



Press Release

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Better supervision needed for EU-funded energy projects in East Africa, say Auditors

A €100m programme to help bring renewable energy to poor people in East Africa achieved some notable successes but still needs better supervision, according to a new report from the European Court of Auditors. The auditors found that the European Commission had made some good selections among the projects proposed, but failed to monitor progress closely enough.

Between 2006 and 2013, the ACP–EU Energy Facility was allocated €475 million of European Development Funds, mostly for grants to projects in sub-Saharan Africa. The main objective was to promote access to modern energy for poor people in rural areas and on the outskirts of towns, where energy for cooking remains largely based on firewood or charcoal. It also aimed improve governance in the energy sector, encourage investment in cross-border energy projects and promote renewable energy. By mid-2014, a total of €268m had been granted, €106m for projects in East Africa, which had by far the lowest rate of access to electricity in the region. Around 85 % of the projects selected were related to renewable energy, 12 % to hybrid sources (renewable and fossil) and 3 % to fossil.

The auditors examined 16 renewable energy projects in five countries: Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia. They found that the Commission was mostly successful and allocated support to well-prioritised projects. For example, a project in Kenya to recover methane from slurry on small farms installed 765 biogas digesters compared with a target of 460. Recovering biogas for cooking fuel saves firewood, reduces indoor pollution and improves the fertilising qualities of the slurry.

But the report also points out that the Commission could have done better in using the Facility to increase access to renewable energy.

“Most of the projects we examined were successful and are likely to be sustainable,” said Klaus-Heiner Lehne, the Member of the Court of Auditors responsible for the report. “But a quarter failed to deliver the majority of their expected results, mainly due to design weaknesses and to inadequate monitoring by the Commission.”

According to the auditors, reports submitted by the project managers were of uneven quality and the Commission did not attempt to enforce compliance with reporting obligations. When projects were known to encounter serious difficulties, Commission staff did not make sufficient use of on-site visits and monitoring reviews to complement the information provided by those responsible and did not take

The purpose of this press release is to give the main messages of the special report adopted by the European Court of Auditors. The full report is on www.eca.europa.eu

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appropriate and timely action. The report makes recommendations for selecting future projects more rigorously, strengthening their monitoring and increasing their sustainability.

Special Report No 15/2015: **ACP - EU Energy Facility support for renewable energy in East Africa** is available in 23 EU languages.