



Empowerment through a women's clean energy co-operative in Bihar, India



This project will establish a women's energy co-operative as an independent energy services provider to thousands of off-grid households in Bihar.



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Background

Indian government data from 2005 shows that almost 90% of households in the state of Bihar are not connected to the conventional grid. Bihar is also the state with the greatest number of people below the poverty line; people who spend a large portion of their income on kerosene and diesel generators.

In its last REEEP-funded project, SELCO India began replicating its successful solar lighting model in the Munger district of Bihar in partnership with SEWA Bharat, a local organisation working with rural women. Under that project, SELCO is installing 400 home systems financed by Bihar Kshetriya Gramin Bank (BKGB) via some 40 women's self-help groups.

This project will now incubate the resulting partnership into an actual cooperative that takes up the energy services business systematically, with a long-term plan for servicing the local communities.

Project purpose

To establish one fully operational women's energy co-operative as an independent energy services provider to thousands of off-grid households in Bihar.



Main activities and outputs

- Establish three local Energy Service Centres selling, installing and servicing energy systems
- Train 20 local technicians to install and maintain energy products over longer term
- Partner with three local financial institutions to create appropriate financing products
- Train 500 bankers to take up clean energy financing
- Develop 50 women entrepreneur-owned micro service centres for mobile phone charging and lighting services on rental in 50 communities
- Create local-language awareness material

Expected impacts

- Customised solar lighting and mobile charging systems benefiting over 20,000 people
- Doorstep access to technology, with finance and service available for 4,000 off-grid households and businesses
- Employment generated for rural and urban poor women through micro energy-entrepreneurship
- Financial inclusion of a largely unbanked population
- Increased capacity in local banks to support improved energy access
- More reliable connectivity through local mobile phone charging stations
- Better livelihood and studying opportunities through increased working hours in evening

Project Information

Location:

India

Duration:

2013–2014

Sector:

Renewable Energy

Thematic focus:

Business

Total project budget:

€ 380,000

REEEP grant:

€ 150,000

REEEP donor:

United Kingdom

Co-funding:

€ 230,000 from SELCO Foundation

Implementing partner:

SELCO Foundation