**Energy Planning**

**Introduction**

Among the driving forces that sustainable development requires is energy. Energy planning refers to the practice of establishing long-term guidelines that will help in guiding the *local, regional, global or national* energy system’s future. Mostly, government organizations as well as big energy firms carry out energy planning. This process may include the contribution of different stakeholders from local utilities, government institutions, academia as well as other parties that may be interested. Normally, it is conducted using the integrated strategies which consider energy supply as well as energy efficiency role in the decreasing demands.

Energy plans should be associated with population increase’s effects. The types of used energy, energy utilization as well as energy insufficiency all impact on a metropolitan area’s economic development and environmental health. A major factor that contributes to excess carbon production in an environment is burning fossil fuels. Normally, this causes global warming (Farhad & Carl-Johan, 2011).

In the metropolitan regions where sustainable plans for energy are implemented, susceptibility to increase in energy price and energy scarcity is decreased. In majority of such cities, traffic congestion is less and energy prices are low. Their environments have uncontaminated air. Such cities are able to maintain a competitive economic edge globally due to low carbon levels. Developing countries should always have a sustainable development energy plan that considers the needs of consumers first. The implication of this is that priority should be given to small consumers of energy as well as poorer families (ICLEI, 2009).

**The Goals Of Energy Planning**

The efforts of sustainable planning in regards to energy are aimed at ensuring zero or reduced supply of carbon energy, optimal efficiency in energy utilization, accessible, effective and equitable provision of energy services to consumers. The basis of energy planning is the consideration of the broader perspectives of an entire economy, the society and the environment instead of focusing on financial aspects only. Normally, energy services’ demand guide energy planning (ICLEI, 2009). The main factors to consider during sustainable planning in regards to energy include:

* All energy sources and the actions that relate to the entire energy system.
* Carbon mitigation which is a major determinant of the process of developing a plan as well as the process through which project actions are chosen.
* Energy services’ demand consideration rather than the form of energy that should be supplied serves as the planning basis.
* The most important factors to consider include energy efficiency, energy preservation as well as demand management.
* Economy and energy segment relationship should be included in the plan.
* Energy plan ought to be flexible while anticipating and acting in response to possible changes (ICLEI, 2009).

It is important to establish the most ideal *energy action plan’s* vision for future. This entails establishing measurable goals in relation to a stated vision. Such a vision ought to be addressed to a community clearly. A vision that is clear and supported by plans’ implementation can inspire and encourage employees, institutions, citizens and organizations in the city so that they can support the action plan. The vision should also act as a reference point via which evaluation of the advancements can be done (ICLEI, 2009). In the sustainable system, the main elements include:

* Consistency: Short-term actions ought to work properly in relations to future goals.
* Inexhaustible: The energy system should rely on lasting resources and run using technologies that are friendly to the environment.
* Diverse: Diverse systems are quicker to adapt changes.
* Interdependency: All aspects of the energy system depend on the other important aspects (ICLEI, 2009).

**The Issues To Overcome To Ensure Effectiveness Of Energy Plan**

Effective energy planning requires right information. Gathering energy supply information is usually easy. However, gathering information about how energy is used by consumers, the type of the energy used and sources of this energy is difficult. This is important data when it comes to sustainable planning in regards to energy. The focus of an energy plan is on satisfying consumers’ needs. Several benefits can be realized from a planning that is based on the entire society’s needs. The benefits can be communal, ecological and economical. As such, among the issues that should be avoided during the establishment of a good plan is a planning that does not include collection of the right and sufficient data. Energy supply needs of companies and sources of the supplied energy dominate the process of energy planning (ICLEI, 2009).

A sustainable planning approach in relation to energy is unique since it has to consider consumers’ and city needs first. This is because the needs of energy service are not met by energy supply only. For example, the need for a cool or warm house depends on a specific weather condition. An effective and efficient energy design can make this achievable. Consideration of energy supply alone while establishing the energy plan assumes that households can use electricity in heating or other energy sources available. When the established energy plan considers the demands of consumers it plans at the local level while ensuring that there are no systems for misuse (ECLEI, 2009).

**The Actors Involved In The Energy Planning**

The process of energy planning can involve several stakeholders. These can be from local utilities, government institutions and academics among other parties that may be interested. Local actors can participate at the initial process’ levels of development as well as the implementation of a sustainable action plan which entails recognizing release inventory. The non-governmental organizations can contribute as well. Such organizations include energy supply industries. Local governments can also help in the process of gathering information because they control city developments and activities (ICLEI, 2009).

Local governments can access the society directly and easily determine consumers’ energy needs. They can also influence the society. Each metropolitan region is different in various ways in terms of energy supply and needs. There are different resources that different metropolitans have and their development plans vary. Even their powers and mandates are different. A town’s energy plan ought to be established on the basis of its unique requirements as well as the resources available. Local governments can contribute in the process of energy planning in different ways which include planning process’ funding, providing the necessary city and energy consumers’ information as well as monitoring the implementation of the plan (ICLEI, 2009).

**References**

Farhad, D., & Carl-Johan, F. (2011). On Sustainability in Local Energy Planning.

ICLEI. (2009). Local Governments for Sustainability: Sustainable urban energy planning. Retrieved from http://www.unep.org/urban\_environment/PDFs/Sustainable\_Energy\_Handbook.pdf