

Operational Mechanism for Implementation of the Biogas Programme

After the establishment of a Biogas Company in 1977, the biogas programme was organised more systematically with assistance from the ADB/N. Over 13 years, the company established a reasonable infrastructure within which to promote the biogas programme throughout the country. The company is the sole agency conducting extension and training activities for the biogas programme. The overhead costs of the Biogas Company have thus increased, and this increase is being borne by the farmers, making biogas installations more expensive.

Realising the high overhead cost, the Biogas Company planned to reduce the number of regular staff engaged in construction. Biogas plant construction, being a seasonal activity, is carried out only during six months of the year. Therefore, in 1985, the company launched a local masons' training programme with 30 participants for two months. The programme covered the construction and maintenance of biogas plants, and those receiving this training were placed on contract by the company to install biogas, but not kept as regular employees. They also acted as extension workers to motivate potential buyers in their localities. These local masons also helped in the maintenance and operation of biogas plants, carrying a six to seven year company guarantee.

The company has now adopted a policy of privatisation; this means that the construction and maintenance of biogas will be contracted out to private firms and individuals. These individuals are given the necessary

training by the company. This means that the direct involvement of the company will be in the construction of larger biogas plants (more than 15m³) and the smaller ones will be contracted out to private firms. The company will provide supervision and monitoring to ensure that biogas plants are installed properly.

The Biogas Company expects to remain the lead agency in the development and dissemination of biogas in the country, by providing support to private individuals and firms engaged in the promotion of biogas. It plans to enlarge its activities in research and development to reduce the cost of plants and find alternative uses for biogas and slurry. The feasibility of producing electricity from biogas slurry is being examined as well as the use of slurry for animal feed. Thus, given a government favourable policy, the combined efforts of private sector, the Biogas Company, the Agricultural Development Bank, and the United Mission to Nepal could contribute significantly to the development of biogas in Nepal.