



The Global Forum on Sustainable Energy (GFSE), www.gfse.at 10 Years of awareness raising for a global sustainable energy system

Background: GFSE was founded by the Austrian Foreign Ministry with the support of the Ministry of Environment in September 1999 and is headquartered in Vienna. The initiative stems from outreach efforts of the World Energy Assessment, which was organized by the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the World Energy Council.

Objectives and activities: GFSE is a neutral multi-stakeholder platform which is facilitating international dialogue on sustainable energy by taking into account the special interests and challenges of developing countries. GFSE aims at the establishment of a sustainable world energy system in a social, economic and environmental perspective.

Supporters and organisers: GFSE is organised on a broad and coherent basis in Austria and internationally. The GFSE activities are co-organised by the Austrian Development Cooperation in the Ministry for European and International Affairs and the Austrian Development Agency (ADA). The GFSE secretariat is currently hosted by the Austrian Energy Agency. The GFSE activities are carried out case by case with different international partners such as UNIDO, UNDP, REEEP, IASA or ESMAP. Up to now eight Global Meetings of the GFSE and various regional GFSE workshops were held. Conference summaries are available at: www.gfse.at.

GFSE-1: The first GFSE meeting convened from 11-13 December 2000, in Laxenburg, Austria. GFSE-1 addressed the theme "Rural Energy – Priorities for Action," and contributed to preparations for the ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-9), which took up various energy-related issues. Participants at GFSE-1 considered the linkages between rural energy and sustainable development, enabling frameworks for attracting investment for rural energy, lessons learned, financing issues, the challenges and opportunities of regulatory reform, and innovation.



GFSE-2: The second GFSE meeting convened from 28-30 November 2001, in Laxenburg, Austria, and addressed the issue of "Energy Technologies – Cooperation for Rural Development." Participants heard presentations and engaged in discussions on: stocktaking of the international energy discourse; facilitating the transfer of energy technologies suitable for rural development; case studies on successful modalities for transfer of energy technologies; and enabling policy environments and creating conditions for private sector involvement in the transfer of energy technologies for rural needs. Participants met in two regional working group sessions on rural electrification and clean fuels for rural needs in Africa, and in Asia and Latin America. Participants also considered the desired outcomes of and proposals for the upcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD).



GFSE-3: The third GFSE meeting convened from 27-29 November 2002, in Graz, Austria, and addressed public-private partnerships for rural energy development. It considered the relevant outcomes of the WSSD and sought to support the further development of initiatives to promote WSSD implementation, including the EU initiative on Energy for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development. Plenary sessions held during GFSE-3 covered topics such as innovative financial instruments for private sector involvement in rural energy development; implementation of the energy outcomes of the WSSD; how to make the WSSD work in Africa and Asia; and the role of operational international organizations and funding agencies for rural energy development.

GFSE-4: This meeting, entitled "Energy for Sustainable Development: Reconsidering the Role of Incentive Measures," was held from 18-20 February 2004, in Vienna, Austria. GFSE-4 focused on renewable energy issues in order to provide input to the International Conference for Renewable Energies held in Bonn, Germany, in June 2004. GFSE-4 also brought together various energy-related partnerships announced at the WSSD in order to discuss their progress, and sought to contribute to ongoing work on the use of incentive measures for sustainable energy.

GFSE-5: The fifth GFSE was held from 11-13 May 2005, in Vienna, Austria, under the theme "Enhancing International Cooperation on Biomass," putting special emphasis on strengthening the institutional capacity to promote South-South cooperation. Participants also addressed a variety of relevant topics, including: potentials and challenges for increasing biomass use; synergies and risks between food and biofuel crops; biofuels for sustainable transport; and biomass for electricity production and household heating.

GFSE-6: The sixth GFSE was held from 29 November - 1 December 2006, in Vienna, Austria. The meeting convened under the theme "Africa is energizing itself" and focused on sustainable energy in the African continent, with particular attention to sub-regional issues, biofuels, hydropower, the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), and financing. Participants at GFSE-6 met in nine plenary sessions to hear presentations and engage in discussions on a variety of relevant topics, including: the "African regional landscape on energy"; a regional focus on western, southern, eastern and central Africa; biofuels and hydropower; CDM opportunities in Africa; how GFSE can contribute to CSD-15; financial engineering for energy in Africa; and the way forward.



GFSE-7: The Seventh Meeting of the Global Forum on Sustainable Energy (GFSE-7) was held from 21-23 November 2007 at the Vienna International Centre, Vienna, Austria. The meeting convened under the theme "Energy Efficiency for Developing Countries - Strong Policies and New Technologies," and considered policies, case studies, and initiatives related to improving and promoting energy efficiency in developing countries, as well as opportunities, barriers, and the way forward. Participants met in eight expert panel sessions to hear presentations and engage in discussions on a variety of relevant topics, including scenarios for developing countries, energy efficiency and industrial development, carbon finance, investing in energy efficiency, and connections to poverty reduction in urban and rural areas.

GFSE REGIONAL WORKSHOPS: GFSE facilitated various regional workshops on sustainable energy issues in developing countries. From 27-28 November 2003, GFSE held a regional seminar that focused on district heating in South Eastern Europe. A workshop for countries that are members of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development was held from 24-26 November 2004, in Paro, Bhutan. Since 2007 GFSE is facilitating half yearly regional forums on renewable energy and energy efficiency together with the Energy and Environment Partnership for Central America. From 24 to 26 June 2008 GFSE co-organised the 1st Caribbean Sustainable Energy Forum in Grenada together with GTZ.



GFSE-8: GFSE celebrated its tenth year anniversary in the context of the energy conference "Towards an Integrated Energy Agenda Beyond 2020: Securing Sustainable Policies and Investments" from 22 to 24 June 2009, Vienna, Austria. The conference was co-organized by GFSE, UNIDO, IIASA and the Austrian Development Cooperation. The conference was focused on the impacts of the financial crisis on sustainable energy investments in developing countries and energy issues in the context of the forthcoming climate changes negotiations. New initiatives such as the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) were presented.

Related links:

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