

# FINAL PROJECT REPORT



## MECS UK Tanzania eCooking Scale and Support Programme

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### Africanetic Company Limited

#### Project Details

**Project:** Deployment of 500 electric Pressure Cookers (EPC's) in Tanzania

**Implementing Organization:** Africanetic

**Reporting Period:** Ten Months

**Prepared for:** FCDO and Loughborough University

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# Executive Summary

Africanetic Company Limited is a Tanzanian clean cooking enterprise incorporated in 2021 and fully compliant with statutory, tax, and audit requirements. This report documents Africanetic's participation in the **MECS UK – Tanzania eCooking Scale and Support Programme**, under which the company received **£45,000 in milestone-based grant funding** to research, promote, and distribute electric cooking solutions, particularly Electric Pressure Cookers (EPCs).

The project focused on introducing EPCs as a safe, cost-effective, and climate-friendly alternative to conventional cooking fuels such as charcoal and firewood, which remain dominant in Tanzania despite their environmental and health impacts. Africanetic developed and promoted its proprietary **FASTA COOK PRO (6L)** EPC, supported by interim sales of SESCOM EPCs, targeting households, food vendors (Mama Lishe and Mama Ntilie), and small restaurants.

## Summary of Sales and Business Model Approach

Africanetic adopted a **multi-channel, education-led sales approach** to introduce electric pressure cookers (EPCs) into a market heavily dependent on charcoal and firewood. Sales were driven through direct engagement with end-users (Mama Lishe, Mama Ntilie, households, and restaurants), supported by digital marketing on Facebook and Instagram, influencer-led demonstrations, and flexible payment options including PAY-GO, instalments, and lease-to-own models. The strategy emphasized practical benefits such as cost savings, safety, reduced electricity consumption compared to inefficient eCooking appliances, and suitability for local Tanzanian foods.

## Key Findings from Implementation

The project confirmed that **consumer awareness and affordability are the primary barriers** to EPC adoption, rather than product performance. While digital channels and influencer marketing successfully generated interest and sales among individual households, uptake among informal food vendors remained limited due to low and irregular incomes, behavioral resistance to change, and reliance on low-cost or free traditional fuels.

Sales volumes (approximately 50 EPCs sold - 15 SESCOM and 35 FASTA COOK PRO) fell below initial targets due to structural constraints, including limited project duration, election-related market disruption, lack of electricity access in some areas, and competition from low-quality grey-market EPCs. However, customer feedback from early adopters was strongly positive, validating the technical suitability and value proposition of EPCs.

## How Findings Shaped Future Strategy

The findings led Africanetic to **pivot from standalone EPC sales toward shared-use and service-based models**, such as communal kitchens and PAY-GO infrastructure, which reduce upfront cost barriers and better align with daily income patterns. Future strategy prioritizes institutional users, shared facilities, bundled energy solutions, and deeper consumer

education, supported by partnerships, financing mechanisms, and longer engagement cycles to enable scalable and sustainable eCooking adoption.

The project strengthened Africanetic's technical, commercial, and impact capacity, positioning the company to continue supplying eCooking solutions as part of a broader clean cooking ecosystem in Tanzania.

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# 1. Introduction

Africanetic's core business has focused on clean cooking solutions, primarily through the supply of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) refills, sale of LPG accessories and equipment, and digital service delivery via its e-commerce platform, **GasFasta**, which enables customers to select LPG services and receive doorstep delivery.

The eCooking initiative supported by the MECS UK *Tanzania eCooking Scale and Support Programme* represents an extension and diversification of Africanetic's existing clean cooking portfolio rather than an entirely new line of business. The introduction of electric pressure cookers (EPCs) builds directly on Africanetic's experience in energy access, last-mile delivery, PAY-GO systems, customer education, and behaviour change within the cooking energy sector. Electric Pressure Cookers (EPCs) were integrated as an **equally dominant clean cooking solution** within Africanetic's portfolio, as they address several limitations associated with conventional and LPG-based cooking. EPCs deliver clean cooking outcomes with greater precision and significantly reduced cooking times, resulting in low electricity consumption and clear cost savings for users. They also help mitigate common LPG-related barriers, including refill supply delays, temporary stock shortages, and user concerns around refill weight accuracy, which is often difficult to verify at the household level.

Electric cooking was therefore integrated as a **balancing solution to LPG**, rather than a replacement. This dual approach allows households and food vendors to select the most appropriate clean cooking option based on electricity availability, cooking patterns, affordability, and operational reliability. By offering both LPG and electric cooking solutions, Africanetic enhances resilience within its clean cooking ecosystem, reduces dependency on a single fuel source, and improves overall user confidence, convenience, and continuity of service.

## Project Aims and Objectives

The MECS-funded project aimed to support and stimulate Tanzania's emerging eCooking supply chain by testing market readiness, consumer acceptance, and viable business models for electric cooking appliances, particularly EPCs.

## Africanetic's Specific Objectives

For Africanetic, the project aimed to:

- Introduce and promote electric pressure cookers as a viable alternative to charcoal and LPG
- Sell up to **500 EPC units** within the project period (May–December 2025)
- Test multiple sales and financing models, including cash sales, instalments, and PAY-GO

- Generate user data, behavioural insights, and impact evidence to inform scale-up

## **Country Context: Clean Cooking and eCooking in Tanzania**

Tanzania remains heavily dependent on charcoal, firewood, and biomass for cooking across both rural and urban areas. This reliance contributes to deforestation, greenhouse gas emissions, and serious health risks from indoor air pollution. Poverty, limited electricity access, low disposable incomes, and behavioural habits further constrain adoption of modern cooking technologies. eCooking therefore represents both a challenge and an opportunity—requiring not only technology but strong consumer education, financing, and trust-building.

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## 2. Sales and Business Model Strategy

### Customer Journey and Sales Approach

Africanetic adopted a multi-channel strategy:

- **Awareness & Education:** Social media campaigns (Facebook, Instagram), influencer marketing, and direct community engagement
- **Product Offering:** SESCOM EPCs (interim) and FASTA COOK PRO (6L, multifunctional, locally relevant menus)
- **Sales Channels:** Direct sales, whatsapp groups, social media inquiries, referrals
- **Payment Models:** Cash sales, instalment plans, lease-to-own and PAY-GO options
- **After-Sales Support:** Product demonstrations, user guidance, warranty assurance, and basic servicing support

### Target Customers

- Individual households
- Mama Lishe and Mama Ntilie food vendors
- Small restaurants and catering businesses

The eCooking activities under this project covered key commercial and residential geographies within Dar es Salaam, including **Kariakoo**, the country's largest trade and distribution hub serving low- and middle-income households, informal food vendors Mama Lishe (providing reasonably better, clean food, organized set-up in schools, universities, construction sites) and Mama Ntilie (operating from small stalls or handcart selling cheap, quick food servings), small to mid-size restaurants, and 2–3 star hotels. Additional areas included **Mbagala, Mbezi, Magogoni Ferry, Ilala, Temeke, Ubungo, Goba, Kinondoni**, and **Gongolamboto**, reflecting a mix of densely populated low-income settlements and emerging middle-income zones.

These segments were selected due to their high cooking frequency, fuel expenditure, and potential livelihood benefits.

### Affordability & Support Measures

Affordability challenges were addressed through flexible payment options and strong emphasis on long-term cost savings. Africanetic tested multiple payment mechanisms to improve affordability and adoption of electric pressure cookers (EPCs). **Upfront cash purchase** was the most successful model, with most customers paying in full either at sale or on delivery. The initial price of **TZS 150,000** was reduced to **TZS 100,000 in September 2025**,

which improved customer acceptance and sales. The price reduction was undertaken based on feedback from direct field activities and market surveys, primarily to counter strong competition from low-cost brands and grey-market products. This approach was intended to increase visibility, brand awareness, and market recognition while accelerating eCooking adoption. The strategy envisioned building a strong and trusted market presence, with a planned gradual retracking to the original list price once brand acceptance and demand were established.

**Instalment payments** were offered mainly to verified household customers and structured into **2–3 equal instalments**, extendable up to **3–4 payments**. Only a few households opted for this model, but repayment compliance was strong due to verification which included both ID verification and signed commitment notes.

**PAY-GO** (TZS 1,500/day or TZS 10,000/week, indefinitely) and **lease-to-own** options (TZS 2,000/day or TZS 15,000/week over three months) were promoted among food vendors and low-income groups but saw no uptake. Irregular incomes, electricity constraints, and reluctance to commit to recurring payments limited acceptance.

However, electricity access constraints and upfront prepaid electricity costs remained major barriers. The contributing factors briefly are:

- **Dual constraint identified:** both **electricity access** and **affordability** limited eCooking adoption.
- **Low-income households:** electricity connections often existed, but **prepaid top-up costs were unaffordable** due to daily cash-flow constraints for those who did not already pay for cooking fuel (collecting firewood).
- **Perceived issues with cost of electric cooking:** Many households and street vendors thought that eCooking with an EPC would be more expensive than their current cooking method, and so were wary to try.
- **Low confidence and safety fears:** Some potential customers had low confidence in using the EPC, and were worried about safety. Some had house helpers who would have struggled to pick up using the EPC. **Mama Lishe & Mama Ntilie:** many operate in **streets, open markets, or temporary setups** with **no formal electricity connections**.
- **Informal operations:** lack of legal or reliable access prevented consistent electricity use even where nearby supply existed.
- **Cost sensitivity:** commercial cooking requires higher electricity usage, increasing prepaid costs beyond vendors' capacity because often they pay for the cooking fuel after having used it. They sometimes had arrangements that they pay for the charcoal at the end of the day (essentially post-pay), after they had made their daily earnings. eCooking would not allow for this.
- **Outcome:** inconsistent electricity access and affordability significantly reduced sustained use of electric cooking solutions.

## Adaptive Strategy

During implementation, Africanetic adjusted its approach by:

- Narrowing focus to EPCs only - Initially, the project included both Electric Pressure Cookers (EPCs) and small refillable 2 kg gas stoves, but high LPG refill costs, unreliable supply, and ongoing service needs made the gas model less viable, so the focus shifted entirely to **EPCs as a one-time investment with predictable operating costs, faster cooking, and greater convenience**, and studies show that cooking with an EPC can cost roughly **one-third the cost of LPG and far less than charcoal** in many African contexts, making them more affordable over time. EPCs also benefit from **strong manufacturer support** (warranties, repair guidance, tools, and technical assistance), which reduces after-sales complexity, and this shift has resulted in **higher customer satisfaction, fewer service issues, and clearer value for users**, with evidence of **substantial cost and time savings**. Market efforts were then **prioritized toward urban and peri-urban customers with reliable electricity access**, with an emphasis on **education and awareness** rather than pure sales to drive adoption.
- Increasing emphasis on education over pure sales - By emphasizing **education over pure sales**, we didn't just try to sell the Electric Pressure Cooker — we **actively taught and engaged customers so they truly understood its value and use**. This included **hands-on informative sessions** where people cooked staple foods like **ugali, rice, stew, and beans** with the EPC, highlighting **ease of use, predictable and lower cooking times, electricity consumption, and real savings**. These live demonstrations helped customers *see, taste, and experience* the benefits directly, building **confidence, trust, and faster adoption** of the product rather than relying on traditional sales pitches alone. Educating users in this way is known to significantly **increase product adoption and satisfaction** because customers understand how to use the product and the value it brings before they buy.
- Prioritizing urban and peri-urban customers with electricity access - focused our efforts where **reliable electricity is already available**, so households can actually *use* and benefit from electric cooking solutions without barriers. Urban and peri-urban areas typically have much higher grid electrification than rural regions, making electric appliances like EPCs more practical and accessible for daily cooking. This increases the likelihood of **adoption, use, and satisfaction**, because customers already have the infrastructure needed to power the technology.

### 3. Project Achievements

#### Sales Performance (Until December 2025)

**Total EPCs sold: 50 units**

- SESCOM EPCs: 15
- FASTA COOK PRO: 35



From the above sales figures, it may be noted we have sold SESCOM and FASTA COOK PRO EPC's, both. SESCOM was during the interim period, as we decided to focus on launching our own branded appliance, **FASTA COOK PRO, ELECTRIC PRESSURE COOKER**. Producing our own brand gave us **control over pricing, supply consistency, quality, and after-sales support**, unlike third-party brands like SESCOM, which are costly, supply is unpredictable, and service depends entirely on external partners. These challenges

especially affect our **cost-sensitive target customers** such as low-income households, mama lishe/ntilie, small vendors, and restaurants. Through this process we learned that **price is a major barrier** (many customers expected very low prices or a free trial period to be able to compare to their existing cooking method, and even flexible payment options weren't enough) and that **education and practical experience are vital** for adoption. Therefore, we organized **hands-on demonstrations** cooking staple foods like ugali, rice, stew, and beans to show **ease of use, predictable cooking time, electricity consumption and savings**, which helped build confidence and understanding. We also found that broader awareness support from stakeholders can help overcome barriers and accelerate adoption of clean cooking technologies like EPCs in Tanzania's market.

**Sales mechanisms:** We primarily sold EPCs through **direct sales and instalments**, testing different payment mechanisms to improve affordability and adoption; **upfront cash purchases** worked best, with most customers paying in full at sale or delivery, and reducing the price from **TZS 150,000 to TZS 100,000 in September 2025** noticeably boosted acceptance and sales. **Instalment plans** (2–3 equal payments, extendable up to 3–4) were offered to verified households, and while only a few chose this option, **repayment compliance was strong** due to ID verification and signed commitments. **PAY-GO and lease-to-own options** were promoted to vendors and low-income groups (e.g., TZS 1,500/day or TZS 10,000/week for PAY-GO and TZS 2,000/day or TZS 15,000/week over three months for lease-to-own) but **saw no uptake**. This was because of irregular incomes, electricity constraints, and reluctance to commit to recurring payments — a common barrier to financing

clean cooking appliances in low-income markets where affordability and access remain major challenges.

## Comparison to Targets

Targets for Africanetic set by **MECS UK** required the sale of **500 electric pressure cookers (EPCs)** in Tanzania to support the Scaling eCooking Solutions project. Under this mandate, Africanetic procured **15 SESCO units** and manufactured **400 FASTA COOK PRO units** with oversight from overseas vendors to ensure **suitability, performance, energy efficiency, safety, and compliance with Tanzania Bureau of Standards (TBS)** requirements, reflecting local and international appliance standards. The remaining units contracted for the project were **reserved for production after the midpoint sales of the initial FASTA COOK PRO batch** to maintain consistent supply and quality assurance.

We used a mix of **direct sales and instalment plans** in areas of Dar es Salaam and surrounding urban areas including **Kariakoo**, the country's largest trade and distribution hub serving low- and middle-income households, informal food vendors (Mama Lishe and Mama Ntilie), small to mid-size restaurants, and 2–3 star hotels. Additional areas included **Mbagala, Mbezi, Magogoni Ferry, Ilala, Temeke, Ubungu, Goba, Kinondoni, and Gongolamboto**, reflecting a mix of densely populated low-income settlements and emerging middle-income zones to drive EPC adoption, testing different payment mechanisms to improve affordability. **Upfront cash purchases** proved most effective, with most customers paying in full at sale or delivery, and **reducing the price from TZS 150,000 to TZS 100,000 in September 2025** noticeably increasing acceptance and sales. We offered **instalments (2–3 equal payments, extendable to 3–4)** to verified household customers, and while few opted for this, **repayment compliance was strong** due to ID verification and signed agreements. We also promoted **PAY-GO and lease-to-own options** with daily/weekly rates (e.g., TZS 1,500/day or TZS 10,000/week for PAY-GO; TZS 2,000/day or TZS 15,000/week over three months for lease-to-own) to vendors and low-income groups, however, sales volumes remained **below the 500-unit target** due to several barriers, such as:

- Poverty and limited purchasing power
- Behavioural resistance to changing cooking habits
- Widespread availability of low-cost, low-quality EPCs through grey markets

In Tanzania, a **wide range of low-cost electric pressure cookers and similar appliances** are commonly sold through **informal and unregulated channels** such as local markets, roadside shops, small appliance stalls, and online sellers, with brands like **Silver Crest, Decakila, Orange, Bosch, West Stronger and others** widely available at low prices between £15 - £25 but often **lacking robust quality, insulation, safety features, and warranties** compared with certified models. Because these cheap units can **underperform, heat unevenly, use more electricity, or break down quickly**, many users report **poor cooking results and short lifespan**, which undermines confidence in electric cooking technology and slows broader adoption of reliable EPCs in the market.

- Political unrest during elections

- Short project duration

## Impact on the Company

Despite lower-than-expected sales, the project:

- Built Africanetic's EPC brand and market credibility
- Generated valuable customer and impact data (shared with 60 Decibels)
- Informed strategic pivot toward integrated communal and productive-use cooking models (a broader strategic approach scaling clean electric cooking that delivers economic value, supports livelihoods, and integrates into community and institutional ecosystems)

Detailed look at how Africanetic adapted to market challenges, and actions taken:

- **Manual vs Digital EPCs:**
  - *Manual/Basic models* are simpler to use and generally lower cost, making them easier for first-time adopters to understand and trust.
  - *Digital/advanced models* include preset programs, timers, and automated control, offering convenience and consistent results, but they can have a **higher price and slight learning curve** for users unfamiliar with digital interfaces.
  - The plan going forwards is to focus on basic digital models that have preset functions but not advanced functionality and to expand the offering to more advanced digital models further down the line after building brand recognition.
- **Product positioning:** Africanetic balanced usability and affordability by prioritizing EPC designs that are **easy to operate for everyday cooking needs**, helping reduce apprehension around new technology while still offering performance that meets local food practices (e.g., staples like rice, beans, ugali).
- **Education & demonstrations:** To overcome unfamiliarity and behavioural resistance, the company organized **hands-on cook sessions** to show how both simple and digital EPC functions deliver **predictable, efficient results**, building user confidence and understanding.
- **Payment and pricing adaptations:** Africanetic adjusted pricing (e.g., reducing the unit price from TZS 150,000 to TZS 100,000) and tested multiple payment models (cash, instalments, PAY-GO, lease-to-own) to improve affordability and match customer preferences and income patterns.
- **Market feedback loops:** Continuous customer feedback on **usability challenges, price sensitivity, and appliance expectations** informed iterative strategy

adjustments, including focussing sales in areas with reliable electricity and strengthening after-sales support to reinforce trust in quality EPC products.

- **Broader strategic insights:** The company's experience echoed broader **eCooking adoption barriers** in Tanzania — such as low awareness, variable electricity access, and price sensitivity — highlighting the importance of **education, tailored product offerings, and supportive financing** to complement sales efforts.
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## 4. Strategy Evaluation and Lessons Learned

### What Worked Well

- *Strong product relevance (local menus, safety, energy efficiency)*

We supported **product relevance** by including **clear printed instructions and feature guides** in the FASTA COOK PRO packaging, and adding **intuitive, on-appliance labels** with user guidance and **preset cooking ratios** for common local foods, helping users understand **how to use the EPC safely and efficiently for dishes like ugali, rice, beans, and stew**, reducing the learning curve and enhancing confidence in the appliance's relevance to everyday cooking.

- *Influencer marketing generated high awareness*

We leveraged **influencer marketing** to boost awareness of FASTA COOK PRO by partnering with **Monalisa Diko**, a popular Tanzanian food and lifestyle creator with a strong following on **Facebook and Instagram** known for cooking content. She posted **90-second and 60-second videos** featuring the product across her social profiles, helping introduce the EPC to a wider, engaged audience and increasing visibility; simultaneously, we shared the content and campaign links with our own database of clients and social followers to amplify reach and engagement, tapping into the growing influence of social creators in East Africa to drive brand recognition and interest. About 60% of sales resulted from digital marketing.

- *Lowering price targeting affordability and Instalment options improved interest*

Lowering the EPC price from **TZS 150,000 to TZS 100,000** and offering **instalment payment options** helped **reduce perceived cost barriers and increase customer interest**, because smaller upfront prices and manageable payment plans make the appliance feel more affordable and budget-friendly for price-sensitive buyers, a strategy shown to **improve purchase likelihood by lowering perceived financial constraints** and encouraging spending in markets with limited income. We offered **instalments (2–3 equal payments, extendable to 3–4)** to verified household customers, and while few opted for this, **repayment compliance was strong** due to ID verification and signed agreements.

### Challenges

- *Affordability and electricity access*

Electricity access and **upfront prepaid electricity costs** remained major barriers to eCooking adoption: many low-income households *had a connection but couldn't afford prepaid top-ups (as they either used free cooking fuel or paid for their fuel after having used it)*, informal vendors often lacked *formal grid access*, and even where electricity was available, *cost and supply constraints* limited consistent use of EPCs and reduced sustained adoption.

- *Consumer mistrust due to poor-quality imports*

In Tanzania's informal market, many **low-cost electric pressure cookers and similar appliances** are sold through unregulated local markets, roadside shops, small stalls, and online sellers under budget-oriented brands like **Silver Crest, Decakila, Orange, West Stronger and others**, which are widely available at lower prices but often **lack robust quality, safety features and performance standards**, leading to **poor cooking results, higher electricity use and short lifespans** compared with certified models; this undermines confidence in electric cooking and slows broader adoption of reliable EPCs in the market.

- Short project timeframe

The timeframe of the projects severely impacted the number of sales that were possible – as once the appliances were landed and cleared from the port, there was limited time left to launch the product and do the engagement required to reach sales targets.

## Key Lessons

- eCooking adoption requires ecosystem solutions, not appliance-only sales
- Communal kitchens and productive-use models can accelerate acceptance (a broader strategic approach scaling clean electric cooking that delivers economic value, supports livelihoods, and integrates into community and institutional ecosystems)
- Consumer education must precede scale

## Supply Chain Needs

- Affordable financing mechanisms (individual households or end-user customers offered extended third-party service window recovery, SACCOS/Cooperative lending networks, interest free instalment payment method)
- Quality standards enforcement
- Longer-term market development support

## 5. Next Steps

Africanetic plans to:

- Integrate EPCs into communal kitchens and institutional settings  
Such as schools, canteens, hostels, and community feeding programs—is effective due to high, predictable cooking volumes and centralized management. Regular bulk cooking enables faster cost recovery, lower per-meal energy costs, significant time savings, improved health and safety by eliminating smoke, and measurable environmental benefits through reduced charcoal and firewood use. Centralized ownership, blended financing (grants, PAYGO, or service contracts), menu-aligned training, and simplified maintenance make adoption easier, while successful communal use creates a strong demonstration effect that encourages wider household uptake.
  - Partner with financiers and donors for blended finance
  - Continue consumer education and impact measurement
  - Expand EPC deployment through PAY-GO and productive-use applications
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## 6. Conclusion

The MECS UK-supported project enabled Africanetic Company Limited to gain critical, real-world insights into Tanzania's eCooking market. While adoption remains challenging, the initiative confirmed strong long-term potential when eCooking is embedded within inclusive, affordable, and livelihood-focused models. Africanetic remains committed to advancing clean cooking solutions that deliver environmental, health, and economic benefits for Tanzanian communities.

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