Final Project Report

Provision of Services to Support the Import and Distribution of eCooking Appliances into Tanzania and Develop a Sustainable Supply Chain

Sustainable Energy Services Company (SESCOM) Limited

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Executive Summary

This report presents the outcomes of a MECS-funded project implemented by Sustainable Energy Services Company (SESCOM) to support the import and distribution of electric cooking (eCooking) appliances in Tanzania. The project aimed to strengthen clean cooking supply chains through the introduction of 8L EPCs and 7L air fryers, with a minimum distribution target of 700 units. Despite initial operational and external challenges, the project exceeded its minimum sales target by 112%, demonstrating strong market demand and commercial viability.

SESCOM successfully procured and distributed eCooking appliances across the country establishing a functional multi-regional distribution network. This network leveraged existing and newly recruited sales agents, partnerships with women's savings groups, and collaborations with key stakeholders, enabling effective market penetration and outreach to diverse customer segments.

The project demonstrated strong market acceptance of both appliance types. The air fryers, despite being new to the market, achieved rapid uptake, indicating consumer openness to innovative cooking technologies when clear benefits are communicated. The 8L EPCs attracted both new customers and upgrade purchases from existing 6L EPC users, highlighting the importance of product customization and appropriate sizing in driving repeat adoption.

A professionally executed digital marketing strategy played a central role in creating awareness and stimulating demand during holiday season. During the promotional period, digital campaigns reached 548,000 views, generated over 22,300 engagements, and initiated 624 direct customer inquiries, contributing significantly to sales momentum across all regions. The integration of digital outreach with physical distribution networks proved highly effective in converting interest into sales.

Beyond quantitative results, the project delivered important qualitative insights. Trust-based marketing through existing customer networks emerged as a powerful driver of adoption, while collaborative approaches among MECS partners, government agencies, utilities, and civil society organizations created enabling market conditions that amplified overall impact.

The project also identified ongoing challenges, including price sensitivity among lower-income households, sales agent capital constraints, and limitations in digital supply chain systems as operations scale. These challenges underscore the need for innovative financing mechanisms, improved agent support, and continued investment in digital systems and customer service capacity.

Overall, the project demonstrates that commercial eCooking supply chains in Tanzania are viable and scalable when supported by coordinated partnerships, consumer awareness, modern marketing approaches, and enabling policies. SESCOM is well positioned to build on this foundation by sustaining digital marketing efforts, converting stimulated demand into long-term sales, expanding its product portfolio, and strengthening collaborations around financing and subsidy mechanisms to achieve greater scale and impact.

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1 Introduction

1.1 About SESCOM

Sustainable Energy Services Company (SESCOM) is a Tanzanian-registered limited liability company, incorporated in 2013 and operational since 2015. The company specializes in sustainable energy solutions across urban, peri-urban, and rural areas of Tanzania. SESCOM business portfolio encompasses standalone solar PV systems, mini-grids, grid-connected electricity transmission and distribution, e-mobility solutions, and the supply of energy-efficient appliances, particularly for clean cooking and productive use applications.

SESCOM has successfully implemented projects and undertaken business operations across multiple regions in Tanzania, including Njombe, Coast, Dar es Salaam, Morogoro, Dodoma, Kilimanjaro, Shinyanga, Manyara, Lindi, Mtwara, Singida, and Tanga. With a strong track record and expanding market outreach, SESCOM continues to drive impactful energy solutions tailored to local contexts. This project supported importation and distribution of 8L EPCs and 7L air fryer shown here under.

SESCOM 8L EPC

SESCOM 7L Air Fryer

Company Vision: To accelerate communities transition to sustainable energy solutions by ensuring the availability of quality, reliable, and affordable energy technologies and services.

Mission: To be a leading sustainable energy enterprise providing efficient, affordable, and reliable energy solutions across Tanzania.

1.2 About MECS and the Project Context

Modern Energy Cooking Services (MECS) is an eight-year research and innovation programme funded by UK aid (FCDO) that has supported a variety of research and market strengthening work in Tanzania, resulting in an increasingly positive enabling environment for electric cooking (eCooking).

Since 2019, MECS research has demonstrated that eCooking is a viable cooking method in Tanzania, fitting local cuisine, having cheaper operational costs than LPG and charcoal, and being desirable to consumers. The enabling environment has continued to evolve positively with several key developments:

- In 2022, clean cooking became a key development priority for Tanzania

- In 2023, the President launched the African Women Clean Cooking Support Programme at COP
- Government directives require all institutions with over 200 people to end reliance on biomass by 2024, and those with over 200 by 2025
- A National Clean Cooking Strategy was recently launched

MECS activities, through accelerating and scaling a shift to modern energy cooking, improve human health especially for women and children by reducing exposure to harmful indoor air pollution and reducing risks of gender-based violence (GBV) associated with collecting and procuring biomass fuel. Women and girls, who traditionally spend the most time cooking, have their time freed up through reduced cooking times and reduced time spent procuring fuel. Additionally, shifting to modern cooking solutions such as eCooking can save households money on cooking fuel, thus alleviating fuel poverty.

1.3 Project Aims and Objectives

The broad objective of the MECS Seed Fund is to provide working capital to organizations and businesses with the interest, capability, and know-how to import and distribute eCooking appliances in Tanzania. The programme seeks to support projects that will deliver a minimum of 2,000 energy-efficient electric cooking appliances into homes or through business-to-business (B2B) channels from larger or more established organizations registered to trade in Tanzania.

This project, titled Provision of Services to Support the Import and Distribution of eCooking Appliances into Tanzania and Develop a Sustainable Supply Chain, specifically aimed to:

- Import and distribute a minimum of 700 energy-efficient eCooking appliances (8L Electric Pressure Cookers and 7L air fryers)
- Strengthen the supply chain for eCooking appliances across multiple regions in Tanzania
- Build capacity among SESCOM staff and sales agents on new eCooking technologies
- Develop and implement effective marketing and awareness strategies, including professional digital marketing, for eCooking adoption
- Establish robust customer data collection systems to support impact assessment
- Create sustainable business models for continued eCooking market development

2 Methodology

The project employed a comprehensive implementation strategy combining traditional distribution methods with modern digital marketing approaches to ensure normal business operations ran at its best. The methodology centered on leveraging SESCOM and existing infrastructure and distribution networks involving B2B while expanding capacity through new partnerships.

The project involved data collection and follow up though Phone calls, WhatsApp calls and chats to gather end user data from sales agents, providing support and receiving feedback.

All activities were coordinated across three main operational centers: Dar es Salaam (headquarters and main warehouse), Kilimanjaro, and Dodoma.

2.1 Key Activities and Methods

2.1.1 Procurement, Inventory Management and Distribution

SESCOM procured and import a total of 1000 appliances in the first consignment which included 500 units of 8L EPCs, 500 units of 7L Air fryers, 204 stainless steel pots for 8L EPC, and some spare parts for both appliances. The manufacturing process was initiated and completed, and subsequent procedures, such as inspections, were carried out by the manufacturer before the goods were shipped. Products were received at the main warehouse in Dar es Salaam and were transported to regional centers in Kilimanjaro and Dodoma based on demand patterns, sales agent requests, and forecast.

The process of ordering normally takes three months since order confirmation, while the process of receiving, inspecting and store arrangements takes on average a day, depending on the size of consignment.

2.1.2 Sales and Distribution Network

The main objective of this project was to support the business not only in the importation of clean cooking appliances, but also in achieving its broader goal of reaching end users and facilitating the transition from traditional, polluting cooking solutions to clean cooking technologies.

Distribution was carried out in collaboration with an established network of sales agents, alongside the active recruitment of 56 new agents to expand geographic coverage. Sales were conducted through multiple channels, including direct retail sales at SESCOM centers, independent sales agents, and partnerships with women’s savings groups. To encourage product trial and adoption, the project employed product demonstrations and consumer lending strategies in collaboration with these savings groups.

The project minimum sales target was 700 units, comprising 8L EPCs and 7L air fryers over the project period. However, due to delays in receiving the ordered consignment, sales reported in this project could only commence in June 2025 after receiving the consignment. Despite this challenge, the company exceeded its minimum project target by 122%, achieving total sales of 854 units. Of these, 461 units were 8L EPCs, while 393 units were air fryers.

Table 1 below presents a detailed breakdown of sales by appliance type at each center, as well as the revenue generated from these sales.

Table 1: Report of SESCOM Sales for Air Fryer And 8L EPCs From June 2025 to Dec 2025

AIR FRYER AND 8L EPCs SALES; JUNE 2025 TO DEC 2025					
CENTER	**8L EPC**			**AIRFRYER**	
DAR	**MONTH**	**SALES**	**REVENUE**	**SALES**	**REVENUE**
	June	7	1,550,000	10	1,860,000
	July	57	13,740,000	42	7,900,000
	August	43	9,580,000	10	1,840,000
	September	23	5,450,000	21	4,090,000
	October	35	8,000,000	15	2,820,000
	November	40	9,040,000	12	2,280,000
	December	31	7,060,000	16	2,980,000
	TOTAL	**236**	**54,420,000**	**126**	**23,770,000**
DODOMA	June	5	1,100,000	0	0
	July	12	2,450,000	6	1,140,000
	August	17	3,390,000	5	960,000
	September	5	1,100,000	9	1,640,000
	October	11	2,450,000	9	1,620,000
	November	5	1,160,000	5	920,000
	December	7	1,630,000	5	900,000
	TOTAL	**62**	**13,280,000**	**39**	**7,180,000**
MOSHI	June	24	5,300,000	7	1,260,000
	July	19	4,180,000	26	4,520,000
	August	34	7,510,000	8	1,520,000
	September	31	6,660,000	19	3,460,000
	October	23	5,120,000	64	11,520,000
	November	9	2,100,000	66	11,940,000
	December	23	5,210,000	38	6,840,000
	TOTAL	**163**	**36,080,000**	**228**	**41,060,000**
	GRAND TOTAL	**461**	**103,780,000**	**393**	**72,010,000**
	Total Appliances & Revenue		**854**		**175,790,000**

The 8L EPC was introduced to the market in September 2024, recording initial sales of 16 units. Sales declined slightly to 14 units in October 2024, then increased to 24 units in November and remained at 24 units in December 2024, resulting in an average of 20 units per month during the initial launch period. To date, the average monthly sales of the 8L EPC have increased significantly to 66 units, based on reported sales over seven months starting from June 2025 (see Table 1). In comparison, the 6L EPC, which has been in the market for five years, has achieved average monthly sales of 1,000 units.

The air fryer represents a completely new line of eCooking appliances, offering cooking functions that differ from those of existing products. An analysis of its performance during the seven-month period reported shows an average monthly sales volume of 56 units, with the Kilimanjaro center leading in sales. This represents a strong market entry and compares favorably with the initial performance of the 8L EPC at the time of its introduction.

2.1.3 Capacity Building and Stock Taking

Training sessions that involved practical sessions and demonstrations were conducted for SESCOM employees at Dar es Salaam, Dodoma and Kilimanjaro centers, covering technical specifications of the 8L digital EPCs and 7L air fryers, proper usage and maintenance, inventory management procedures including stock taking, data packaging and storage as well as customer service best practices.

Additionally, Dar es Salaam center staff were trained on ICT as well as AI tools for various business functions including content ideation, customer service responses, and communication drafting.

Photos featuring capacity building and inventory management

2.1.4 Marketing and Promotion

During this period, the company designed, printed and distribute a number of promotional materials, user guide manuals, and short videos demonstrating the use and benefits of 8L EPCs and 7L Air fryers were created and shared through social media as can be seen below.

Photos of some promotional materials

The company also contracted an expert on ICT and AI, TWENY Limited helping with digitization of some system and capacitating SESCOM team. The company was also involved in digital marketing, content creation and special promotions during holiday season, which commenced on 18 December 2025 and continue through 30 January. This represented a strategic shift from inefficient traditional marketing approaches such as printing advertising which involves high printing and distribution costs to professional digital engagement across social media platforms. This service established and optimized SESCOM presence on Instagram and Facebook, including brand identity development, logo integration, visual consistency, complete profile optimization with updated contact information, creation and configuration of professional advertising accounts, and integration of WhatsApp Business for enhanced customer communication.

Participating in Awareness campaigns and demonstrations

The company has been participating in various events from International, National, local, corporate, groups, to individual organized events to demonstrate and showcase products. These events include Dar Es Salaam International Trade Fair (DTIF), NaneNane, National Environment Week, International Customer care week, National Uhuru Torch Race, Workers' Day in various regions, Women's Day, Tanga Women Ghala, Public Service Week, and Arusha Nishati Samia Connect. Other campaigns include the road shows conducted by Fern Marketing through MECS project, demonstration to TANESCO staff and customers.

Photos taken during various events demonstrating eCooking appliances

Other demonstrations and trainings have been conducted to women groups, corporative, saving groups, faith-based organizations, hotels, various offices including government, private and other peculiar groups like Mwenge motorcycle association.

Photos taken during various groups demonstrating eCooking appliances

2.1.5 Data Collection and Management

Customer data was systematically collected at the point of sale and through phone call to sales agents and maintained on customer database. Among the collected data, a total of 471 customer data were shared with 60 Decibels, the research firm contracted to conduct impact surveys for data analysis.

SESCOM is looking forward to receiving survey feedback for monitoring and improving services delivered to customers.

2.1.6 After Sales Services

SESCOM integrates after-sales service planning into the product introduction process. Common spare parts are included in each consignment at the point of ordering to ensure timely support and minimize service disruptions. During implementation period, no major faults were recorded. Minor issues that arose were promptly resolved by the company's technical team.

In parallel, SESCOM has strengthened its internal technical capacity by training its technical team to carry out maintenance of the new appliance. As part of its scale-up strategy, the company has further incorporated the expansion of capacity-building initiatives for existing trained technicians to support increased deployment and long-term service sustainability.

2.2 Timeline and Geographic Coverage

This was a one-year project commenced in January 2025, implementing daily business activities and selling electric appliance all over Tanzania and nearby countries but focusing efforts on the target geographical area (Dar es Salaam, Dodoma, Kilimanjaro, and Iringa Regions). The expansion of business to Iringa region, which is the new geographical area aiming to test the market, was delayed due to political instability during and after election period. The company currently supplies EPCs to the region through a sales agent, who has so far distributed 17 units. Efforts to leverage the existing partnership with TANESCO to further develop and expand this market are ongoing. The multi-regional approach allowed the project to test distribution strategies across different market contexts, from the high-density urban environment of Dar es Salaam to the more dispersed populations in Dodoma and Kilimanjaro.

2.3 Methodology Evaluation

2.3.1 What Went Well

- Partnerships and collaboration with other stakeholders greatly supported achievement of the sales reported.
- The use of existing distribution networks enabled rapid project implementation and market penetration
- Professional digital marketing exceeded expectations with 548,000 views, 22,300 engagements, and 624 direct customer conversations.
- The combination of digital reach and physical distribution networks created synergies, with online awareness facilitating offline sales
- Product demonstration and lending through women groups proved highly effective in generating sales
- Regular communication with sales agents maintained engagement and enabled rapid problem-solving
- Capacity building activities, including inventory management, data recording and management and AI tool training, improved staff knowledge and operational capabilities

2.3.2 Challenges and Limitations

- There was delay receiving ordered consignment due to some factors, including delays in initial preparations and transportation which took longer than anticipated leading to receiving the appliance on mid-June instead of mid-May.
- Inability to implement an instalment payment model with employees in the government and private sector offices, guaranteed by their employers, to purchase eCooking appliances with agreed-upon repayment terms. Several entities and groups were approached, discussions were initiated and still ongoing with 6 of them, including Bongo FM, Mwenge motorcycle association, employees from Dodoma reginal office (health section), TWENTY company, British High Commission employees, and Ministry of Information, Culture, Arts and Sports. Some discussions, such as those with Bongo FM, were interrupted by the election period and the subsequent swearing-in process that engaged the key relevant officials. Despite continued efforts to advance this arrangement, human resource departments have been hesitant to assume responsibility for guaranteeing employee repayments. In the case of government institutions, HR

departments do not have authority over employee salaries, meaning such arrangements require special approvals and administrative permissions. Without these, the financial risk remains entirely with the supplier.

- Manual Excel-based and lack of digital systems along the supply chain proved inadequate for real-time inventory tracking and data management across multiple locations. For example, the main warehouse cannot remotely access current stock levels until information is manually shared by coordinators using Excel files. Similarly, end-user data stored in Excel requires additional processing and analysis, limiting the ability to respond promptly to time-sensitive data requests. Addressing this challenge requires adequate investment, and the company has accordingly included it in its scale-up strategy.
- Political instability during the election period restricted physical demonstrations and expansion activities, particularly the planned Iringa introduction.
- Limited capital among sales agents constrained their ability to purchase inventory in bulk, requiring more frequent smaller orders.
- Transportation costs reduced profit margins for agents, impacting their motivation.
- The high volume of digital inquiries (624 messaging conversations) required dedicated response capacity that initially strained resources
- Installment payment model with institutional buyers, though promising, required more time to establish than initially anticipated.
- Integration of digital marketing analytics with sales and inventory systems remained manual, limiting real-time optimization.

2.3.3 What Would Be Done Differently

Future projects would benefit from upfront investment in digital inventory management and customer relationship management systems to enable real-time tracking and integration of digital marketing data. Budget allocation should include dedicated staff for social media customer service to capitalize on digital marketing leads promptly. More comprehensive risk assessment, particularly regarding political factors, should inform project timing and contingency planning. Earlier engagement with institutional buyers and more streamlined approval processes would accelerate implementation of innovative financing models. Additionally, providing more flexible stock holding arrangements or consignment models could better accommodate agents with limited working capital.

3 Findings and Lessons Learned

3.1 Main Achievements

The project successfully achieved its core objectives while generating valuable insights into effective e-cooking market development strategies. Key achievements include the establishment of a functional multi-regional distribution network, the successful introduction of new eCooking appliance types to the market, the demonstrated transformative impact of professional digital marketing, and the validation of viable business models for sustainable eCooking market development.

These achievements were driven by several key factors, including growing consumer demand for electric appliances, the expansion of eCooking initiatives, improved market penetration strategies, and strong partnerships and collaborations. Engagements with civil society organizations (CSOs), women's savings groups, government agencies, and development partners, particularly the MECS programme whose supported programs played a critical role in stimulating demand and broadening the customer base.

3.1.1 Distribution and Sales Performance

The 8L EPCs and 7L air fryers demonstrated strong market acceptance across all operational regions. Both products attracted new customers while also driving upgrade purchases from existing SESCOM customers, particularly those who had previously purchased 6L EPCs. Despite being new to the market, the air fryers achieved rapid uptake, reflecting effective awareness-raising efforts and strong consumer openness to innovative cooking technologies.

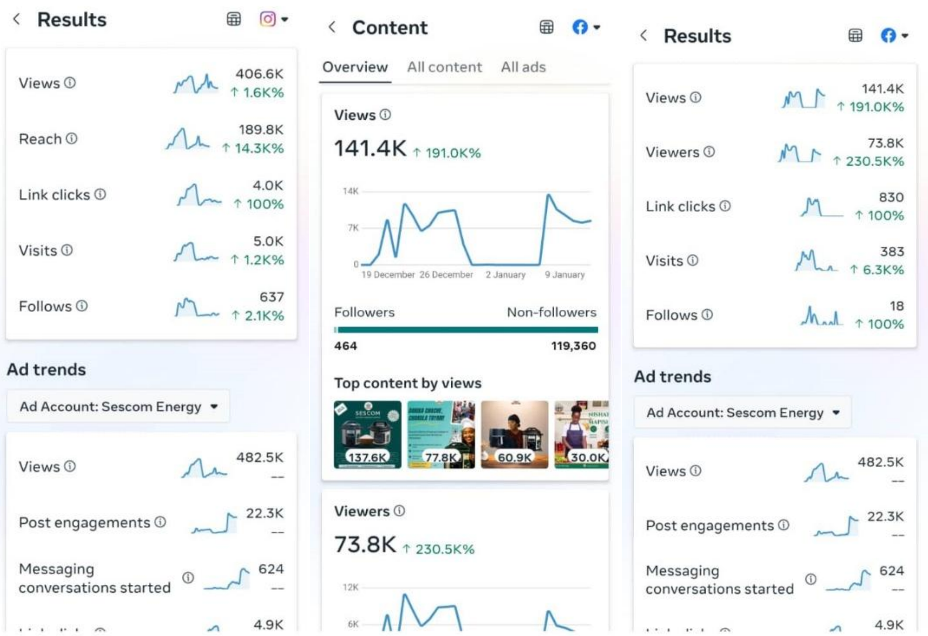
Sales momentum showed a strong correlation with ongoing eCooking campaigns, strategic partnerships, and the digital marketing efforts implemented by SESCOM and its sales agents, highlighting the importance of coordinated market activation strategies.

3.1.2 Special Digital Marketing Campaigns Performance

The digital marketing campaign delivered exceptional measurable results that exceeded expectations and provided valuable proof of concept for social media marketing in the eCooking sector.

Special Holyday Campaign Performance Metrics:

Metric	Performance	Growth
Total Views (Combined)	548,000	225%
Instagram Views	406,600	1,600%
Instagram Reach	189,800 users	14,300%
Facebook Views	141,400	91%
Total Link Clicks	4,830	1,613%
Post Engagements	22,300	N/A
Messaging Conversations	624	N/A



These results demonstrated several important insights. Instagram proved exceptionally effective for visual product marketing, with a 1,600% growth in views indicating strong resonance with the platform user demographics. The 189,800 reaches on Instagram represented significant exposure to audiences SESCOM had never accessed through traditional marketing. The 624 messaging conversations represented high-quality leads with people actively interested enough to initiate direct contact.

Cost-effectiveness analysis revealed that digital marketing delivered substantially lower cost-per-impression compared to traditional advertising channels such as radio, newspaper, or billboard advertising. The ability to target specific demographics, track engagement metrics, and adjust campaigns in real time provided unprecedented marketing efficiency.

3.1.3 Network Development

The project successfully expanded SESCOM’s sales agent network by recruiting 56 new agents, bringing the total to 260 agents, while strengthening relationships with existing agents through regular communication, performance incentives, and problem-solving support. Although other companies have struggled to recruit sales agents, SESCOM’s established position in the market as a trusted supplier of high-quality eCooking appliances, coupled with strong customer loyalty, has made recruitment significantly easier. Partnerships with women’s savings groups proved particularly effective, with product lending arrangements increasing awareness and generating sales among group members.

3.1.4 Capacity Building Outcomes

Training activities successfully enhanced technical knowledge among SESCOM staff at regional centers, improving their ability to demonstrate products, troubleshoot customer issues, and manage inventory effectively. The training on AI tools added new knowledge on existing new technologies.

3.2 Key Lessons Learned

3.2.1 Trust Drives Demand for Broader Product Ranges

Most sales of the newly introduced 8L EPCs and air fryers came from repeat customers and referrals from existing loyal customers and sales agents. This trust-based marketing proved significantly more effective than cold outreach. Customers increasingly requested additional electrical appliances beyond core cooking devices, including kettles, microwaves, and blenders. This demonstrates that successful introduction of initial products creates a platform for expanding the product portfolio, with each addition amplifying overall sales volume and market penetration. The importance of a diversified product portfolio to meet varied household needs became evident as customer confidence in SESCOM products grew.

3.2.2 New Clean Cooking Technologies Can Achieve Rapid Market Acceptance

The SESCOM air fryers, though entirely new to the Tanzanian market, achieved high acceptability quickly. This rapid adoption indicates that effective awareness efforts can successfully introduce innovative cooking technologies when they offer clear benefits. Customers appreciated the health benefits of air frying, reduced cooking oil requirements, and versatility in food preparation. This suggests strong potential for introducing other innovative eCooking devices in similar contexts, provided adequate consumer education accompanies product launches. The success challenges assumptions that only familiar appliances can penetrate the market and demonstrates consumer openness to innovation when properly presented.

3.2.3 Customization Fosters Growing Adoption

The 8L EPC adoption rate increased significantly compared to the previous 6L model, driven by tailored capacity and features better suited to family needs. This demonstrates how product customization and appropriate sizing can convert interest into sustained use. Notably, existing 6L EPC customers upgraded to 8L models, signaling customer loyalty and the value of offering scalable product options within a product line. The willingness to upgrade rather than simply purchase a second smaller unit indicates that customers prioritize optimal appliance capacity over lower initial investment. This lesson suggests that offering product ranges with graduated specifications can capture customers at different stages of adoption and income levels while creating natural upgrade pathways.

3.2.4 Partnerships Amplify Impact Beyond Individual Efforts

Collective efforts on awareness and market development proved far more effective than isolated initiatives. TANESCO massive eCooking awareness campaigns, UNCDF-CookFund project activities, SNV support for sales groups with revolving fund incentives, and other MECS programmes (Fern Marketing national awareness campaign, Oak Workshop and Bajeti Energies seed fund programme) created a mutually reinforcing ecosystem of support. This collaboration, combined with ongoing national clean cooking initiatives, created market conditions where individual actors like SESCOM benefited from elevated general awareness while contributing to overall market growth. The lesson underscores that eCooking market development requires coordinated multi-stakeholder approaches rather than competition among implementers.

3.2.5 External Factors Can Significantly Impact Implementation

Political instability during the election period posed unexpected challenges to project implementation, limiting public demonstrations, delaying the Iringa expansion, and affecting overall sales momentum. This experience highlights the critical importance of comprehensive risk analysis that extends beyond technical and market factors to include political, social, and economic risks. Future project planning should incorporate scenario planning and develop mitigation strategies for anticipated external risks. Flexibility in implementation timelines and activity sequencing can help projects adapt to changing circumstances while maintaining progress toward objectives. Interestingly, digital marketing proved more resilient during this period than physical activities, as social media campaigns could continue even when in-person events were restricted.

3.2.6 Digital Engagement Requires Dedicated Response Capacity

While the 624 messaging conversations represented valuable leads, they also revealed a capacity gap in customer service. Social media users expect prompt responses typically within hours rather than days. Initial resource constraints meant SESCOM could not always respond quickly enough, potentially resulting in lost sales opportunities. This lesson emphasizes that digital marketing investments must include corresponding investments in customer service capacity. The leads generated through social media advertising are valuable only if company has staff dedicated to converting those leads through timely, informed responses. Company should not invest heavily in digital marketing without simultaneously building capacity for rapid customer engagement.

3.3 Persistent Challenges

3.3.1 Price Sensitivity

Sales agents consistently reported customer concerns about appliance prices, with many potential buyers expressing interest but ultimately declining due to cost considerations. While the operational savings from eCooking (reduced fuel costs) make the appliances economically advantageous over time, the high upfront cost remains a significant barrier to adoption for many households. Even among the 624 digital messaging conversations, price emerged as a frequent concern. This price sensitivity underscores the need for innovative financing mechanisms, including installment payment options, rent-to-own models, or subsidies targeted at lower-income households.

3.3.2 Agent Capital Constraints

Low working capital among sales agents limited their ability to maintain inventory, requiring frequent small orders rather than bulk purchases. This increased transaction costs for both SESCOM and agents while potentially leading to stockouts and lost sales. The company adapted by allowing single-unit purchases of 8L EPCs and air fryers, but this reduced operational efficiency. Agent profit margins were further constrained by transportation costs and customer negotiations, affecting their motivation and sustainability as distribution partners. The increased demand stimulated by digital marketing actually exacerbated this challenge, as agents could not always stock sufficient inventory to meet heightened interest.

3.3.3 Digital System Gaps

The absence of digital inventory management and customer relationship management systems created inefficiencies throughout the supply chain. Data collection required days or weeks, inventory tracking necessitated constant phone calls, and SESCOM lacked real-time visibility into stock levels, sales patterns, and agent performance. While the digital marketing campaigns generated valuable analytics from Facebook and Instagram, integrating this data with sales and inventory systems remained manual and time-consuming. These gaps limited the company's ability to make timely data-driven decisions, forecast demand accurately, provide optimal support to sales agents and customers, and capitalize fully on digital marketing insights. As the business scales, these limitations will become increasingly constraining.

3.3.4 Product Knowledge Gaps

Despite training efforts, some sales agents and customers demonstrated limited understanding of how to optimally use digital EPCs and air fryers. This knowledge gap can lead to suboptimal product experiences, customer dissatisfaction, and reduced word-of-mouth promotion. The technical features that make these appliances superior require explanation and demonstration to ensure customers fully benefit from their purchases. While video content helped address this for initial awareness, ongoing education and support remain necessary to maximize customer satisfaction and long-term adoption. The digital platforms provide new opportunities for sharing educational content i.e., tutorial videos, FAQ posts, WhatsApp guides, but systematic content creation in this area is needed.

4 Next Steps

Building on project achievements and lessons learned, SESCOM has identified clear priorities for sustaining and scaling eCooking market development in Tanzania. These next steps reflect both immediate opportunities to capitalize on stimulated demand and longer-term strategic investments required for sustainable growth.

4.1 Sustain and Expand Digital Marketing Momentum

The exceptional results from the initial digital marketing campaign establish a strong foundation for continued growth. SESCOM ongoing digital marketing services will maintain promotional activities across Facebook and Instagram platforms. Priority actions among others include:

- Maintain consistent posting schedule across both platforms to sustain audience engagement and visibility
- Monitor analytics regularly to optimize campaign performance, identify high-performing content types, and adjust strategies based on data

4.2 Intensive Sales of Supported Appliances

With demand successfully stimulated through project activities and digital marketing, SESCOM will prioritize converting interested customers into buyers and meeting ongoing demand for 8L EPCs and 7L air fryers. This includes maintaining adequate inventory levels across all regional centers, ensuring product availability, supporting sales agents with continued marketing materials and responsive communication, and following up on pending institutional buyer discussions to close deals and establish installment payment arrangements.

4.3 Enhanced Awareness and Capacity Building

To address knowledge gaps and maximize customer satisfaction, SESCOM will expand training programs leveraging both digital and traditional channels:

- Develop comprehensive user guide videos and post them on Instagram and Facebook for widespread access
- Create digital tutorial series demonstrating optimal usage of digital EPCs and air fryers
- Conduct regular refresher training sessions for sales agents on product features, selling techniques, and digital tool utilization
- Organize community demonstrations in partnership with women groups and local organizations
- Strengthening the capacity of the existing technical team, including training on maintenance of the new appliance, and expanding the technician base.
- Establish a customer support WhatsApp channel for troubleshooting and usage guidance, leveraging the platform integration
- Share educational content through digital channels to reach customers where they are already engaging with SESCOM

4.4 Improved Sales Agent Terms and Support

To strengthen the distribution network and address agent constraints, SESCOM will introduce more flexible terms including consignment arrangements for established agents to reduce capital requirements, tiered commission structures that reward volume and performance, shared transportation cost models to improve agent profitability, and bulk purchasing incentives for agents with adequate capital. Digital marketing support will continue providing agents with professional content they can share with customers, reducing their individual marketing burden while maintaining brand consistency.

4.5 Digital System Implementation

SESCOM will prioritize digitization of supply chain management to capitalize on digital marketing investments and improve operational efficiency:

- Implement integrated inventory management system providing real-time stock visibility across all locations
- Deploy customer relationship management (CRM) software to track customer interactions, preferences, purchase history, and social media engagement
- Develop mobile applications for sales agents to place orders, track commissions, access marketing materials, and view inventory availability
- Create automated reporting systems that integrate digital marketing analytics with sales and inventory data for comprehensive business intelligence
- Partner with MECS programme, Biomass Energy Africa facility and other technical assistance providers to accelerate digital transformation
- Ensure systems can capture and analyze leads generated through digital marketing campaigns for conversion optimization.

4.6 Product Portfolio Expansion

Responding to customer requests for additional electrical appliances expressed through both agent feedback and digital marketing conversations, SESCOM will conduct market research to identify high-demand products complementary to eCooking appliances, evaluate potential suppliers for quality and reliability, develop business cases for introduction of new product lines and test new products with existing loyal customers before full market launch. This diversification strategy leverages trust built through eCooking products to capture broader household appliance needs. Digital marketing capabilities provide efficient channels for introducing and promoting new products to established audiences.

4.7 Strengthened Stakeholder Collaboration

Recognizing that collective action accelerates market development, SESCOM will deepen engagement with key stakeholders:

- Continue collaborations with MECS Programme, UNCDF-CookFund and SNV on financing mechanisms and subsidies
- Actively participate in TANESCO and other key stakeholders in eCooking campaigns to benefit from awareness activities and coordinate messaging
- Coordinate with other MECS implementers to share lessons, avoid duplication, and amplify collective impact

- Engage government agencies to inform policy development and access institutional buyer opportunities
- Partner with financial institutions to develop consumer financing products that address price barrier concerns

4.8 Expansion to New Geographic Markets

With core operations stabilized and digital marketing infrastructure established, SESCOM will proceed with expansion into new regions including Iringa, leveraging the recruited sales agent and planned TANESCO and other campaign linkages. Digital marketing can support geographic expansion by generating awareness in new regions before physical presence is fully established.

4.9 Funding and Partnership Development

SESCOM will actively pursue additional funding opportunities to scale operations and implement the above initiatives. This includes applications to clean cooking facilities and impact investors, pursuit of results-based financing arrangements tied to appliance distribution and adoption metrics, exploration of equipment financing or working capital facilities to strengthen cash flow, and identification of potential partners with complementary capabilities or market access.

4.10 Impact Measurement and Learning

To continuously improve operations and demonstrate impact to stakeholders, SESCOM will establish systematic monitoring of key performance indicators. This will help to inform operational adjustments, product development, marketing strategy optimization, and strategic planning while generating evidence useful for advocacy and additional funding efforts.

5 Conclusion

The MECS-funded project to support the import and distribution of eCooking appliances in Tanzania has successfully demonstrated the viability of commercial eCooking supply chains while generating valuable insights into effective market development strategies. Through procurement and distribution of 8L Electric Pressure Cookers and 7L air fryers across multiple regions, SESCOM established robust distribution infrastructure, strengthened relationships with sales agents and community partners, and built awareness of eCooking benefits among diverse customer segments.

The project achievements extend beyond quantitative distribution targets to encompass important qualitative outcomes. The rapid market acceptance of air fryers challenges assumptions about consumer conservatism and demonstrates openness to innovation when products offer clear benefits. The strong upgrade demand from existing 6L EPC customers to 8L models illustrates how product customization and appropriate sizing can convert initial adopters into loyal customers who make additional investments in clean cooking. The effectiveness of trust-based marketing through existing customer networks reveals that satisfied customers become powerful advocates, generating referrals more effectively than traditional advertising.

Critical lessons emerged regarding the importance of collaborative approaches over isolated efforts. The mutually reinforcing activities of TANESCO, UNCDF, SNV, other MECS project implementers, and national clean cooking initiatives created market conditions where all actors benefited from elevated awareness and supportive policies. This ecosystem approach proves more effective than competitive dynamics and suggests that future market development efforts should prioritize coordination and partnership over organizational systems.

The project also identified ongoing challenges. Price sensitivity remains a major barrier despite long-term cost savings, highlighting the need for innovative financing mechanisms and targeted subsidies for lower-income households. Sales agent capital constraints and margin pressures pose risks to the sustainability of the distribution network unless addressed through more flexible support. As operations scale, digital system gaps increasingly limit efficiency, making technology investment a priority. Additionally, the high volume of digital marketing inquiries revealed the need for dedicated customer service capacity to effectively convert online engagement into sales.

Looking forward, SESCOM is well-positioned to capitalize on stimulated demand and expanded infrastructure to achieve greater scale and impact. The company next steps balance immediate opportunities to convert interested customers with strategic investments in digitization, capacity building, sustained digital marketing, and product diversification required for sustainable growth.

The experience demonstrates that commercial eCooking supply chains can be viable and sustainable when supported by enabling policies, consumer awareness, adequate working capital, and modern marketing approaches. The combination of private sector drive, development partner support, professional digital marketing, and collaborative market development creates conditions for rapid scaling of clean cooking access.