compiling the report.

Perhaps concerns about the role of the Nairobi staff arise because of the confusing name ‘Secretariat’ which implies an administrative function whereas they clearly at present have a multi-purpose role. The question therefore arises: is this an appropriate structure for the efficient and effective, particularly in terms of cost, operation of a decentralised research network in the South? How to support researchers where a substantial proportion do not work in an environment that provides the supporting structures to effectively carry out research, for example, a library? Searching for appropriate material is not the task of an administrator – then how to ensure employing and keeping good quality researchers to do this task. Who should author papers on regional issues? Who should represent AFREPREN outside? Do principal researchers have a conflict of interest between representing AFREPREN and their own organisation? There is no ‘one size fits all’ model for running a research network – members have to design a structure and ways of working which best suit their own circumstances. An effective network also evolves and responds to changing conditions and there are clear signs that this is the case within AFREPREN. The evaluators are of the opinion that many of the concerns about the role of the Secretariat and the Director would be most easily addressed by transparency of operation and would wish to emphasise again the recommendation made in Section 6.2 of the need for clear terms of reference that define the roles of the Director and Secretariat and the relationship with the Steering Committee, as well as guidelines for ways of working.

6.4 Advisory Committee and Policy Advisory Panel

The evaluators would recommend a governance structure similar to that used by the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC). An *Advisory Committee* (AC) consisting of the representatives of the major financing organisations, the AFREPREN Director and two members of the Steering Committee. This committee would meet annually to receive and comment on work plans, progress reports (including finance) and proposals from the Secretariat and Steering Committee. The AC would have no decision-making powers but on request could offer advice on implementation of the programme. The Network continues to own the research activities and output but at the same time has a channel for ensuring accountability to its funders. The evaluators would propose institutionalising the existing *Policy Advisory Panel* (PAP), but broaden it to around 10 members of senior African academics, policy analysts, policy makers and international resource persons in the energy sector plus the Theme Group Chairs. The panel would advise on trends and priorities for energy policy research and ensure the network continued to meet the region’s needs, as well as acting as ‘ambassadors’ for the Network’s research output. Such a panel would give a strong sense of ownership to the region of the research output, enhance the network’s status and make a significant contribution to policy impact. The panel would meet at least twice in a three year funding cycle linked to regular workshops, although they should be invited to all AFREPREN activities. Panel members could also form a pool of distinguished resource persons for workshops. The Steering Committee should continue as it is currently formulated and be responsible for the implementation of AFREPREN’s research programme.

7. Cost-effectiveness: Giving Value for Money

7.1 Introduction

The Terms of Reference for this evaluation asks for a qualitative appraisal of the cost effectiveness of the programme in comparison with other regional research and network programmes (Sida, 2002, p. 7). It is of legitimate concern to Sida that it sees ‘value for money’ in relation to the total amount spent and that the allocation between different headings does not lead to distortions in reaching the Network’s objectives.

7.2 Challenges

The methodological challenges of finding appropriate benchmarks to appraise AFREPREN against have already been addressed by the evaluators from Phase I (Christensen and McCall, 1994, pp. 12–15). The evaluators for Phase III come to the same conclusion: that no objective assessment is possible. There is a lack of a network with a similar structure and function to act as a benchmark. The closest at least in terms of research objectives is probably the first phase of The Review of Policies in the Traditional Energy Sector (RPTES) based in five countries in West Africa. The RPTES programme was started in 1993 by the World Bank under a Trust Fund provided by the Directorate General for International Cooperation (DGIS) of the Netherlands. Its objective was to assist African countries to prepare sound policies, strategies and operational instruments for the development of the traditional energy sector. However, the composition of the research teams within RPTES is different to those in AFREPREN, consisting of multi-disciplinary national teams composed of staff from key ministries to conduct sectoral policy review and identify/prepare investment projects with significant technical input from World Bank staff. The process also included members from NGOs and universities with the aim of making critical and constructive policy recommendations. Capacity Building is implicit in the project. Researchers are not selected by the open solicitation process used in AFREPREN. The documents prepared under RPTES are confidential and not within the public domain. The first phase of RPTES cost around US \$3.5 million over three years – it would not be unreasonable to assume that a significant part of the funding has been used to cover World Bank costs. One could conclude that AFREPREN scores favourably compared to RPTES in a number of areas: more countries are covered; material is developed primarily by African researchers which can lead to a greater sense of ownership; material exists in the public domain; democratic selection process of researchers; and a significant proportion of development funds have been spent in developing countries.

7.3 Potential Productivity Measures for AFREPREN

AFREPREN’s uniqueness as an entity makes it difficult to undertake cross-organisational comparisons of various ‘research productivity/efficiency’ measures. While other organisations employ their researchers ‘full-time’, AFREPREN researchers usually continue to work elsewhere in full-time employment, using their spare time to carry out their Network responsibilities and activities. Some could argue, therefore, that AFREPREN can ‘free-ride’ on the research support that

AFREPREN researchers are receiving from their ‘home’ institution. In other words, their ongoing employment in their home institution is serving to improve the quality of their AFREPREN research ‘products’. (Interestingly, however, the opposite is perhaps just as plausible: the training that the individual receives from AFREPREN makes them a more efficient employee in their home institution.) The

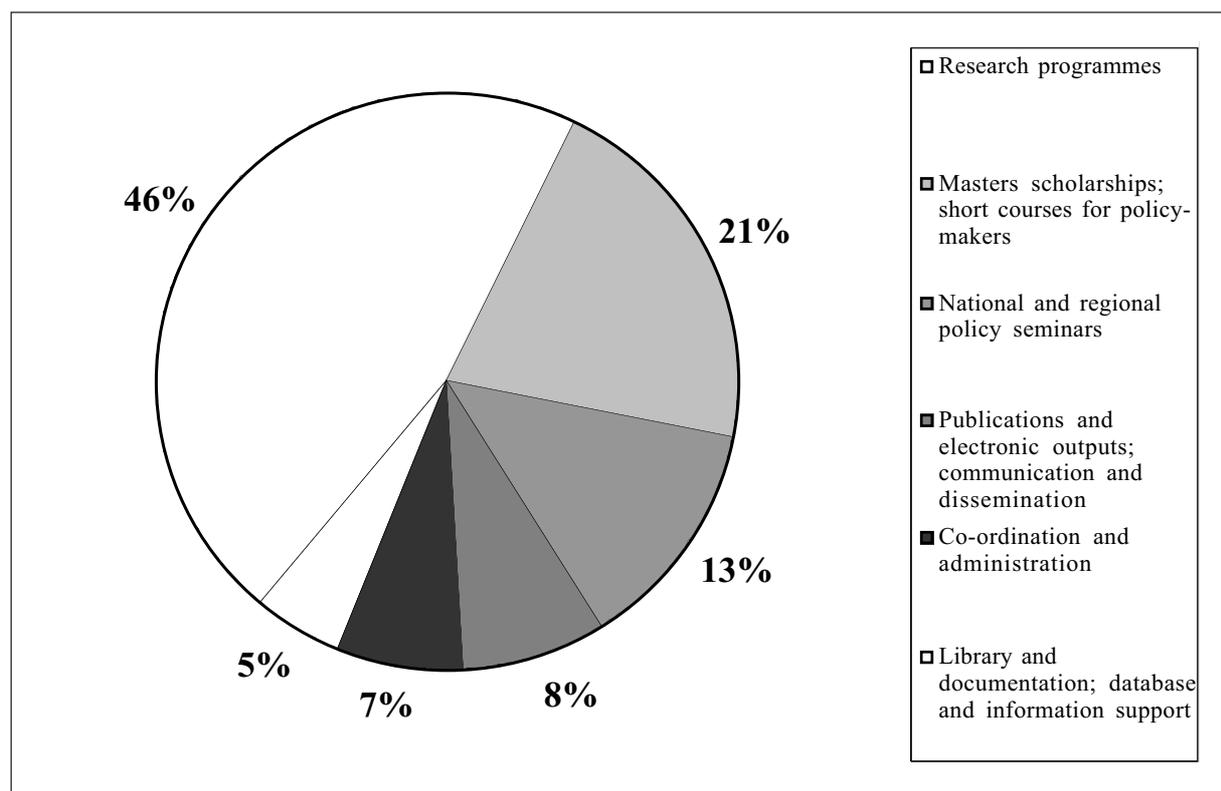
point is simply that any comparative measures of productivity across organisations should be viewed as suggestive, rather than conclusive.

With these caveats, the AFREPREN Secretariat estimate that an AFREPREN researcher costs approximately US \$30,000 to train. The Secretariat also maintain that, in terms of three efficiency measures (dollar per researcher, dollar per publication and administration costs as a percentage of total costs), AFREPREN compares favourably with other African research organisations. Further, note the following from a 1993 UNDP report: 'Resident expatriate personnel have become extremely expensive. In many countries of the region [sub-Saharan Africa], the cost of a resident expatriate adviser now approaches US \$300,000 per year.' (Berg, 1993, p. 245) Given this, the evaluators think that AFREPREN's productivity compares very favourably with foreign researchers as well.'

The Network output does in general reach international standards and in general does meet the targets set by Sida. There has been some slippage with the national seminars and (as of June 2002) 19 still need to be held within eight months. To deliver these will put strain on the network and under the circumstances, a budget neutral extension would not be unreasonable.

Based on this qualitative assessment, it is the opinion of the evaluators that AFREPREN gives value for money.

Figure 7.1 – AFREPREN Budget [source: AFREPREN presentation, 3 June 2002]



In relation to the budget allocation between headings, the evaluators are of the general impression that the allocation is reasonable. (See the distribution in Figure 7.1.) The research programme rightly makes up the bulk of the expenditure and administration costs (including co-ordination) are modest. The Secretariat seems to have taken on board the first evaluators' criticism of the hotels used for national seminars (Christensen and McCall, 1994, 14) and has optimised cost and efficiency of service (at least on the basis of the two hotels used during this evaluation). The Secretariat itself is housed in modest accommodation and delivers an excellent service. There have been some criticisms voiced about ease of access to the AFREPREN material. It is impossible to judge to what extent this is valid and where the fault lies. AFREPREN makes a large part of its material available on the Web site. Access to electronic media is highly dependent on the internet access server and electricity supply reliability. Both of these in Africa, and Nairobi is no exception, are notoriously unreliable. Likewise, the post can also be slow and unreliable. Between 1999 and 2001, over 9,000 publications have been distributed to members and non-members of the Network. The researchers have complimented the secretariat on the speed of response to their requests. The website has also increased the numbers of request that the Secretariat receives and responds to without increases in staffing. The evaluators have no evidence to suggest that the Secretariat does not make strenuous efforts to distribute the material at its disposal.

7.4 Recommendation Related to Cost-effectiveness

The only reservation the evaluators have with regards to the budget items is the amount of resources devoted to supporting participants in the Masters programme at the University of Cape Town. Although the support does not take up more than 10 per cent of the budget, the total number of researchers who can benefit from this support is small (15), and there are other ways of increasing the critical mass of researchers involved in energy policy. For example, there is a need to attract more social science researchers into the Network, therefore this group could be targeted with workshops and seminars on the role of energy in moving people out of poverty. Given that there is only one University centre in the AFREPREN region that deals with energy policy research, it would make a significant contribution to diversification and capacity in the region if support was given to creating one or two more centres at other institutions, for example Makerere University (which had expressed an interest when AFREPREN was evaluating regional institutions). The need for building links with regional institutions was stressed in the second evaluation (Hvelplund and Worrell, 1999, p. 41), and unfortunately, the evaluators for the third phase have been unable to find any concerted efforts to develop these links, apart from the Masters programme at the University of Cape Town, as yet.

8. The Future: Broadening the Research Agenda and the Funding Base

Sida has expressed concern that AFREPREN has so far failed to achieve substantial funding from other donors. The Secretariat reports that in the past it has received significant support from NORAD plus small grants for specific activities from a variety of sponsors. However, it is acknowledged that previous efforts have been ad-hoc and unfocused. Explanations for lack of progress in finding fresh sources of funds lie both within and outside the network. The Secretariat considers that in part it has been hindered by time constraints due to the efforts needed to try to meet the contracted targets which had been jeopardised owing to the late start in getting the research underway arising from time taken to resolve the hypotheses issue.

There is an explicit assumption in Sida's concern that other donors are willing to fund policy research whereas the trend in the energy sector appears to be more towards funding implementation either of a structural nature (energy sector reform – privatisation and commercialisation) or support to creating a market for renewables (particularly PV). Also the current AFREPREN research topics might not overlap with donor concerns; climate change would seem the most obvious omission. There may also be structural difficulties in funding a regional network. Donors (both bi- and multi-lateral) are tending to work much more at the national level and channel funding through embassies and national offices whereas AFREPREN is operating at a regional level making it difficult to identify who exactly to approach or that it is even an option. There is also the issue of conflict of interest for the principal researchers: do they raise research funding for AFREPREN or their own institution? They are not full-time employees of AFREPREN and so it would not be surprising to find that their primary allegiance is to their own institution. This key issue then becomes core funding for the Secretariat and an appropriate working relationship between national institutions and the Secretariat needs to be formulated.

The evaluators are of the opinion that this message to find other donors has now been taken on board by the Director and the Steering Committee. The issue was again discussed at the June 2002 Steering Committee meeting. The Director has been active in meeting with a number of international funding agencies (for example, Shell Foundation) which have shown interest in AFREPREN's work and have encouraged the submission of proposals. At the time of the evaluators' visit to Nairobi, proposals had been submitted to UN-DESA, Habitat-GEF, and the European Commission and there are others in the pipeline. AFREPREN is also to participate in the partnership initiatives arising out of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. However, the evaluators consider that more efforts need to be made at the regional level to encourage the target group to begin to commission research. The proposed Policy Advisory Panel might be useful in encouraging African government ministries to commission research and the privatisation of the utilities might also present useful opportunities. There could also be a role for national focal points, and if it was in existence the Policy Advisory Panel, in soliciting funding.

However, what are the implications of multiple funding sources? The Secretariat is the heart of the network and provides an essential and proficient service to support the researchers. The Secretariat also provides continuity. Unfortunately, such core funding is difficult to source. If the Network is to continue to operate in the same way, being run by the researchers carrying out research around different themes in parallel, it will involve considerable co-ordination effort and an element of luck to ensure that all funding comes on stream at the same time. The alternative is that the Secretariat determines the proposals to be written and puts together research teams rather than have open solicitation for researchers. The evaluators consider that this would be a detrimental move and would reduce the oppor-

tunities for access to funding by researchers in the region. The evaluators therefore recommend that Sida commit for the next phase sufficient funds to support the present secretariat and at least one research theme. This funding should be conditional on AFREPREN producing a document which clearly lays out the terms of reference of the key actors in the Network as recommended in Section 6 of this report. The evaluators also recommend that Sida organise a donors conference on behalf of AFREPREN where the researchers are able to present their programme as a unified whole. Such a conference is a more efficient way to solicit for funding than individual applications and with the commitment of one donor increases the possibilities of support from others.

Success with funding applications is also linked to identifying key areas of research in the energy sector. The evaluators would like to recommend the following themes:

- Energy and sustainable livelihoods
- Critical review of WSSD and the implications for the energy sector in Africa
- Climate change
- Productive use of modern forms of energy
- Does the ESCO model deliver its promises

9. Summary of Recommendations

The evaluators have no hesitation in recommending that Sida continue financial support to AFREPREN.

9.1 Research-related Recommendations

- Involve a smaller number of international energy experts for deeper participation in facilitating and guiding AFREPREN's core research activities.
- Enhance the role of the Theme Group Coordinators, helping to facilitate group members' research activities between formal group meetings and preparing reports that compare and contrast findings from across national studies.
- Increase attention to research training, with a particular emphasis on the process of conducting sound social science and policy research.
- Continue support for 'Special Studies of Strategic Significance', but with a renewed focus upon 'emerging issues' using innovative approaches.

9.2 Policy Impact-related Recommendations

- Ensure a broad cross-section of participation at national seminars and follow-up, more systematically, the conclusions reached at those same seminars.
- Encourage more regular engagement with the media.
- Study and formalise the role of the 'national focal point' (apart from his/her 'national policy seminar' responsibilities).
- Use different approaches to national policy seminars, to explore the determinants of policy impact.
- Update the AFREPREN newsletter.
- Use more diverse fora for the dissemination of written information.
- Think systematically about how to respond to 'current events' by, for example, making presentations and submissions to key national and international organisations.

9.3 Capacity Building-related Recommendations

- Develop a strategy of ensuring all principal researchers are given sabbatical leave to conduct their research.
- Build links with regional universities and research institutes.
- Sida should consider the funding of a University Chair in Energy within the region, for example in gender and energy at the University of Makerere, Uganda or climate change at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
- For reasons of transparency, current researchers should not be the beneficiaries of funding which leads to academic qualifications.

- Develop a more open system of selection of participants in short training courses.
- Use more women as resource persons in training courses.
- Develop a strategy to encourage the participation of more social scientists and policy analysts are researchers in the Network.
- Provide training courses in research methodology, particularly in relation to social sciences perspectives including gender, as well as policy analysis and development.
- Involve researchers with social science and policy analysis backgrounds in the international expert review panels.

9.4 Network Structure and Governance-related Recommendations

- Develop clear terms of reference that lay down exactly the roles of the Steering Committee, the Chair, national focal points and the relationship with the Director and Secretariat. Procedures for the functioning of the Network and resolution of disputes should also be clearly laid down and available for all to consult (for example, on the web page).
- Major funding organisations should not attend Steering Committee meetings but should be members of an Advisory Committee. This Committee should consist of the representatives of the major financial organisations, the AFREPREN Director and two members of the Steering Committee. This Committee would meet annually to receive and comment on work plans, progress reports (including finance) and proposals from the Secretariat and the Steering Committee.
- A Policy Advisory Panel, consisting of approximately 10 senior African academics, policy analysts, policy makers and international resource persons in the energy sector, plus the Theme Group Chairs should be established to suggest themes for research.

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Appendix 1

Terms of Reference for the Evaluation of the Sida-supported Programme within the African Energy Policy Research Network (AFREPREN)

1. Background

AFREPREN was launched in March 1989, after a planning period of nearly two years (May 1987–February 1989), with the primary objectives of:

- Undertaking energy policy research work that can lead to practical policies for sustainable energy development;
- Strengthening research capacity in energy policy in the Eastern and Southern African region (hereinafter referred to either as “ESA” or the “region”); and
- Disseminating its research results, in particular to energy policy-making organs in the ESA, with the aim of making a policy impact.

Central to AFREPREN’s approach is the bringing together of energy policy researchers and energy policy-makers in ESA, so that they can work together on the problems, which they jointly identify as being important.

AFREPREN is structured and organised as a research network encompassing at present ten (10) ESA countries: Botswana, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Between 1989 and 1994, it completed two Programme Cycles (1989–94 and 1995–99), and is now in the latter half of the Third Programme Cycle whose duration is July 1999–December 2002. The current Cycle comprises a Core Research Programme (hereinafter the CRP) and two other sub-programmes as follows:

The CRP is made up of three Theme Groups, one each on:

- Renewables and Energy for Rural Development
- Energy Services for the Urban Poor
- Energy Sector Reform

The two sub-programmes deal with :

- Energy Efficiency, Environment and Climate
- Special Studies of Strategic Significance

At present, the core of the research network consists of 14 principal researchers and about 28 research associates/assistants (at two research associates/assistants per principal researchers), who are actively involved in undertaking research studies in the three theme groups of the CRP. The two sub-programmes together involve about 20 researchers, dealing with one-off, short-duration studies.

AFREPREN is administered and coordinated by a Secretariat based in Nairobi. It is headed by a Director, and staffed by several professionals and administrative personnel, assisted at any time by a fair number of short-term undergraduate interns from Kenyan universities.

A Steering Committee is responsible for the formulation, implementation and supervision of AFREPREN's programme of activities, and is also responsible for AFREPREN's financial matters. It comprises at present seven members, six of whom are drawn from the three theme groups of the CRP (two from each group), the seventh being the Director of the AFREPREN Secretariat who acts as the Executive Secretary. The General Assembly meets once a year to review the progress of work in the Programme Cycle, while the Steering Committee and the theme groups meet twice a year.

AFREPREN complements its central mission of conducting policy research work and the strengthening of policy research capacity with a range of associated activities, e.g. publication and dissemination of its research output, national and regional policy seminars, MSc training programme, training workshops for its core membership, updating its African energy database and library and documentation services.

Between early 1987 and mid 1999, AFREPREN received from the former SAREC and the new Sida¹ a total of SEK 61.5 million. The Sida grant for the current Third Programme Cycle (July 1999 – December 2002) is a total of SEK 42 million (the current rate of exchange against the US dollar is about 10.5 SEK).

AFREPREN has been evaluated twice, in 1993/94 and 1998/99. The evaluations were commissioned by the former SAREC and the later Sida/SAREC, and carried out by two separate teams of two independent international experts each.

2. Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation

There are two main reasons for the evaluation:

- 1) To assess how far AFREPREN has been able to fulfil, under the period in review (July 1999 – February 2002), the research, dissemination, capacity-strengthening and policy-impact objectives set out in its Programme Proposals of March 1999 and July 2000 (see in particular the LFA and Expected Results matrices annexed, respectively, to the Programme Proposals and the current contract between Sida and AFREPREN);
- 2) To obtain the views and recommendations of the evaluators on the future direction, scope, content, functioning and funding of AFREPREN, including greater decentralisation of AFREPREN's future activities to AFREPREN's national focal points in selected countries of the ESA region.

3. The Assignment (issues to be covered in the evaluation)

The assignment covers the activities of AFREPREN's Third Programme Cycle (hereinafter referred to as the Programme) over the period July 1999–February 2002. The evaluators will keep in mind the *overall objectives* as stated in the March 1999 version of the Programme Proposal (see the LFA matrices mentioned above) and the *specific project-wise objectives* of the revised final July 2000 version of the Programme Proposal.

The assessment of the output and performance of the Core Research Programme (CRP, see Section 1 above) should be related to the final July 2000 version of the Programme Proposal.

¹ In July 1995, the former Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation with Developing Countries/ SAREC was integrated, together with three other Swedish development assistance agencies, into the former Swedish International Development Authority/ Sida, to form the new agency Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency/Sida. Within the new Sida, the earlier SAREC became the Department for Research Cooperation, Sida/SAREC.

3.1 Aspects of the evaluation

3.11 Relevance and appropriateness

- Relevance of the Programme as a whole, and of its main individual parts, to the energy problems facing the region, paying particular attention to the scope and depth of the CRP, as well as the studies conducted under the headings “Energy Efficiency, Environment and Climate” and “Special Studies of Strategic Significance”;
- Appropriateness of the composition of the three theme research groups that make up the CRP, paying particular attention to the professional qualifications and experience of the groups’ members, the mix and balance of disciplinary training (e.g. science and engineering, social sciences, management, energy studies), the balance between researchers and policy-personnel, and the gender balance;
- Professional qualifications and experience of the researchers and policy-personnel selected for conducting the studies under the headings “Energy Efficiency, Environment and Climate” and “Special Studies of Strategic Significance”;
- Processes of choice of the themes and topics tackled in the Programme, and processes of the selection of researchers and policy-personnel for conducting the research projects that make up the Programme.

3.12 The Programme quality

The evaluators should examine the quality of the research produced by the principal researchers in collaboration with their research associates and research assistants, during the period July 1999 – February 2002.

The quality of the research should be assessed according the following criteria:

- 1) the degree to which the studies have actually conformed to the project proposals contained in the final July 2000 version of the Programme Proposal mentioned under Section 2 above;
- 2) the degree to which the studies contain the authors’ own critical analyses of existing and new material;
- 3) the deployment of methods to systematically utilise the synergies inherent in the research issues and problems being explored by the three theme groups;
- 4) the degree to which the conclusions and policy recommendations (policy options) presented are actually backed up by the empirical evidence and the analyses contained in the studies;
- 5) the extent to which each study has been peer reviewed. In assessing this aspect, the evaluators will (i) study all the reviews and comments by all the reviewers (referees) who have been commissioned to comment by either the secretariat or Sida/SAREC, and (ii) take into account the professional background and experience, as well as the institutional affiliations, of the reviewers (referees). In commenting on this aspect in their Evaluation Report, the evaluators shall ensure the complete anonymity of the reviewers (referees).

For the list of research output to be evaluated see p. 6.4.

3.13 Gender issue

The evaluators should inspect the extent to which gender issues have been dealt with in the research output, paying particular attention to the question of integrating gender dimensions (e.g. empowerment and equity) into the analytical and theoretical research frameworks.

3.14 Dissemination of the research output

The evaluators should assess the dissemination modes, i.e. the publications in energy journals, newsletters, website, data and information in AFREPREN database. The following issues should be examined:

- Publications in refereed international energy journals of acknowledged international standing should be assessed. The evaluators should ascertain from the secretariat which studies have been submitted for publication and which have been accepted or rejected. In addition to energy-specific journals, the evaluators are invited to direct the attention of AFREPREN to other relevant journals dealing with policy and environment;
- The relevance and appropriateness of the modes of dissemination;
- The choice of destinations of the disseminated output: Who decides and how is the decision taken? What criteria are employed? How open and unbiased is the dissemination process?;
- The actual practice of the principle of free availability of the research output, on request, to researchers, policy- personnel, development officials, and to individuals in governmental and non-governmental organisations, etc, worldwide. In assessing this aspect, the evaluators should keep in mind that the Sida-supported, publicly funded, output and database is in the public domain, and thus ought to be accessible by the public.

3.15 Policy impact

The appropriateness and effectiveness of the channels and methods used by AFREPREN to make an impact on the process of energy policy making at the national and the regional levels, and the approaches adopted for sustaining that process.

In making this assessment, the evaluators should pay particular attention to the national and regional policy seminars held during the period under review.

Examination of the national and regional seminars should be grounded on the relevance and appropriateness of the professional status, qualifications and experience of the invited participants to the stated objectives of the policy seminars, including external experts, speakers and resource persons from Africa and other parts of the world.

The evaluators will also assess the relevance and quality of the summarised seminar reports produced by the secretariat on the national and regional seminars, and the target-appropriateness and effectiveness of their dissemination.

3.16 The energy policy research capacity building and strengthening

Strengthening of links with universities and institutes in the region is the important part of the programme activities. In this context, the evaluators shall also assess the Master's Degree Programme in Energy Policy being undergone by selected candidates from the region, in an arrangement agreed between AFREPREN and the University of Cape Town.

The background to the initiation of the Master's Degree Programme is as follows: Until 1999, the approach used by AFREPREN to build-up and strengthen research capacity in energy policy was through the "hands-on", learning-by-doing method of active involvement of researchers and policy-personnel in research projects. While acknowledging the merit of this approach, the second Evaluation Report of 1999 (referred to above) pointed to the absence of capacity-building links with universities in the region, and explicitly recommended that links be forged with a view to benefiting from the existing intellectual capacity in the region's academia, not least in the area of research methodology.

Acting on the recommendation of the second Evaluation Report, AFREPREN explored the possibilities offered by several universities and technical institutes (polytechnics) in the ESA region, but found that the programmes on offer were not policy oriented, but dealt mostly with the technological, managerial and planning aspects of energy production and supply, in particular in the area of renewable energy. The one notable exception was the Energy Development Research Centre at the University of Cape Town, which has mounted energy-policy oriented postgraduate courses over a number of years. It was decided that AFREPREN should approach EDRC, University of Cape Town, with the request to design and mount a Master's Degree Programme in energy-policy to cater to AFREPREN's needs.

The programme was announced by AFREPREN through its usual dissemination channels, calling for applications by candidates resident in the ESA region. A screening and selection process was set up involving AFREPREN, Sida/SAREC and EDRC, with criteria of relevant academic qualifications and working experience.

The programme consists of five major modules:

- Introduction to Energy Policy
- Energy Markets and Governance
- Energy, Poverty and Development
- Energy Policy Project
- Energy and Climate Change
- Masters Dissertation: Energy Studies.

The Programme combines strongly policy-oriented courses and project work, involving a written examination and a dissertation.

3.17 Budget and cost-effectiveness

The structure and purpose of the major components of the Programme budget, and how these have affected the performance of the Programme as a whole and the achievement of specific project-wise objectives.

A broad qualitative appraisal of the relative cost-effectiveness of the Programme in comparison with other regional research and network programmes in Africa and elsewhere, to the extent that relevant information is readily available to the evaluators or is made available to them by Sida/SAREC.

3.18 Sources of funding and broadening the funding base

Since the inception of AFREPREN in 1989 SAREC and Sida have been its predominant financial supporter, with minor one-off contributions by research donors in Canada (IDRC) and Norway (NO-RAD and Ministry for Foreign Affairs) and UNEP. Despite repeated urgings by Sida, AFREPREN has not satisfied to mobilise any significant funding by other donors or funding by any government in the ESA region.

It means that over the last several years Sida has been the sole funder. The evaluators should, on their visit to the secretariat in Nairobi, examine documented evidence of non-Sida funding, if any, over the period 1995–2001.

The evaluators are requested to explore (i) whether AFREPREN has in recent years put in internationally competitive bidding for energy project funding from donors like the EU and if not, why not, (ii) the

reasons behind the inability of AFREPREN to obtain financial backing by other donors, and (iii) the shortcomings of the methods and approaches used hitherto by AFREPREN in approaching other donors. Based on this analysis, and on their own and their peers' experience of fund-raising, the evaluators are requested to suggest ways of galvanising AFREPREN into mobilising funding from other donors and thus into reducing its present total dependence on Sida's financial support.

3.19 Governance

The appropriateness and optimality to the stated overall objectives of AFREPREN of:

- The present composition, mandate, responsibilities, methods of operation of AFREPREN's Steering Committee (see the Terms of Reference of the Steering Committee in Enclosure 2: Modifications to the Programme Proposal, annexed to the current contract between Sida and AFREPREN); and
- The present composition, responsibilities and methods of operation of the secretariat, paying particular attention to the impact on the Programme of the conflict of interest inherent in the present dual role of the professional staff of the secretariat as administrators/facilitators/ coordinators on the one hand, and as researchers on the other hand.

In this context, the evaluators shall compare the current governance of AFREPREN with those of other regional research programmes and research networks that they know of, as well as others currently supported by Sida (e.g. the African Economics Research Consortium/AERC, the Biotechnology and Biosafety Research Network/Bio-EARN, etc).

3.20 Openness

The perception by some established African energy researchers and energy policy-personnel resident in the ESA region, but currently not involved in AFREPREN, on how problematic it is for them to (i) gain entry into AFREPREN, and/or (ii) access the output and database of AFREPREN, and their perceived reasons for this difficulty.

4. Methodology, Evaluation Team and Time Schedule

The evaluation procedure includes the study of the essential documentation as well as interviews at site. The essential documentation listed under item 6 will be provided to the evaluators by the secretariat and Sida/SAREC.

4.1 Site visits

During the site visits evaluators should carry out in-depth interviews as follows:

- Interviews in Stockholm
- Individual interviews in Nairobi with all the fourteen (14) principal authors (principal researchers) of the fourteen (14) Part I or short-term country case studies, six of whom also constitute AFREPREN's Steering Committee
- Participation, *as observers*, in the parallel group meetings of the three theme groups of the CRP which will be held in Nairobi at the time of the evaluators' visit to discuss work-in progress on the ongoing Part II or medium-term studies
- Interviews in Nairobi with the Director, and selected professional and administrative staff, of the secretariat
- Attendance, *as observers*, at the AFREPREN national policy seminar in Tanzania (scheduled for April 2002)

- Interviews in Tanzania with (i) members of the AFREPREN national focal point, (ii) selected energy researchers and selected top policy-personnel in government and utilities who are currently **not** part of the AFREPREN network, (iii) selected managerial personnel of private sector energy producers and suppliers (e.g. independent power producers and /or distributors, renewable energy installations), and (iv) managerial personnel of selected NGOs active in energy issues

4.2 Division of labour between the two evaluators

Given the limited time and resources available for the evaluation exercise, we suggest that the two evaluators divide the tasks of studying the documentation and conducting the interviews evenly between themselves. We leave the details of the division to the evaluators.

4.3. Recommendations by the Evaluators

In addition to their assessment of the Programme during the period under review, the evaluators should also present their views and recommendations on the future direction, scope, content, functioning and funding of AFREPREN, including greater decentralisation of AFREPREN's future activities to AFREPREN's national focal points in selected countries of ESA.

4.4 Time Schedule

The evaluation will entail a total of 6 weeks per evaluator, spread over the period 10 April 2002 – 31 August 2002.

The team leader will visit Stockholm for 2 days (tentative dates 13–14 May 2002). The team will spend about 12 days in East Africa (about six days in Nairobi and five days in Tanzania, with one day taken up by travel between Nairobi and Dar es Salaam; tentative dates: 2–12 June 2002).

The evaluators will submit to Sida, by e-mail, a single, joint draft Evaluation Report (hereinafter “the Report”) in English, not later than 15 July 2002. Sida will send the draft Report to the AFREPREN Steering Committee members and to the secretariat for their comments. These comments, together with Sida's, will be sent by Sida, by e-mail, to the evaluators, not later than 30 July 2002. Taking these comments into account, the evaluators will produce the final version of the Report and submit it to Sida, by e-mail, not later than 31 August 2002.

4.5. Evaluation Team

The team comprises the following two international experts:

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5. Reporting

The length of the final Report will be *at least* 20 single-spaced pages (approximately 8 000 words, font size 12), but *should not exceed* 40 pages (16 000 words), excluding annexes. It should lead with a List of Contents (including pagination) and an Executive Summary of not more than a tenth in length of the Report.

Further, the evaluators should submit the following:

- (i) An Abstract of about 800 words covering the subject matter being evaluated, the purpose, approach and methodology of the evaluation, and the major findings of the evaluation;
- (ii) An Evaluation Summary of not more than 1 600 words for publication in Sida's "Evaluation Newsletter" according to the enclosed Guidelines;
- (iii) Brief curriculum vitae (CV) of each evaluator, of about 150 words per evaluator.

The *final version* of the single, joint Report shall be submitted, together with the above-mentioned Abstract, Evaluation Newsletter Summary, and the CVs, by e-mail and on disk in MSWord 2000 for Windows 97, or earlier versions thereof or other compatible forms of word processor programmes. *All these should be presented in a form that enables publication without further editing.* Subject to decision by Sida, the Report will be published and distributed as a publication within the Sida Evaluation Series.

The final responsibility for submitting the Evaluation Report, the Abstract, the Evaluation Newsletter Summary and the brief CVs, in accordance with the criteria and formats mentioned above, rests with the team leader Ms Joy Clancy.

6. Dispatch of essential documentation to the evaluators

On signing the evaluation contract, the following essential documentation will be dispatched, by courier service, by the AFREPREN secretariat and by Sida/SAREC. The evaluators can request any additional information and documentation from the secretariat and Sida/SAREC that they deem essential during the course of the evaluation exercise.

By the AFREPREN secretariat

1. AFREPREN's March 1999 Programme Proposal submitted to Sida
2. AFREPREN's final July 2000 Programme Proposal submitted to Sida
3. Curriculum vitae of all the principal researchers involved in the Programme
4. Latest versions of the following research output
 - The fourteen (14) Part I or short-term country studies from the three theme groups that make up the Core Research Programme (CRP), and the shortened and edited versions of these 14 studies either already published, or submitted for publication, in internationally refereed journals, in particular in the forthcoming Special Issue of "Energy Policy", as follows:
 - Six (5) cases from the theme group on Renewables and Energy for Rural Development (one each from Botswana, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Zimbabwe, and two from Zambia)

- Four (4) cases from the theme group on Energy Services for the Urban Poor (one each from Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe)
 - Four (4) cases from the theme group Energy Sector Reform (one each from Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe)
 - Three (3) regional studies, one for each of the three theme groups mentioned above, and the shortened and edited versions of these three studies either already published, or submitted for publication, in internationally refereed journals, in particular in the forthcoming Special Issue of “Energy Policy”;
 - Six (6) studies under the heading “Energy Efficiency, Environment and Climate”
 - Fourteen (14) studies under the heading “Special Studies of Strategic Significance”
5. All the reviews and comments by all the reviewers (referees) who have been commissioned, by either the secretariat or Sida/SAREC, to comment on the studies mentioned under item 4 above, together with the names, designations, institutional affiliations and professional background of all the reviewers (referees).
6. Summarised seminar reports produced by the secretariat on the national and regional seminars held during the period under review (July 1999–February 2002), with lists of participants and lists of the titles of the papers presented at the seminars, with names of the authors and their institutions. (Note: The evaluators are **not** obliged to read the lengthy papers presented at these seminars, or the summaries thereof, but if they so wish they can acquire them by writing directly to the secretariat.)
7. Masters Degree Programme documentation:
- CVs of the seven (7) candidates who are about to finish the programme and take their degrees
 - The syllabus of the common course work and the titles of the project work (dissertation) undertaken by the candidates
 - Brochure (prospectus), or background information, on the institution at the University of Cape Town, which is conducting the course
8. List of articles submitted by AFREPREN authors for publication in journals (with the journals’ full titles and places of publication), and the outcome of the submission, during the period under review (July 1999–February 2002).
9. Minutes of the meetings of the Steering Committee held during July 1999–February 2002
10. Newsletters produced during the period under review (July 1999–February 2002)

By Sida/SAREC

1. Current Contract (Agreement) between Sida and AFREPREN dated June 1999, with all four enclosures
2. First Evaluation Report on AFREPREN, 1994, by John Christensen and Michael McCall (Evaluations 1994:3, SAREC Documentation)
3. Second Evaluation Report on AFREPREN, 1999, by Frede Hvelplund and Ernst Worrell (Sida Evaluation Report 99/5)

Appendix 2

Curriculum Vitae of Evaluators

Joy Clancy is a Reader (Associate Professor) in technology transfer with the Technology and Development Group, the University of Twente the Netherlands. Her first degree is in Chemistry from the University of London and her PhD is in Engineering from the University of Reading. At Reading she became interested in biomass energy systems and their transfer to and dissemination within developing countries. After nine years at the University of Reading (UK) she moved to her present post in 1989. Since moving to Twente, Dr.Clancy's research has focused on small scale energy systems for developing countries, including the technology transfer process and the role that energy plays as an input for small businesses and the potential it offers entrepreneurs through the provision of a new infrastructure service. Gender and energy has been an important factor addressed in this research. She contributes to the University's Undergraduate teaching programme on issues linked to sustainable development, in particular the role of technology in development, as well as the TDG's international training programme on energy and environment issues. She has taught more than 500 people working in the energy sector, many of whom are from East and Southern Africa. Dr.Clancy is a founder member of ENERGIA, the International Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy and continues to act as a technical advisor. She is a co-convenor of the Gender and Development Working Group of the European Association of Development Institutes (EADI).

Ian H. Rowlands is an Associate Professor in the Department of Environment and Resource Studies at the University of Waterloo (Ontario, Canada). He is also Director of the Environment and Business Program in the University's Faculty of Environmental Studies. Prof. Rowlands has previously worked as an Energy Planner at the UNEP Collaborating Centre on Energy and Environment in Roskilde, Denmark (1996–97) and as a Lecturer in International Relations and Development Studies at the London School of Economics and Political Science (1991–96). He holds a Bachelor's degree in Engineering Science from the University of Toronto and a Doctorate in International Relations from the London School of Economics and Political Science. Prof. Rowlands is the editor of *Climate Change Cooperation in Southern Africa* (Earthscan, 1998), the author of *The Politics of Global Atmospheric Change* (Manchester University Press, 1995) and the co-editor of *Global Environmental Change and International Relations* (Macmillan, 1992). He has also authored numerous articles, book chapters and consultancy reports on various subjects, including international environmental policy, energy management and policy issues, global climate change, business and the environment and energy/environment issues in southern Africa.

Appendix 3

Site Visits and Travel Itinerary

Monday, 13 May, and Tuesday, 14 May, – Team leader briefed by Sida in Stockholm, Sweden.

Saturday, 1 June – Meeting between the two evaluators in Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Sunday, 2 June – Evaluators travel from Amsterdam, the Netherlands to Nairobi, Kenya

Monday, 3 June – AFREPREN presentations at the AFREPREN Secretariat (Nairobi, Kenya).

Tuesday, 4 June to Friday, 7 June – AFREPREN Regional Evaluation Workshop (Nairobi, Kenya) and evaluators' interviews (Nairobi, Kenya)

Saturday, 8 June – Evaluators' interview and document examination at AFREPREN Secretariat (Nairobi, Kenya)

Sunday, 9 June – Evaluators travel from Nairobi, Kenya to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Monday, 10 June and Tuesday, 11 June – AFREPREN Tanzania National Policy Workshop (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania) and evaluators' interviews (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania)

Wednesday, 12 June – Evaluators and other workshop participants tour the informal urban energy sector in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and evaluators' departure

Appendix 4

Survey

As part of the process of gathering background information for the compilation of the evaluation report, a ‘survey’ of people active in the energy sector within East and Southern Africa representing different stakeholder groups (public and private sector, NGOs; researchers and policy makers) were contacted by email and asked to complete a short questionnaire. The respondents were a random selection from the personal networks of the evaluators and participants who had taken part in AFREPREN workshops. 25 questionnaires were distributed; 10 were returned, 5 email addresses were not functioning, and one person was no longer in post. Resources did not allow for a more comprehensive survey and so no scientific analysis of the results can be made. The responses were seen as a ‘testing of the waters’ to try to gauge perceptions of and reactions to AFREPREN by people who would be expected to fall within their target group, either as potential principal researchers or consumers of the research output. The evaluators found the responses useful in the formulation of their report and are appreciative of those who took the time to respond.

Dear [survey recipient],

I am carrying out, on behalf of the Swedish Development Agency (Sida), an evaluation of the Africa Energy Policy Research Network (AFREPREN). My fellow evaluator, Ian Rowlands from the University of Waterloo in Canada, and I are approaching a number of people involved in energy policy issues in organisations within East and Southern Africa for their opinions. Therefore, I would like to ask you if you would be kind enough to answer a few questions on AFREPREN. Your answers will be treated confidentially and will not be conveyed either to Sida or AFREPREN, nor will they be used in an attributable way.

- 1a. Have you heard of AFREPREN?
- b. In what context have you heard of AFREPREN? (eg, publication, web site, speaker)
2. What was your opinion of the relevance, within the African energy and environment context, of what you saw, read or heard from AFREPREN?
3. What is your opinion of the scientific quality of what you saw, read or heard from AFREPREN? (Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor/Bad – please can you explain your answer).
4. Have you tried to order materials or request information from AFREPREN? If yes, what was your impression of the service? (Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor/Bad – please can you explain your answer).
5. Have you ever tried to become a member of APREPREN? If yes, what was your experience of the process? If no, would you be prepared to tell us why not?
6. Finally, what do you consider the most important policy issues facing the Africa Energy Sector today?

I would appreciate receiving your reply by 1st July. If you should require any further information about this evaluation please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,

Joy Clancy
Technology and Development Group.

Appendix 5

Interviewees

Interviews in Kenya

Mr. Stephen Karekezi

Mr. Maxwell Mapako

Dr. Semere Habtetsion

Ms. Joan Kyokutamba

Mrs. Langiwe Chandi

Ms. Grace Banda

Ms. Nozipho Dithhale

Mr. Joseph Mbaiwa

Prof. W. Wolde-Ghiorgis

Eng. Ikhupuleng Dube

Mr. Oscar Kalumiana

Mr. Bereket Kebede

Mr. Abel Mbewe

Mr. Maneno Katyega

Mr. Mengistu Teferra

Ms. Margaret Matinga

Dr. Edward Marandu

Mr. Simon Peter Engurait

Mrs. Dorcas Kayo

Mr. Peter Kinuthia

Mr. Brian Williams

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Interviews in Tanzania

Mr. Ralph Kârhammar

Mr. Wilfred Kipondya

Mr. James Ngeleja

Mr. M.I. Maingu

Mr. Zephani Ubwani

Mr. Bashir Mrindoko

Mr. Norbert Kahyoza

Dr. Cuthbert Kimambo

Dr. Shukuru Kawambwa

(9)

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Department for Research Cooperation
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