Enhancing Subnational Planning for Accelerating the E-Cooking Transition

Appendix 6. Uganda Case Study

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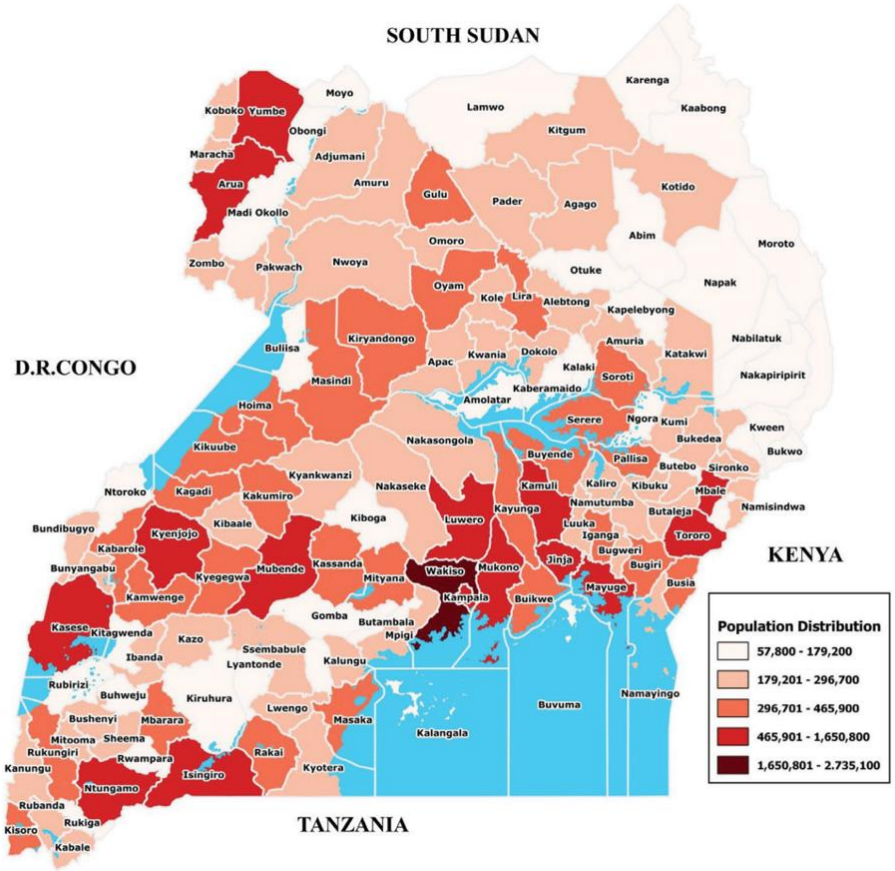
Uganda Case Study

1. Country Context

1.1 Administrative, Geographic and Socio-Economic Context

Uganda is a low-income country in East Africa covering roughly 241,000 km^2, including substantial inland water bodies such as its share of Lake Victoria in the south and lakes Kyoga, Albert, Edward, and George. It has a GDP of about $53.6 billion and a GDP per capita of roughly $1,070 (World Bank, 2024). Its population was around 45.9 million people according to the census conducted by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) in 2024, and it remains one of the world's youngest populations with about half of the population under the age of 18 (UBOS, 2024). The average household size is 4.2 nationally and 3.8 and 4.5 in urban and rural areas, respectively.

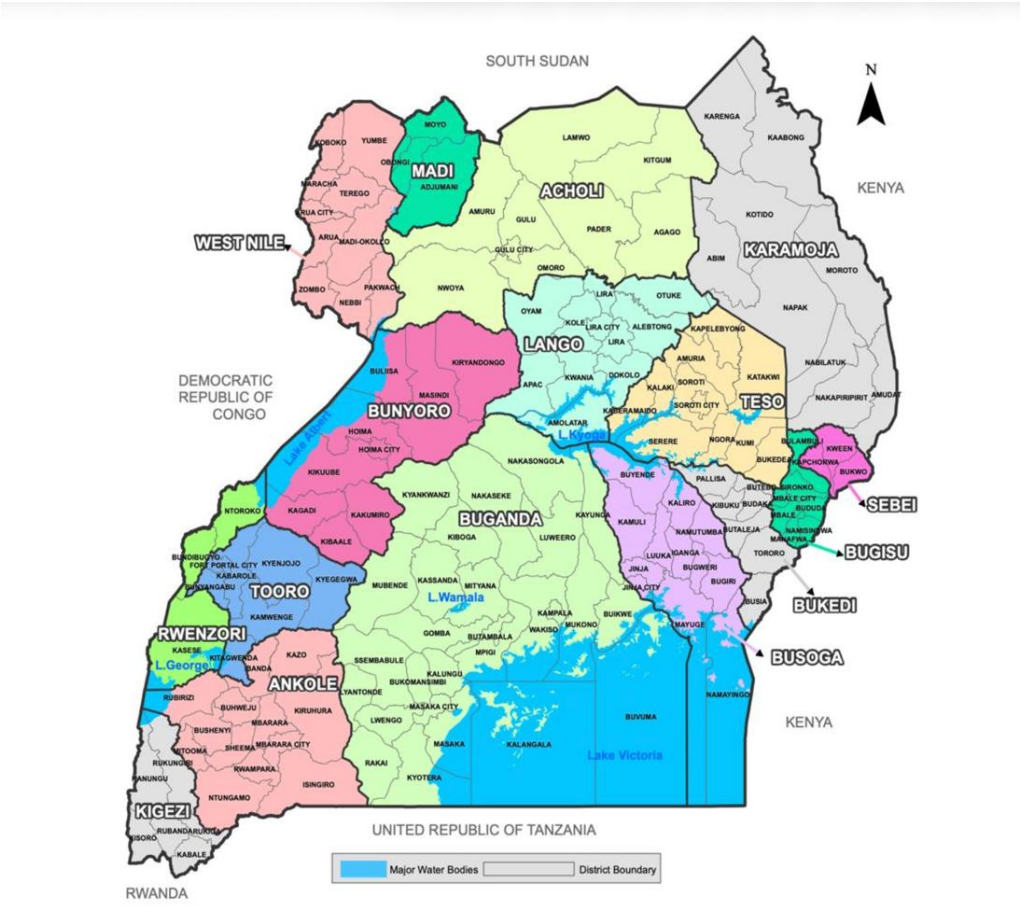
Figure 1: Population by district (UBOS, 2020)



Uganda is divided into 146 districts of which 11 are classified as urban (Kampala, Arua, Mbarara, Gulu, Jinja, Fort Portal, Mbale, Masaka, Lira, Soroti and Hoima) and the remainder as rural. Rural districts are divided into counties, sub-counties, parishes, and villages while

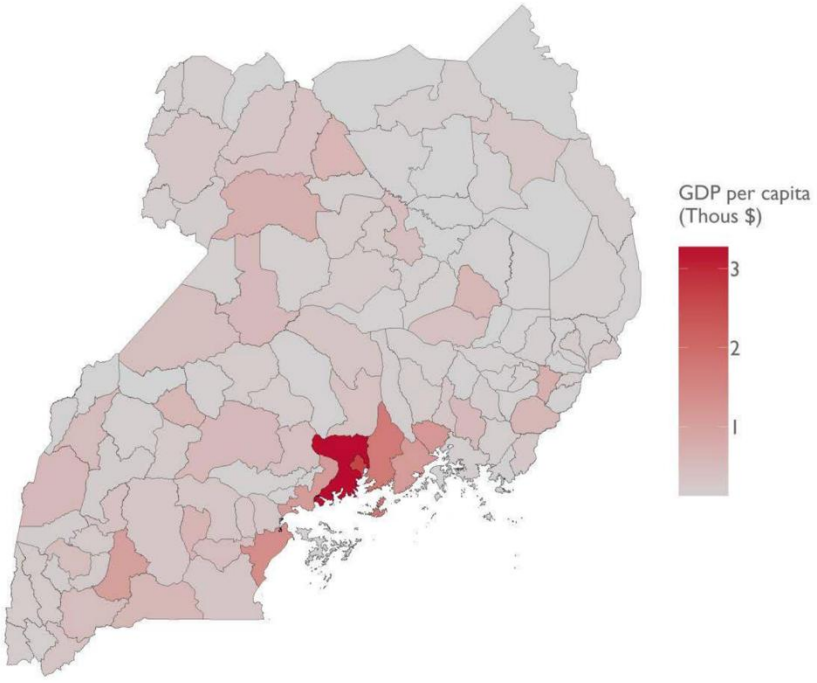
urban ones are divided into municipalities, divisions, wards, and cells (Commonwealth Local Government Forum, 2017). Local councils represent each of these levels with the district level referred to as LC5 while LC4, LC3, LC2, and LC1 represent the lower levels.

Figure 2: District map (UBOS, 2024)



There seem to be no publicly available official statistics on the distribution of GDP by district. However, a study commissioned by USAID used nighttime lights and agricultural production as a proxy to estimate economic output. The map below indicates that the highest GDP per capita is found around the capital city in the districts of Wakiso ($3,250), Kampala ($2,655), and Mukono ($1,738) while lowest GDP per capita is found in the sparely populated northeastern parts of the country. Higher GDP per capita also tends to be found around the 11 urban districts mentioned above.

Figure 3: Estimated GDP per capita by district (USAID, 2017)



1.2 Energy Context

Background

According to the Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERA), the installed power generation capacity in Uganda as of June 2025 was 2,098 MW of which 82% was hydro, 9% bagasse, 4.8% fossil thermal, and 4.2% solar (ERA, 2025). Peak domestic demand is 1,023 MW in addition to about 180 MW of exports (ERA, 2025), indicating a significant generation surplus that could accommodate electric cooking (e-cooking) uptake. About two thirds of electricity generated is consumed by industries of various sizes while 23% goes to residential and 11% to commercial (ERA, 2025).

Uganda's major oil discovery in the Lake Albert Basin in 2006 unlocked an estimated $6 billion investment, with commercial production of 230,000 barrels per day (bpd) targeted for July 2026. To serve its market, the country's strategy includes the 60,000 bpd Hoima refinery (expected by 2030) and central processing facilities in the oil fields, both designed to produce high volumes of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). This planned domestic supply of LPG could be important in the strategy for shifting away from biomass, as Uganda aims for universal clean cooking access by 2030. The IEA and MEMD in the 2023 Uganda Energy Transition Plan (ETP), which achieve universal access by 2030, projected that two thirds of the people gaining access would do so by using LPG (IEA and MEMD, 2023).

Access to electricity and clean cooking

Published electricity access rates vary somewhat by source. The Energy Policy for Uganda 2023 indicates that 57% had access in 2022 with 19% from the grid and 38% from off-grid (MEMD, 2023). World Bank official SDG 7 tracking statistics, which include both grid and off-grid, shows electricity access rates at 51.5% overall, 76.4% urban, and 42.4% rural in 2023 (World Bank, 2023). The 2024 census finds that 53.4% of households have access to electricity with 25.3% from the grid and 28.1% from solar (UBOS, 2024). The table below further breaks these figures down into urban and rural access rates.

Table 1: Electricity access (UBOS, 2024)

Source	National	Urban	Rural
Grid	25.3%	49%	9.1%
Solar	28.1%	20.6%	33.3%

Regarding clean cooking, the 2024 census results show that 3.8% of households use clean fuels as their main source for cooking, with a rate of 6.5% in urban areas and 1.9% in rural areas, indicating a significant gap between grid electricity access and e-cooking. Firewood dominates in rural areas, charcoal use is more prevalent in urban areas, and the use of modern cooking solutions is very low.

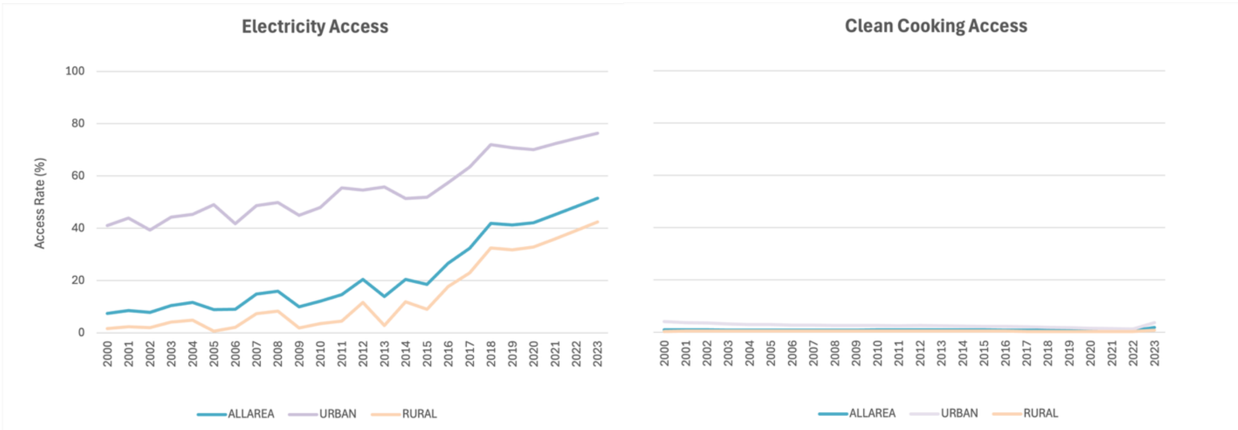
Table 2 Clean cooking primary fuel use (UBOS, 2024)

Fuel	National	Urban	Rural
Wood	64.5%	41.2%	80%
Charcoal	28.2%	48.6%	14.7%
Electricity and solar[1]	1.7%	2.4%	1.3%
LPG	1.1%	2.4%	0.3%
Biogas	1.1%	2.1%	0.4%
Kerosene/Paraffin	0.8%	0.9%	0.8%
Other	2.6%	2.5%	2.6%

Electricity access rates have improved over time from less than 10% in 2000 to over 50% currently (Tracking SDG 7, 2025). However, there has been little progress in the adoption of clean cooking, which has remained as low, single digits over the same period.

[1] In the census, the electricity statistic also includes solar thermal cookers, though it is unclear why. Electric stoves are about half of the 1.7% shown above.

Figure 4: Electricity and clean cooking access over time (Tracking SDG 7, 2025)

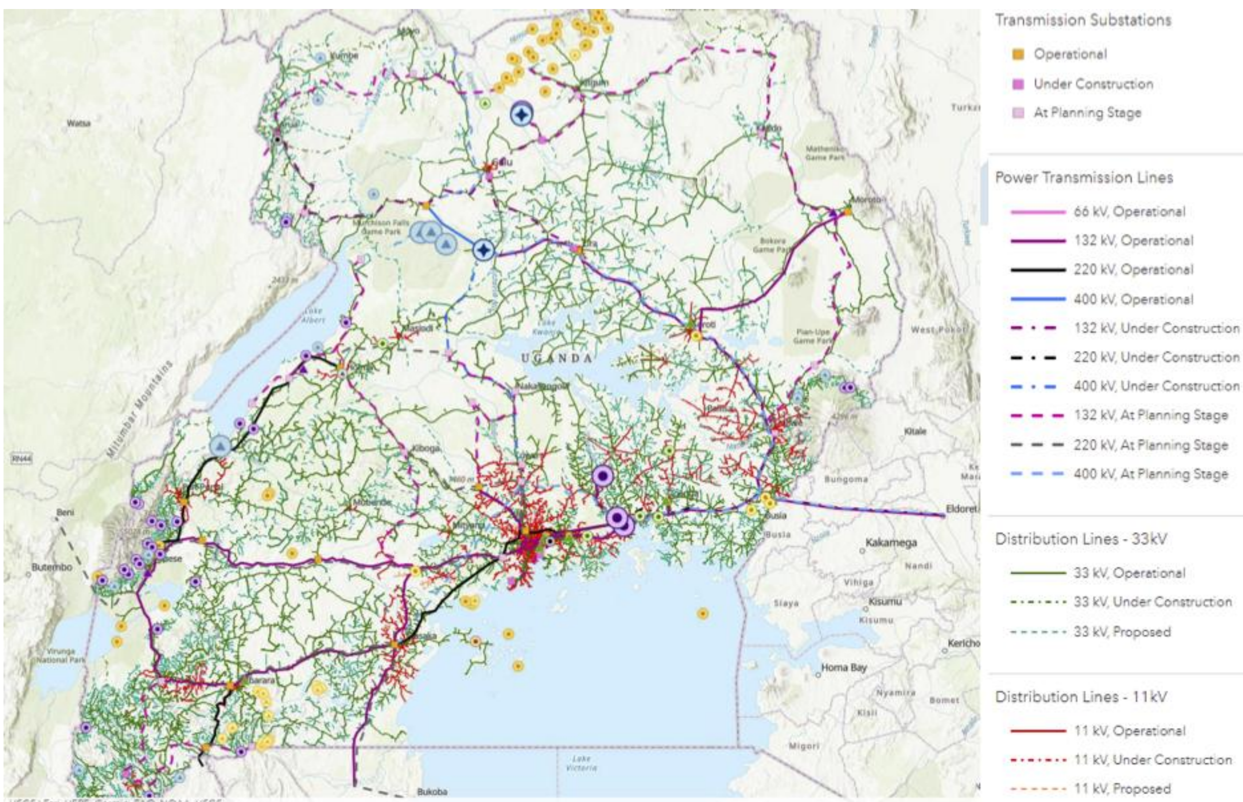


Electric cooking opportunities and challenges

Electricity Networks, Reliability & Coverage

Uganda's national grid mainly carries hydropower from the Nile to load centres and cross-border interconnectors with Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, DRC and South Sudan.

Figure 5: Current and planned transmission network (MEMD, 2022)



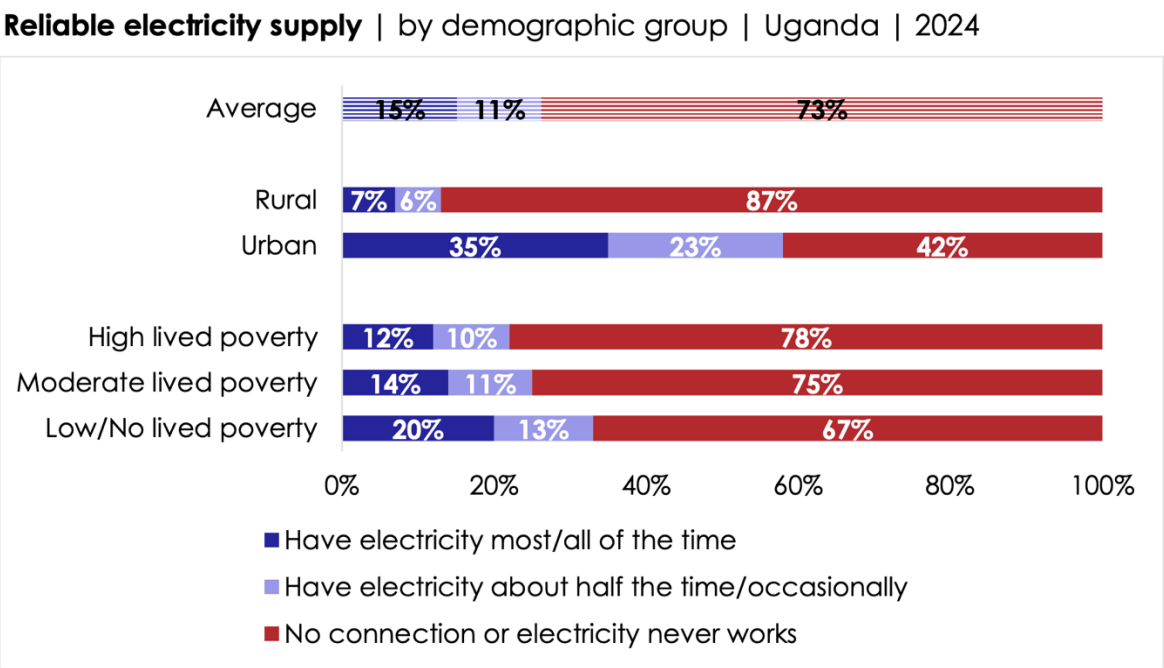
The grid is densest in the south and centre around major cities along the corridor around Lake Victoria and in the southwest with some moderately dense areas towards the west and

the north. Maps of the grid network from 2022 show a relatively tight mesh in the densest regions, while the northeast, some central-northern districts, and the islands on Lake Victoria remain much more sparsely served.

A study of eight years of data from the distribution utility Umeme reveals that the median outage duration has decreased in all service areas, though the frequency of outages has remained largely unchanged in all regions aside from a small area west of Kampala (Mugyenyi et al., 2024). The most common issue is failure of overhead equipment, which causes outages averaging 3-4 hours. Theft, while much less common than other issues, causes the longest outages at over 13 hours on average.

A survey of a nationally representative sample of 2,400 Ugandans in 2024 shows that 55% of those connected to the grid report having electricity most or all of the time, a decrease of 15 percentage points from 2022, despite the reduction in outage duration over the past eight years (Afrobarometer, 2024). This means that only 15% of Ugandans enjoyed grid electricity most or all of the time, mostly in urban areas (35%) with rural areas having significantly lower reliable access (7%) as seen in Figure 6 below. This could be a significant barrier to the adoption of e-cooking in many areas of the country.

Figure 6: Electricity reliability (Afrobarometer, 2024)



Energy Prices and Affordability

Affordability concerns are of fundamental importance in Uganda for the transition to clean cooking and e-cooking. In the country, almost all (90%) of the population cooking with firewood – or around 58% of the total population – do not pay for it (IEA and MEMD, 2023).

The current electricity tariff structure for domestic consumers, which includes 18% VAT, is as follows in the table below (UEDCL, 2025). Note that a monthly service fee of 3,965 UGX ($1.12) applies, and the lifeline tariff rate below 15 kWh is only accessible if the average consumption over the past 6 months is less than 100 kWh per month.

Table 3: Electricity tariffs (UEDCL, 2025)

Tariff Block	Price (UGX)	Price (¢)
Below 15 kWh	295	8.3
16-80 kWh	892	25
81-150 kWh	486	14
Above 150 kWh	892	25

Uganda is one of the few countries to implement a tariff meant to incentivize e-cooking, with a significantly lower tariff applied to units consumed between 80 kWh and 150 kWh in the range where a good proportion of electric cooking was thought to place. The targeting is imprecise, however, as some e-cooking can take place in the more expensive bands above and below. In particular, some low-income households might require significantly less than 80 kWh for their non-cooking needs. A recent study found that half of those using EPCs did not reach the 80 kWh threshold during the month (A2EI/MECS, 2025). These are more likely to be the less wealthy customers that are in most need of the reduced tariff. In addition, some wealthier households are not cooking with electricity and yet are still able to take advantage of the discount. In general, since non-cooking use of electricity will occur at all consumption levels, including those households who do not cook with electricity at all, precise targeting will be difficult. Also notable in the study mentioned above is that 73% of those surveyed had no awareness of the e-cooking tariff despite it having been introduced more than two years prior.

More targeted tariff schemes could in theory be designed to support e-cooking by selecting households based on income, appliance ownership, or verified electricity use trough IoT. Applying preferential prices for electricity consumed during specific times of day during typical cooking hours or reducing the kWh threshold of the e-cooking tariff could also help but is less targeted. However, no country has yet implemented an electricity tariff that explicitly targets e-cooking users or usage in these more precise ways and often the required data and technologies are not readily available for this purpose. That said, the draft National Integrated Clean Cooking Strategy (NICCS) proposes some of these measures (see *Government Policies* in Chapter 2.2) and emerging PAYGo and carbon credit programmes for electric pressure cookers (EPCs) demonstrate that usage-based subsidy concepts are technically feasible, as many pilots, including in Uganda, track appliance operation and kWh

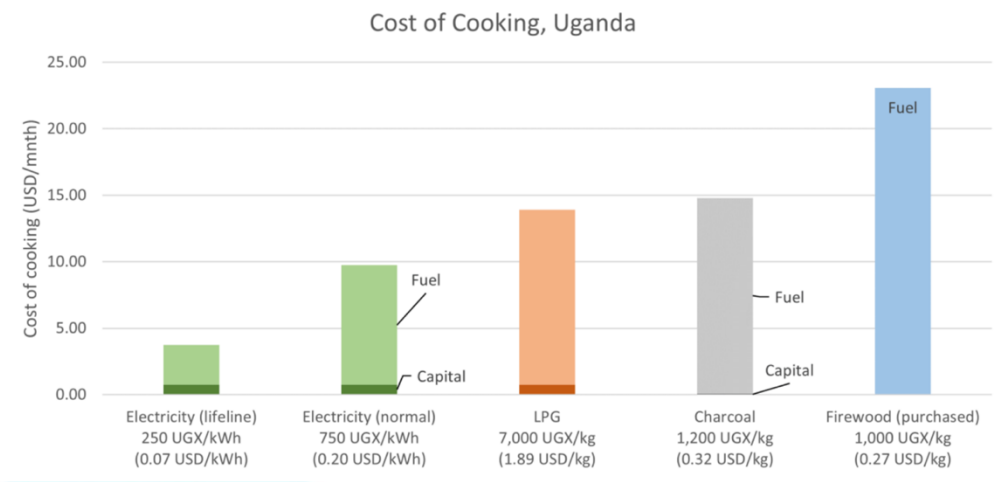
consumption in real time to verify emissions reductions and award carbon credits (UpEnergy and PowerUp, 2023).

For charcoal, due to a ban on production in northern Uganda in 2023, prices have increased significantly, including doubling in Kampala (Daily Monitor, 2023; The Independent, 2024). The MECS eCookbook updated in 2024 uses a price of 1500 UGX/kg and notes that the price in Kampala is as high as 3000 UGX/kg (MECS, 2024). Just the year prior, MECS listed a price of 1200 UGX/kg to assess the cost of cooking (MECS, 2023).

LPG prices have also been increasing, with the prices listed by MECS in the two references above from 2023 and 2024 as 7000 UGX/kg and 9500 UGX/kg, respectively. Despite the removal of VAT on LPG in 2020, LPG prices are higher than other countries in the region, possibly due to higher transport costs from the coast or lack of economies of scale. They are almost double the price in Tanzania, though only about 15% higher than in Kenya (MECS, 2022). However, with national oil production expected to start in 2026 (The Observer, 2025), cheaper local supply of LPG should follow, making the fuel more competitive with other sources such as e-cooking.

Another barrier to cooking with electricity is the upfront cost of appliances. While traditional electric hotplates are relatively affordable, more efficient appliances such as electric pressure cookers and induction stoves can be cost prohibitive for many households. Inability to afford these appliances can prevent households from taking advantage of ongoing fuel cost savings over alternative fuels such as charcoal and LPG (though LPG cylinders and stoves also present an upfront cost barrier). While the appliance cost is not a barrier for traditional charcoal stoves (though it hinders deployment of improved cookstoves), the upfront cost of an LPG cylinder and stove is significant and comparable to efficient electric appliances.

Figure 7: Estimated cost of cooking (MECS, 2023)



Note: Cost of cooking over a month, using international averages for cooking energy demand from ESMAP (2020) and local electricity/fuel prices from the Uganda eCooking Market Assessment, and including cost of appliance (electrical appliance: EPC) levelized over stove lifetime.

Ultimately, affordability and the cost of cooking with each of these technologies and fuels depends on many factors, including the type of meal (MECS, 2020) and how appliances are used (MECS, 2024). Initial controlled cooking tests by MECS indicated that EPCs were cheapest followed by charcoal, hotplate, and LPG in that order (MECS, 2020), though a subsequent alternative analysis shown in the figure below resulted in a lower LPG cost than charcoal (MECS, 2023).

Regardless, there are clear opportunities for households with access to the grid to reduce their expenditure on cooking by increasing their use of electricity. The IEA and the MEMD in their 2023 Uganda Energy Transition Plan performed an affordability analysis that shows that less than 30% of households can afford cooking with LPG or with an induction stoves, while only 10% of households could afford cooking with a hotplate resistance stoves (IEA and MEMD, 2023).

Other barriers and opportunities

Perceptions and preferences are also important factors that influence adoption of e-cooking by households. It is generally perceived that electricity is expensive when in some situations, it can be cheaper than other options for cooking. There is also a perception that electric appliances are not suitable for cooking Ugandan dishes and that the food will not be as flavourful (MECS, 2020; MECS, 2024). And in general, there will be some resistance for people to change long-standing routines and habits, some of which have persisted for many generations. Awareness raising can help to inform consumers about the benefits of electric appliances while dispelling any myths about their disadvantages. In general, however, it has been noted that behaviour change and communications campaigns cannot by themselves overcome barriers such as affordability, availability of appliances, and electricity access and reliability, which need to be addressed in parallel with complementary interventions (NREP, 2025).

2. Policy and Planning Environment

2.1 Institutional Ecosystem

National Level

The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development (MEMD) leads policy, strategic planning, and supervision of the energy sector at the national level, including electricity and clean cooking. On the electricity side, the Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERA) is the independent regulator in charge of licensing of generation, transmission, distribution, and off-grid operators, monitoring quality of service, and setting tariffs. Together, MEMD and ERA oversee the state-owned generation, transmission, and distribution utilities, the Uganda Electricity Generation Company Limited (UEGCL), the Uganda Electricity Transmission Company Limited (UETCL), and the Uganda Electricity Distribution Company Limited (UEDCL). Of note is that Umeme, which held a 20-year concession for operation and maintenance of most of the electricity distribution network in the country, turned over full operational responsibility of its assets to UEDCL when the concession ended in March of 2025 (ERA, 2025). The transition has involved significant public financing, including parliamentary approval of $118 million for the buyout, and Umeme has pursued international arbitration over additional $292 million in compensation, which could raise concerns about legal costs and contingent liabilities for the government that could affect planning and investment capacity (Parliament of Uganda, 2025; African Business, 2025). Although the dispute could suggest potential delays in the pace of new grid connections and electrification efforts, early reports indicate that UEDCL has registered significant new connections in the months since the takeover (an average of more than 100,000 connections per month), suggesting continued momentum in expanding access to electricity (State House, 2025).

MEMD leads the clean cooking sector, though other agencies and offices also play supporting roles. The Office of the President hosts the interministerial committee on clean cooking, the Office of the Prime Minister develops and implements clean cooking programs in refugee settlements and host communities, the Ministry of Water and Environment oversees carbon finance activities and regulation of charcoal, the Ministry of Health tracks health impacts of cooking with dirty fuels, and the Uganda National Bureau of Standards is responsible for establishing and enforcing standards for cooking equipment and appliances. Finally, the Uganda Energy Credit Capitalisation Company (UECCC) develops and administers financing initiatives that support both the clean cooking and electricity sectors.

Subnational Level

The Ministry of Local Government is the link to subnational governance and is responsible for coordination with local governments. As mentioned previously, there are five subnational

administrative levels referred to as LC5 (146 districts/cities), LC4 (312 counties/municipalities), LC3 (2191 sub-counties/divisions), LC2 (10,716 parishes/wards), and LC1 (71,208 villages/cells) for rural/urban areas, respectively (Commonwealth Local Government Forum, 2017; Daily Monitor, 2025).

At the LC5 level, the political arm of the government is led by an elected chairperson/mayor overseeing the district/city council and an executive committee, which operate much like the legislature and the cabinet, respectively. The civil service, which is the technical arm, is led by the chief administrative officer/city clerk overseeing sector departments such as natural resources, community development, health, education, public works, and planning. These departments are led by secretaries in the executive committee who are the functional equivalent of ministers in the national government. They collectively influence the energy sector through activities such as charcoal licensing, environmental enforcement, and community awareness campaigns. As needed, they also handle issues in the clean cooking sector such as institutional cooking and integration of clean cooking into local development plans. Lower levels of government from LC4 downwards carry out more localized implementation and enforcement, provide data as needed to higher levels of government, and can be delegated specific responsibilities by districts/cities.

2.2 National Energy Planning Related to E-Cooking

Government Policies

The National Electrification Strategy (NES) of 2021 establishes the pathway for Uganda to achieve universal access to electricity by 2030. It uses a least-cost geospatial planning to connect over 10 million new customers through a mix of grid extension and densification and off-grid solutions. In this plan, grid extension and densification focus on areas relatively close to the existing network where the per customer connection cost is $1600 or less. Both mini-grids and the grid are options when the cost per connection is between $1600 and $2000 while mini-grids are planned if the cost exceeds this range and the village has at least 500 inhabitants. Finally, standalone solar is prioritised for more remote, sparsely populated communities where grid extension or mini-grids would be cost prohibitive.

Aside from the e-cooking tariff, several national policies are supportive of e-cooking in general but without specific targets. These include the National Development Plan IV of 2025, the Nationally Determined Contribution of 2022, and the Energy Policy for Uganda of 2023. Moving forward, the upcoming NICCS and the National eCooking Strategy (NeCS) will guide interventions in the sector. These documents are not yet published, but drafts of the NICCS and the NeCS indicate a universal clean cooking access target by 2040 – less ambitious but more realistic than the SDG7-aligned, 2023 Uganda ETP (universal access by 2030) . The drafts show an 18% target for cooking with electricity as a primary fuel by 2040

while LPG leads as the top clean cooking fuel, reaching 30% penetration in the same year (see Table 4), in line with domestic production plans. (Note, it is unclear why the percentages in the draft NICCS add up to more than 100%.) Interim targets by 2030 include 18% of the population cooking with electricity at least part of the time (different from the primary cooking definition).

Table 4: NICCS targets (draft not yet published)

Primary Cooking Fuel	NICCS Target
LPG	30%
Electricity	18%
Ethanol	8%
Biogas	0.6%
Clean or Transitional Biomass Stoves	46%

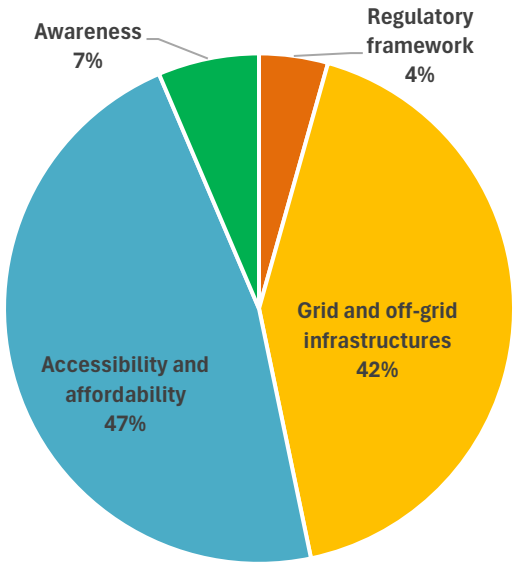
For the e-cooking sector, the NICCS and the NeCS recommends a range of interventions.

- Ensure a sufficient supply of a range of electric cooking appliances, including through reduction of trade barriers and incentives for local manufacturing.
- Develop a system for bulk procurement of e-cooking appliances and spare parts.
- Engage with financial institutions to develop e-cooking specific consumer credit facilities and to provide credit to importers and distributors.
- Consider a VAT waiver on e-cooking appliances.
- Establish an e-cooking friendly carbon finance environment (both Article 6 and voluntary market models) to crowd in private and international capital.
- Promote e-cooking to newly connected households (working with UEDCL) using measures such as on-bill financing.
- Encourage and support innovative consumer financing mechanism as rent-to-own or pay-as-you-cook and results-based financing.
- Design a new e-cooking tariff to make low-cost units more easily accessible for low-income households and better tailored to e-cooking.
- Pilot appliances that provide discounts for electricity consumed through IoT monitoring.
- Ensure that power sector expansion plans can accommodate additional demand from e-cooking as well as from industry and other sources.
- Revise guidelines for mini-grid design and operation to include e-cooking loads.
- Assess and address the need for specific interventions to support demand growth and improve reliability, including transformer replacements, feeder reinforcement, reliability monitoring.

- Develop and enforce quality standards for appliances and promote the brands that are compliant.
- Set up five regional appliance testing and quality assurance centres under UNBS to ensure compliant products enter the market.
- Develop regional distribution hubs with satellite retail networks, backed by service-level agreements for warranties, spare parts, and repair services.
- Build domestic capacity trough training and certification of approximately 5,250 technicians and retailers (at least 40% women and youth).
- Raise awareness of the benefits of e-cooking through a comprehensive strategy that leverages a range of means and tools (e.g. social media and influencers, radio and TV campaigns, local leaders, workshops).
- Support tailored e-cooking planning for specific groups such as refugee and host communities, small and kibanda (roadside) businesses (e.g., eateries), and schools and health centres, each with adapted appliance options, tariff considerations, and behavioural nudges.
- Collaborate with local governments and non-governmental organisations to promote e-cooking.

To achieve the 2030 e-cooking target (i.e. 18% cooking at least partially with electricity), the NeCS estimates a cost of UGX 987 billion (~$274 million) of which almost half is allocated to accessibility and affordability measures, 42% to new and upgraded grid and off-grid infrastructure (of which close to 100% is for grid infrastructure), 7% to awareness initiatives and 4% to upgrading regulatory frameworks and policies.

Figure 8: NeCS total cost estimates (2025-2030) by objective (Source: NeCS)



Government and Donor Initiatives

There are a significant number of initiatives involving e-cooking, another clear sign that it is a priority for the government. The $638 million World Bank Electricity Access Scale-Up Project (EASP), which runs from 2022-2027, is one of the main programs in place to help achieve the targets set out in the NES. It aims to provide electricity access to 1.22 million households, institutions, and businesses through both grid and off-grid connections. EASP is in line with the Electricity Connections Policy of 2018, which fully subsidises no-pole and one-pole connections that are near the existing network and addresses affordability of internal wiring through credit and low-cost technologies like ready boards. It also plans to support the private sector to deploy 300,000 clean cooking solutions, including through the UECCC price subsidy program that offers results-based financing for a range of clean cooking solutions, including a 50% subsidy for EPCs.

Another key intervention is the two-year, £5 million, UK-funded clean cooking program announced in 2024. It has already established a clean cooking unit in the ministry through GGGI; is working with MECS to develop a supply chain of 10,000 electric appliances, train 600 technicians on repair and maintenance, develop standards and labelling, and pilot e-cooking in 100 schools; is supporting ICLEI under the Enabling African Cities for Transformative Energy Access – Uganda Scaleup (ENACTUS) to deploy 6000 appliances in informal settlements within Kampala; and is collaborating with the National Renewable Energy Platform to raise awareness through the Behavioural Change Communication for eCooking program for which a baseline report was conducted in 2024. The 2025-2028 Uganda Biogas and Electric Cooking Project led by AfDB has a $5.12 million e-cooking component to deploy 77,000 energy-efficient appliances by reducing upfront costs and to raise awareness through targeted campaigns. It also hosts the MECS workstream outlined above, which has been allocated $3.32 million by the UK. And finally, the 2020-2025 Higher Tier Cooking Component of the Strengthening the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem for Clean Cooking program funded by GIZ and RVO has supported small- and medium-sized businesses through technical assistance, access to finance support, and enabling environment improvements.

2.3 Decentralization and Subnational Energy Planning Related to E-Cooking

Uganda's decentralisation reforms, initiated in the early 1990s and codified in the 1997 Local Government Act, were widely regarded as among the most ambitious in Sub-Saharan Africa, transferring substantial political, administrative, and fiscal authority to local governments. However, beginning in the early 2000s, the national government progressively recentralised key functions, notably the appointment and control of senior local civil servants (including chief administrative officers), payroll management, local revenue authority following the

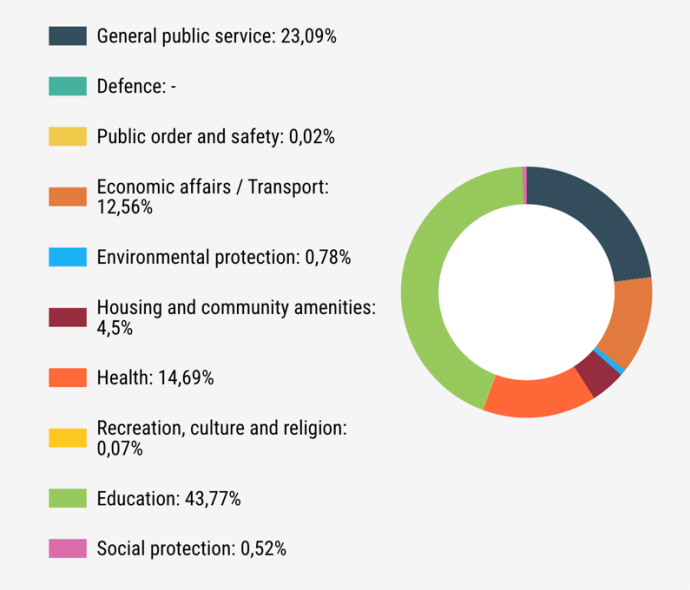
abolition of the graduated personal tax, procurement functions, and tighter conditionality over intergovernmental fiscal transfers. This shift was driven by a combination of factors: efforts to curb corruption and patronage at the local level; concerns over weak financial management and human resource capacity in districts; the need for stronger coordination in implementing national programmes; and donor pressure for accountability of funding. However, political considerations also played an important role, including the desire to limit the autonomy of opposition-controlled local governments—most notably in Kampala—and to reassert central control as multiparty competition increased. Capacity constraints were also exacerbated by local hiring practices that prioritised district affiliation over technical qualifications, weakening administrative performance and reinforcing central perceptions that devolved authority was being poorly exercised (Biryomumeisho et al., 2024; Nabaho, 2013; ACODE, 2019).

Recentralisation has resulted in improvements but also some negative consequences and trade-offs in the areas targeted by central government mentioned above. Centralising the appointment of chief administrative officers and procurement functions was intended to shield administrators from local political interference and reduce patronage and corruption, as there were instances where officers had been dismissed for not complying with the demands of local leaders. However, these gains came at the cost of weakened downward accountability, as senior local officials became more answerable to central authorities than to elected district councils, blurring responsibility for service delivery outcomes and reducing the responsiveness of local governments to citizen priorities. Exposure to inappropriate central political pressures rather than local ones is also a potential concern. Regarding revenue, the elimination of key local sources, notably the graduated personal tax as mentioned above, significantly reduced fiscal autonomy and increased dependence on conditional central transfers, constraining local discretion in planning and undermining the link between local taxation and service provision. Overall, while recentralisation addressed coordination and control failures associated with rapid decentralisation, it established an institutional arrangement in which local governments retain implementation responsibilities without commensurate authority, capacity, or resources, a tension that continues to limit effective local planning and service delivery (Nabaho, 2013; ACODE, 2019; World Bank, 2013).

Priority sectors for local government expenditure are education, health, economic affairs, and transportation, as seen in Figure 9. However, as mentioned above, lack of revenue is a major constraint to effective service delivery by district officials and administrators. Central transfers to local governments have been declining as a share of the overall national budget and account for over 96% of local government budgets (OECD/UCLG, 2022; World Bank, 2024). Only about 10% of this amount is unconditional and discretionary, limiting local

government autonomy to guide and control its own development and potentially steering local officials to cater to the priorities of the national government more than local communities.

Figure 9: Share of expenditures by local government (OECD/UCLG, 2022)



In terms of planning, the draft NICCS has almost no mention of subnational governments within the strategy, while the draft NeCS briefly proposes that local governments support the development of the e-cooking sector value chain at the local level and that they participate in budget conferences. The Energy Policy of 2023 does acknowledge their important role in ensuring the full participation of communities in adapting energy plans to local conditions. It emphasizes the need for a focal person or desk at the local government level that is responsible for supervising the implementation of energy projects and ensuring optimal service delivery. Local governments also have the authority to develop by-laws that guide the energy sector toward the achievement of government targets.

Local governments in Uganda do not produce dedicated energy sector plans. As such, the entry point for clean cooking planning at the subnational level is likely through the National Development Plan (NDP) five-year cycle, which includes energy and cooking goals. The key stakeholders are the district/city/municipality and the national Ministries, Departments, and Agencies, referred to as MDAs. As part of the NDP cycle, the Local Governments Act mandates that district/city/municipal councils prepare development plans, while the National Planning Authority Act mandates that MDAs produce strategic plans. The NDP is finalized prior to these plans to ensure their alignment with national goals. NDP IV was launched in June 2025 as part of the latest cycle.

The National Planning Authority (NPA) oversees the entire NDP process, including at the subnational level, and provides guidance for all stakeholders in the Planning Call Circular (PCC) issued about a year prior to finalization of all plans. The PCC communicates the national strategic direction, programme priorities, and planning requirements for the upcoming NDP.

For the mandated local development plans (135 districts, 11 cities, and 31 municipalities), the Planning Task Force Team, which consists of civil servants, steers the development of the plan, which is ultimately subject to approval by the district/city/municipal council and the NPA. The process broadly includes stakeholder consultations, data collection, situational analysis, identification of local priorities, setting of objectives and targets, designing of interventions, preparation of draft plans with frameworks for partnerships and monitoring and evaluation, and budgeting along with a resource mobilization strategy. Plans must align with NDP priority areas, integrate national policy guidance and programme priorities set by the MDAs, and incorporate input from the lower local government development plans down to the LC1 level in addition to broad consultation with private sector, civil society, and development partners.

The MDA strategic plans cover their respective areas of responsibilities on a national basis. The process for preparing the plans mostly mirrors the process for local government development plans with a few differences. MDAs must consult local governments as part of plan preparation and obtain input on their priorities in addition to providing them with policy guidance, resource parameters, and technical support. They must also consult other relevant MDAs, including those involved with planning, budgeting, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

There are 20 NDP Programmes for which Programme Implementation Action Plans (PIAPs) must be produced as part of the planning process. For clean cooking, the relevant programme is Sustainable Energy led by MEMD. However, the Natural Resources, Environment, Climate Change, Land and Water Management Programme led by the Ministry of Water and Environment could also contain relevant actions. The PCC explicitly states that PIAPs must be developed with local government, which provides a potential opportunity for subnational influence on sector planning and bottom-up integration of clean cooking components. Programme Working Groups include members of local government who can provide data, identify local priorities, highlight specific territorial needs, and shape interventions.

The PCC places particular emphasis on the parish as the lowest basic planning and administrative unit. It notes that under NDP III, the share of the annual discretionary budget for parish-based interventions has risen to 30%. In 2022, the government also launched the

Parish Development Model (PDM) to address poverty and transition the 39% of households living in a subsistence economy to a money economy. It has seven pillars, as shown in the figure below with electricity falling under the second pillar on infrastructure and economic services. Clean cooking is not an explicit focus of PDM, but it should be noted that a switch to cleaner cooking solutions is often accompanied with time and cost savings that could result in additional income generation for both households and businesses. The PCC specifies that all pillars should be integrated into the NDP Programmes.

Figure 10: Pillars of the Parish Development Model (Ministry of ICT and National Guidance)



PDM is meant to foster citizen-driven empowerment and strengthen the role of parishes in planning, budgeting, implementation, and service delivery. Parish development committees are responsible for involving communities in participatory processes for determining priorities, planning and budgeting with beneficiaries determined at the local level. Progress is being made in some areas, particularly in pillar three, as parish revolving funds run by savings and credit cooperative organizations have been established at all 10,585 parishes and capitalized with over $300 million. However, while PDM is intended to be bottom-up, local communities have sometimes expressed frustrations with central decisions that have not adequately considered the local context. For example, the national government announced a prioritization of 18 specific commodities without considering that, in some areas, none of these would be suitable and other crops are more ideal (World Bank, 2024). PDM has potential to bring decision making closer to the citizen and community levels given the buy-in at high levels of government. Significant funding has been provided for the parish revolving funds under pillar three, but progress has been slow for most of the other pillars, and more capacity building is needed at the parish level for planners and implementers.

An examination of selection of about 20 publicly available district development plans (DDPs), mostly from the NDP III cycle, show that none strongly emphasize cooking (Amuru, Bushenyi, Hoima, Jinja, Kamuli, Kanungu, Kapelebyong, Kiryandongo (DDP III), Kiryandongo (DDP IV), Kitgum, Maracha, Masindi, Mbale, Mbarara, Moroto, Nwoya, Pakwach, Rukungiri, Soroti, Yumbe). A few do not mention cooking at all, but most appear to have some discussion of the problem through boilerplate language, likely provided by the NPA. Only a few have targets to increase the adoption of cleaner solutions or reduce the use of biomass, and even fewer have budgets allocated for cooking. As grid expansion and densification is more centrally planned, most plans include targets for access to electricity.

However, there has been some recent focus on opportunities to mainstream energy into the work of local government. At the Uganda Renewable Energy Conference 2024, there was a district government subregional forum that included a panel on integrating energy into DDPs and another on clean cooking. The sessions involved over 30 local government officials and emphasised the importance of empowering local governments, embedding energy into development plans, and addressing challenges such as affordability, financing, after-sales services, access to electricity, and lack of awareness. Similar conversations occurred at the conference this year along with the announcements of clean cooking hubs in urban areas (GIZ, 2025), indicating clear appetite by energy practitioners at the national level to work closely with local government officials to ensure that national clean cooking development outcomes and goals are met.