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Situational Analysis Report

March 2026

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Executive Summary

This Situation Analysis provides a diagnostic and reflective synthesis of the context within which ENACTUS was implemented in the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area (GKMA), with a focus on enabling clean cooking access for residents of urban informal settlements. The report was developed as an evolving working document, explaining how contextual understanding informed implementation choices over time.

The analysis draws on the full body of evidence and learning generated through ENACT programme implementation. This includes the project design assumptions and theory of change; baseline evidence from four informal settlements — Banda, Kirinya, Nankulabye and Nansana East — collected through a household survey (n=1,110) and qualitative methods; the Capacity Needs Assessment (CNA) undertaken with nine GKMA urban authorities; and practical learning from project delivery, including local government engagement, MEMD/CCU coordination, private-sector grant implementation, technical assistance to SMEs, community mobilisation, awareness-raising activities, stakeholder dialogues, and project monitoring. The analysis is also informed by targeted desktop research and policy review, including work on Uganda's national energy and clean cooking policy framework, local government energy mainstreaming, electricity access constraints affecting e-cooking in informal settlements, and the regulatory environment for clean cooking enterprises. Together, these sources provide a triangulated understanding of the policy, institutional, market and settlement-level conditions that shaped ENACTUS implementation.

These findings are interpreted in relation to Uganda's national energy and clean cooking policy framework, particularly the Energy Policy for Uganda (2023), the National Integrated Clean Cooking Strategy (NICCS), local government energy mainstreaming guidance, and the emerging institutional role of MEMD's Clean Cooking Unit.

Key findings indicate that clean cooking constraints in informal settlements are primarily structural, shaped by affordability, tenure insecurity, space and safety constraints, and service gaps. While charcoal remains the dominant cooking fuel at city scale, electricity access and high mobile connectivity create entry points for e-cooking and PAYGo-enabled models. Local governments have relevant mandates but face gaps in policy literacy, planning integration, monitoring and target tracking, private-sector engagement, and finance mobilisation.

Additional situational evidence reinforces that the clean cooking transition in GKMA informal settlements is also an electricity access and utilisation challenge. Although grid access across the metropolitan area is comparatively high, electricity is still used mainly for low-load services such as lighting, charging, entertainment and ironing. Cooking with electricity is constrained by unreliable supply, weak or unsafe internal wiring, landlord-controlled or shared metering arrangements, limited household control over electricity decisions, and low awareness of connection and support options.

The analysis also points to a governance alignment gap. Clean cooking is delivered largely through market-led business-to-consumer models, but uptake depends heavily on local government functions such as community entry, local awareness, permitting, public space management, enforcement, settlement upgrading and trust-building. This makes urban authorities frontline implementation partners, rather than peripheral stakeholders.

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These contextual realities informed ENACTUS implementation choices, leading the project to prioritise public-sector capacity strengthening, multi-level governance coordination, and market-enabled delivery models tailored to low-income, high-density urban environments.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and rationale

The Enabling African Cities for Transformative Energy Access Uganda Scale-Up (ENACTUS) project is being implemented from July 2024 to March 2026, focusing on enabling public-sector-led, market-enabled clean cooking access for urban informal settlement populations in the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area. The scale-up builds on earlier ENACT experience in Kampala and recognises that sustainable clean cooking transitions in informal settlements require coordinated action across national and local government, private sector actors, civil society organisations, and community structures.

1.2 Purpose and intended use

The purpose of this Situation Analysis is to establish a clear understanding of the policy, institutional, and stakeholder environment at project inception, and to identify the constraints and enabling conditions that shaped ENACTUS design and early implementation. While developed as an internal working document, this report synthesises learning at project close to support reflection, accountability, and future programming.

1.3 Scope

- Geographic focus: The Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area (GKMA), with primary evidence drawn from the urban informal settlements of Banda, Kirinya, Nankulabye and Nansana East.
- Institutional focus: MEMD/CCU, GKMA urban authorities, electricity utilities, private sector actors, financiers and community structures.
- Thematic scope: The enabling environment for clean cooking in urban informal settlements, including policy and institutional arrangements, local government capacity, stakeholder coordination, and market and financing conditions.

2. Methodology and Evidence Base

This Situation Analysis uses a triangulated analytical approach linking household-level realities, institutional capacity, and the national policy context. Primary sources include the ENACTUS project proposal, a baseline study in four informal settlements combining quantitative and qualitative methods (household survey, FGDs and KIIs), and a Capacity Needs Assessment conducted with urban authorities across the GKMA.

The baseline household survey reached 1,110 respondents (200 male; 910 female), while the CNA captured both individual (n=34) and institutional (n=9) perspectives across nine GKMA urban authorities.

Secondary sources include official Government of Uganda policy instruments and strategies relevant to energy access and clean cooking. External literature is used to contextualise and validate project findings, rather than to override project-generated evidence.

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The analysis has also been enriched with later ENACTUS learning on local government enablement, electricity access barriers for e-cooking in informal settlements, and municipal regulatory systems affecting clean cooking enterprises. This additional material is used to strengthen the situational diagnosis and implementation implications, rather than as a separate literature review.

3. National Policy, Strategy and Institutional Context

Uganda's policy framework increasingly recognises clean cooking as a strategic priority across public health, environmental sustainability, gender equity, and climate mitigation agendas. Over the past decade, clean cooking has gained prominence within national development, energy, and climate policy instruments, reflecting growing awareness of its cross-cutting contribution to socio-economic and environmental outcomes.

Uganda Vision 2040 articulates the country's long-term aspiration to transition to a modern, industrialised society supported by reliable and sustainable energy services. Expanding access to modern energy, including clean cooking, is therefore integral to achieving Vision 2040's objectives on human development, economic transformation, and environmental sustainability.

Clean cooking is also embedded within Uganda's national development planning framework. National Development Plan III (NDP III) and emerging priorities under NDP IV recognise modern energy access, including clean cooking, as critical to socio-economic transformation, human capital development, industrialisation, and environmental sustainability. These plans emphasise expanding access to affordable and reliable modern energy services and strengthening local government service delivery.

More recent national planning signals reinforce the scale of ambition. Uganda's clean cooking agenda is increasingly framed not only as a household energy issue, but as part of broader economic transformation, energy productivity, health and climate objectives. National targets point towards a major reduction in reliance on traditional biomass by 2030 and universal access to clean cooking by 2040, while electricity is expected to play a growing role in the future cooking mix.

This creates a dual policy challenge for the GKMA: expanding the availability and affordability of clean cooking technologies, while ensuring that electricity access becomes reliable, safe and usable enough to support sustained household cooking where e-cooking is technically and commercially viable.

The Energy Policy for Uganda (2023) provides the overarching policy direction for the energy sector and explicitly frames sector planning and performance tracking as a live process that is refined over time as circumstances and evidence evolve. Within this framework, clean cooking is positioned as a critical component of equitable energy access, supported through integrated planning, strengthened institutional coordination, investment in clean energy solutions, and capacity building across governance levels.

The Energy Policy for Uganda (2023) also underscores the role of local governments in planning, coordinating, and monitoring energy access interventions within their jurisdictions, including mainstreaming energy priorities into local development plans, budgets, and service delivery frameworks. Local governments are expected to support community awareness, facilitate private-sector engagement, and contribute to data collection and reporting to inform national tracking of

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energy access outcomes. This policy direction positions urban authorities as critical actors in translating national clean cooking ambitions into practical, localised action.

Building on this policy foundation, the National Integrated Clean Cooking Strategy (NICCS) consolidates Uganda's clean cooking ambitions into a single, coordinated framework. The strategy articulates a pathway towards universal access to clean or transitional cooking solutions by 2040 and emphasises the importance of coordinated institutional action, standards and quality assurance, consumer awareness, sustainable financing mechanisms, and robust monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) systems.

NICCS further notes that Uganda has developed several fuel-specific strategies and programmes, including initiatives for LPG promotion, e-cooking, biogas, and ethanol. However, these strategies were largely developed in parallel, without systematic integration, creating risks of fragmentation, duplication, and inconsistent targeting. NICCS therefore provides an overarching framework to integrate existing policies and strategies into a single, coordinated national approach.

3.1 Institutional architecture for clean cooking

Clean cooking in Uganda sits at the intersection of multiple sectors, including energy, environment, health, urban development, and local government. As a result, institutional mandates have historically been fragmented, with limited coordination across ministries and agencies and gaps between policy ambition and implementation on the ground.

At the national level, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development (MEMD) serves as the lead institution for clean cooking policy development, coordination and programme implementation. Recent efforts to strengthen governance arrangements, including the establishment of a dedicated Clean Cooking Unit (CCU) within MEMD and the development of cross-government coordination mechanisms, reflect deliberate steps by government to improve oversight, coordination and implementation capacity across the sector. The CCU plays an important technical and coordination role, supporting policy development, stakeholder engagement, programme coordination and monitoring of clean cooking initiatives in alignment with national targets and strategies such as NICCS.

A central implementation issue is the extent to which the CCU's local government coordination and support function can be operationalised through routine government systems. ENACTUS evidence suggests that this function has gained practical traction through engagement with GKMA urban authorities, but it is not yet fully institutionalised. Further work is required to connect national clean cooking policy ambition with both the political and technical arms of local government.

In parallel, national policy frameworks increasingly recognise the importance of structured engagement with sub-national governments as delivery partners for clean cooking interventions. This reflects an understanding that effective implementation depends not only on national coordination, but also on clear points of contact and functional coordination arrangements at city and municipal level.

While these institutional arrangements represent a significant opportunity to accelerate clean cooking uptake, many were still in formative stages at the time ENACTUS commenced. Mandates are evolving, coordination mechanisms are still being operationalised, and linkages with sub-national governments are limited and uneven. This context underscores the importance of targeted capacity

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enhancement, technical support, and deliberate efforts to ensure that local governments are meaningfully integrated into national clean cooking processes.

This policy direction is consistent with findings from earlier ENACT work in Kampala, including the Kampala City Energy Profile and policy briefs on clean cooking access, which emphasised the central role of city authorities in enabling clean cooking transitions through urban planning, stakeholder coordination, and engagement with private-sector actors.

3.2 Implications for sub-national delivery

The national policy and institutional landscape has clear implications for implementation at city and municipal level. National clean cooking targets and strategies require translation into local development plans, budgets, and routine reporting systems if they are to influence delivery in urban informal settlements. However, capacity gaps at sub-national level, including limited policy literacy, weak monitoring systems, and constrained access to finance, risk slowing this translation.

The Kampala City Energy Profile further underscored the importance of integrating energy access considerations into urban planning and infrastructure strategies, particularly within informal settlements. This reinforces the need for clean cooking priorities to be embedded within broader urban development frameworks rather than treated as stand-alone energy interventions.

In addition, financing mechanisms promoted at national level, such as results-based financing and climate-linked funding, require local readiness to develop bankable project concepts and to track and report results credibly. Similarly, the emphasis placed by NICCS on MRV highlights the need for functional data systems and digital tools that can connect local implementation realities with national reporting and accountability requirements.

Taken together, the policy direction is not simply creating a new role for urban authorities. It is creating a practical requirement to operationalise that role through planning systems, local focal points, municipal coordination, and credible links between community-level delivery and national reporting.

4. Urban Informal Settlement Context in the GKMA

Urban informal settlements in the GKMA are characterised by high population density, constrained space, complex tenure arrangements, and uneven access to services. These conditions strongly influence household energy choices and the feasibility of different clean cooking pathways.

The GKMA is Uganda's largest metropolitan region and concentrates a substantial share of national economic activity. Rapid urbanisation has driven expansion into neighbouring districts and municipalities, while informal settlement growth has often occurred beyond formal planning systems. This creates a metropolitan context in which energy demand is high, but land-use planning, infrastructure coordination and service delivery responsibilities remain fragmented across jurisdictions.

This fragmentation matters for clean cooking because settlement upgrading, rights-of-way, building approvals, electrical safety, community mobilisation and local enforcement are all shaped by local and metropolitan governance arrangements. In practice, grid proximity or household connection does not automatically translate into effective access to modern energy services for cooking.

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Nationally, most Ugandan households continue to rely on traditional biomass fuels for cooking. NICCS reports that approximately 93% of households use wood or charcoal as their primary cooking fuel, with charcoal particularly dominant in urban areas. Clean fuels such as LPG and electricity currently account for only a small share of primary cooking energy, with other options showing no clear upward trend to date.

Baseline evidence from the ENACTUS study (n=1,110 households) confirms continued reliance on charcoal as the dominant primary cooking fuel, with 81% of households reporting charcoal use and 11% relying on firewood. At the same time, 42% of households reported owning a secondary cookstove, indicating widespread stove stacking behaviour.

Analysis of stove combinations and user motivations shows that stacking is driven primarily by convenience, fuel cost savings, seasonal fuel availability, and food-specific suitability. These patterns suggest that households are making pragmatic and economically rational decisions to balance affordability, reliability, and cooking flexibility, rather than demonstrating resistance to cleaner technologies.

NICCS adopts internationally recognised performance standards to define clean and transitional cooking technologies. Biomass stoves meeting Uganda Standard US 761:2019 Class 1 are considered clean, while Class 2 and Class 3 stoves are classified as transitional; appliances performing below Class 3 are considered polluting and recommended for phase-out by 2040. For non-biomass technologies such as LPG, electricity, biogas and ethanol, NICCS recognises these as clean at the point of use when used in properly functioning appliances, while emphasising the need for strengthened national standards and enforcement across all fuel types.

Adoption patterns are strongly shaped by affordability, reliability of supply, perceptions of safety, and suitability to household cooking practices. While electricity access and mobile connectivity create increasing opportunities for e-cooking, sustained use remains constrained by cost and infrastructure limitations.

Electricity conditions further complicate the prospects for sustained e-cooking. Across the GKMA, electricity connectivity is relatively high, but use is concentrated in basic services. Informal-settlement households often face poor reliability, voltage fluctuations, overloaded networks, substandard internal wiring, shared or landlord-controlled meters, and limited ability to decide independently how electricity is used within rented accommodation.

A distinctive “informal utility” layer mediates electricity access in many settlements. Landlords, compound managers, local leaders and informal technicians often determine connection arrangements, payment collection, fault response, appliance use and dispute resolution. These arrangements can enable access where formal systems are difficult to navigate, but they also reduce household control, weaken safety assurance, obscure true electricity costs and discourage higher-load uses such as cooking.

The tariff and metering environment can also blunt incentives for e-cooking. Where several households share a single meter, downstream tenants may not benefit from lifeline-style pricing, while rent-bundled electricity charges or informal mark-ups can make electricity appear expensive and unpredictable. At the same time, many households do not consume enough electricity individually to benefit from cooking-oriented tariff structures, reinforcing the tendency to reserve electricity for lighting, charging and entertainment rather than cooking.

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5. Local Government Capacity and Coordination

5.1 Local government mandates and entry points

Uganda's efforts to mainstream energy within local government planning build on a longer policy and programme trajectory. The Renewable Energy Policy (2007) recognised the importance of decentralised energy governance and the role of local governments in planning and coordinating renewable energy initiatives. The policy proposed institutional mechanisms such as district energy committees and district energy offices to support local-level planning, coordination, and implementation of renewable energy initiatives.

Building on this policy foundation, several development partner programmes have supported practical operationalisation of decentralised energy governance. Notably, the Promotion of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Programme (PREEEP), implemented by MEMD in partnership with GIZ, piloted approaches for integrating renewable energy and energy efficiency into district planning, budgeting, and service delivery systems in Northern Uganda. The programme engaged district local governments and energy focal persons to strengthen local capacity for planning, coordination, and promotion of clean energy technologies across sectors.

Local governments in the GKMA hold mandates relevant to clean cooking through responsibilities for planning, environmental health, public health, and service delivery. These mandates create practical entry points for embedding clean cooking within existing local government planning, service delivery, environmental health, community mobilisation, and financing frameworks.

For ENACTUS, local government is understood as the decentralised governance system connecting national policy to communities, households and local markets. This includes city, municipal, division, town council, sub-county, parish or ward and village-level structures, including Local Council structures. These levels provide the public interface through which clean cooking can be mainstreamed into planning, community engagement, awareness raising, market coordination and local development programming.

This role is particularly important because clean and modern cooking services are generally delivered as private goods through market-led business-to-consumer models. Local governments influence the conditions under which those models operate: awareness, community entry, local legitimacy, settlement-level access, permitting, enforcement, trust, and links to community structures. Without this interface, national clean cooking objectives risk remaining disconnected from the local market conditions and delivery constraints that determine actual uptake.

5.2 Existing governance and financing instruments

Clean cooking can be embedded through a number of existing governance and financing instruments. These instruments are useful because they provide routes to institutionalise clean cooking within systems that local governments already use, rather than treating it as a stand-alone energy intervention.

A practical implication is the need to translate national policy into tools that local governments can actually use. Emerging ENACTUS learning points to the value of a local government clean cooking mainstreaming toolkit, linked to the broader energy mainstreaming agenda, that can support

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planning, budgeting, coordination, community engagement, market mapping, awareness raising and training-of-trainers approaches through existing government structures.

The enabling environment therefore needs to move from project-based engagement towards institutionalised support systems. In practical terms, this means moving from fragmented local government engagement and limited market enablement towards structured national-local coordination, active local government support for clean cooking, improved business operating conditions, and accelerated uptake of modern cooking solutions.

Instrument / mechanism	Lead institutions	Entry point for clean cooking
Parish Development Model (PDM)	Office of the Prime Minister; Ministry of Local Government; Parish Development Committees; Community Development Officers (CDOs) at lower local government level.	Community-level savings groups and revolving funds could be adapted to support clean cooking investments, including LPG start-up kits, improved biomass stoves and e-cooking appliances. CDOs can support awareness, mobilisation, and links between SMEs and parish groups.
GKMA Urban Development Programme and urban upgrading platforms	Ministry of Kampala Capital City and Metropolitan Affairs; KCCA; GKMA municipalities.	Clean cooking can be integrated into settlement upgrading plans, market infrastructure design, waste management systems, briquette value chains, and city-level environmental health strategies.
Climate-related funding windows	Ministry of Water and Environment; NEMA; Ministry of Finance; accredited national entities.	Clean cooking contributes to emissions reduction, air quality improvement and climate adaptation. Local governments can integrate clean cooking into climate action plans and access climate-aligned funding where bankable concepts and monitoring systems exist.
District / municipal development planning and budget frameworks	Local governments, including Town Clerks, Planners and Finance Officers, under Ministry of Local Government oversight.	Clean cooking priorities can be mainstreamed into district and municipal development plans, annual work plans and environmental health budgets. Energy focal persons established under ENACTUS provide a practical institutional anchor for this integration.
Results-based finance and private-sector market support instruments	MEMD; development partners; implementing agencies.	RBF schemes require local government facilitation for beneficiary targeting, awareness campaigns and verification. Urban authorities can act as conveners and validators, strengthening compliance, standards enforcement and private-sector accountability.

Practical integration of clean cooking into broader urban programming is already emerging under the World Bank-funded GKMA Urban Development Programme. For example, during a November 2025 community sensitisation activity in Kira Municipality, clean cooking awareness was incorporated alongside climate change adaptation and urban agriculture discussions. The session was jointly delivered by MEMD's Clean Cooking Unit, ICLEI Africa under ENACTUS, and municipal officials, demonstrating coordinated engagement between national and sub-national actors within an existing urban governance platform.

This example illustrates how clean cooking can be embedded within metropolitan development initiatives rather than delivered as a stand-alone intervention, reinforcing the institutional mainstreaming approach promoted under the Energy Policy (2023), NICCS, and the Energy Mainstreaming Guidelines.

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5.3 ENACTUS focal persons and coordination mechanisms

Building on these earlier experiences, ENACTUS focused on strengthening urban local government engagement in clean cooking governance within the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area. As part of project implementation, MEMD formally requested GKMA urban authorities, including Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), Nansana Municipality and Kira Municipality, to nominate dedicated focal persons to support coordination and implementation of the ENACTUS project.

Urban authorities responded by designating officers within relevant directorates, notably public health and environment, gender and community services, and risk management, to serve as focal points for project coordination, community engagement, and liaison with MEMD and implementing partners.

The establishment of focal persons provided an entry point for strengthening institutional ownership at local level and supported day-to-day coordination, information flow and follow-up on project activities. These focal persons have become key intermediaries linking national institutions, municipal administrations, private-sector actors and community structures.

This is an important institutional gain because focal persons create named, recurring points of contact inside urban authorities. They help reduce the transaction costs of engaging local government, support continuity between workshops and field activities, and provide a mechanism for relaying community and enterprise constraints back to MEMD and the CCU.

5.4 Capacity gaps identified through the CNA

Despite the availability of these instruments and emerging examples of integration, the Capacity Needs Assessment indicates that local governments often lack technical capacity, policy literacy, and structured coordination mechanisms to proactively embed clean cooking within these frameworks. This gap reinforces the relevance of targeted capacity-building, institutional anchoring, and coordination support under ENACTUS.

Key CNA constraints include limited policy literacy on clean cooking, weak integration into local plans and reporting systems, insufficient monitoring and data management, and low familiarity with financing mechanisms such as public-private partnerships and results-based finance.

These constraints suggest that local government engagement cannot be reduced to one-off awareness raising. It requires an institutional pathway: nominated focal persons, cross-departmental coordination, planning and budget entry points, data systems, and practical links with national clean cooking coordination mechanisms.

The next phase of institutionalisation will require engagement with both political and technical leadership. Technical focal persons are necessary for coordination and implementation, but political buy-in is needed to legitimise clean cooking as a local government priority, allocate attention within existing planning processes, and support local decisions that affect market entry, community mobilisation and enforcement.

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6. Stakeholder, Market and Programme Landscape

6.1 Programme and stakeholder landscape

Uganda hosts a growing portfolio of clean cooking programmes and initiatives led by government, development partners, and the private sector, including national market development programmes, results-based financing initiatives, carbon-supported delivery models, and city-level pilot projects. The National Integrated Clean Cooking Strategy (NICCS) recognises the importance of coordinating these efforts to reduce fragmentation, improve learning, and accelerate scale.

The programme landscape creates opportunities for ENACTUS to act as a practical bridge between national coordination, municipal implementation, private-sector delivery and community-level demand generation. It also creates risks of duplication unless learning, targeting and stakeholder engagement are deliberately aligned.

The landscape is also becoming more connected across implementation, enterprise support and research. Follow-on technical assistance to clean cooking enterprises, continued engagement with the CCU, and emerging research on electricity access in informal settlements create opportunities to carry forward ENACTUS learning beyond the original project period. This continuity is important because the constraints identified are systemic and cannot be resolved through a single round of awareness raising, grants or workshops.

6.2 Private sector landscape

Uganda's clean cooking sector includes a growing ecosystem of private-sector actors engaged in the production, importation, distribution, and financing of clean cooking technologies and fuels. The private sector plays a central role in expanding access to cleaner cooking solutions, particularly in urban areas where market-based delivery models dominate. In the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area (GKMA), private companies supply a wide range of cooking technologies and fuels, including improved biomass cookstoves, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) stoves, ethanol stoves, electric cooking appliances, and institutional-scale clean cooking systems.

Sector coordination among private-sector actors and development partners is supported through the Uganda National Alliance on Clean Cooking (UNACC). Established in 2013, UNACC serves as a national platform bringing together government institutions, private companies, research institutions, civil society organisations, and development partners to promote the adoption of clean cooking technologies and fuels in Uganda. The alliance plays an important convening role in coordinating sector dialogue, promoting industry standards, and supporting implementation of national clean cooking initiatives, including NICCS.

Private-sector companies operate across several segments of the clean cooking value chain. These include stove manufacturers and assemblers, importers and distributors of cooking appliances, fuel suppliers, carbon project developers, financial service providers, and last-mile distribution companies serving households in both formal and informal settlements. Small and medium enterprises play an especially important role in stove distribution, consumer awareness campaigns, and after-sales services.

The clean cooking market in Uganda can broadly be categorised into several technology segments. The most common segment is improved biomass cookstoves, designed to burn charcoal or firewood

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more efficiently than traditional stoves. These stoves typically reduce fuel consumption and indoor air pollution compared to traditional three-stone fires and rudimentary charcoal stoves, although they remain transitional technologies. Improved biomass stoves can reduce fuel use by approximately 20-75 percent and are often promoted as an intermediate solution where access to modern fuels remains limited.

Beyond improved biomass stoves, the market also includes cleaner cooking technologies such as LPG stoves, electric cooking appliances, ethanol stoves, biogas systems, and solar cooking technologies. In Uganda, clean cooking solutions are generally defined as cooking technologies and fuels that significantly reduce harmful emissions and improve efficiency compared to traditional cooking methods. These include LPG, electricity, ethanol, biogas, and high-efficiency biomass technologies.

To ensure quality and performance of cooking technologies, standards and certification systems are increasingly important in the clean cooking sector. In Uganda, the Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) is responsible for developing and enforcing standards related to energy technologies, including biomass cookstoves and alternative cooking fuels. UNBS undertakes testing, certification, and market surveillance to ensure that cookstoves and related products meet established quality and safety standards.

Within Uganda's market, many improved biomass stoves fall within the mid-range tiers of performance, while modern fuels such as LPG and electric cooking technologies typically achieve higher tiers under the international performance framework. National strategies such as the NICCS increasingly emphasise the promotion of higher-tier cooking solutions in order to achieve significant improvements in health, energy efficiency, and environmental outcomes.

The structure of the private sector landscape also reflects different consumer market segments. Urban middle-income households increasingly adopt LPG and electric cooking technologies, while lower-income households in informal settlements often rely on charcoal-based improved stoves due to affordability constraints. Institutional markets, including schools, restaurants, and commercial food vendors, represent an additional segment for larger institutional stoves and alternative fuels such as briquettes or LPG.

Despite this growing private-sector ecosystem, the clean cooking market in Uganda continues to face several structural challenges. These include limited consumer awareness of clean cooking technologies, affordability constraints for higher-tier cooking solutions, fragmented supply chains, and limited access to financing for small and medium enterprises operating in the sector. Strengthening coordination between government institutions, private-sector actors, and development partners therefore remains an important priority for accelerating the transition to cleaner cooking systems.

For clean cooking MSMEs, local government systems are a core part of the business operating environment. Last-mile sales and marketing in underserved communities depend on fixed premises, door-to-door outreach, public demonstrations, branded transport, market entry, signage, storage and movement of fuels and appliances. Each of these activities can trigger municipal or environmental compliance requirements, meaning that urban regulation directly shapes the cost and practicality of market-led delivery.

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6.3 Regulatory and compliance environment

Within this evolving market landscape, initiatives such as ENACTUS have sought to strengthen linkages between urban authorities and private-sector clean cooking enterprises in the GKMA. These linkages are not only about convening dialogue; they are also about improving the practical interface between market actors and municipal systems that influence licensing, public space use, environmental compliance, enforcement, consumer outreach and local legitimacy.

As part of these efforts, in February 2026 ICLEI Africa supported Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) to convene a multi-level governance dialogue on enforcement and compliance pathways for clean cooking businesses in Kampala. The dialogue brought together national institutions, city authorities, and private-sector enterprises operating in the clean cooking sector to improve mutual understanding of regulatory requirements affecting business operations. Discussions highlighted several operational challenges faced by clean cooking SMEs, including limited awareness of city by-laws, uncertainty around permits for marketing activities, and coordination gaps between different regulatory authorities responsible for licensing, environmental compliance, and energy sector oversight.

Presentations during the dialogue also highlighted the gap between growing investment and the relatively low adoption of modern cooking technologies nationally, with LPG adoption estimated at around 3%, electric cooking at 0.8%, and improved cookstoves at approximately 17%. These figures reinforce the scale of the transition challenge and the importance of strengthening both market conditions and institutional coordination to support wider uptake of clean cooking solutions.

The dialogue provided an opportunity for enforcement authorities to clarify regulatory procedures and for private-sector actors to document the practical challenges encountered in navigating compliance requirements. The discussions underscored the importance of improved communication between regulators and market actors and reinforced the role of city authorities in creating a more transparent and supportive regulatory environment for clean cooking enterprises operating in Kampala.

The regulatory environment presents four linked constraints for clean cooking enterprises. First, there are information gaps around regulatory requirements, payment systems and approval routes, particularly where reforms have not been fully translated into plain-language guidance at market level. Second, clean cooking demonstrations and community outreach can be treated like conventional outdoor advertising, creating fee structures and permitting burdens that are poorly aligned with low-margin last-mile energy access models.

Third, enterprises operate across a multi-agency compliance environment involving municipal, environmental, policing and transport-related functions. Without unified guidance or clear referral pathways, this can create duplication, uncertainty and long administrative timelines. Fourth, formal regulation is overlaid by informal market and street-level governance, including local intermediaries who influence market entry and day-to-day trading conditions.

These constraints do not imply that municipal regulation is inappropriate. Rather, they show the need for better governance alignment: clearer information, differentiated administrative treatment for public-interest clean cooking outreach, stronger inter-agency coordination, and more predictable communication between regulators and clean cooking enterprises.

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7. Implications for ENACTUS Implementation

The combined evidence indicates that clean cooking challenges in urban informal settlements are both structural and institutional. Affordability and settlement-level constraints intersect with governance and capacity gaps at local government level. This means that market activation alone is unlikely to achieve scale unless accompanied by practical public-sector coordination and local institutional anchoring.

The additional electricity-access evidence sharpens the implementation implications. In informal settlements, e-cooking scale-up depends on more than appliance distribution or consumer awareness. It requires network readiness, safer and more usable internal wiring, more direct and transparent household access arrangements, stronger local government integration into electricity access planning, and better awareness of both electricity access services and modern cooking options.

This points towards a practical multi-level governance role for ENACTUS: helping MEMD and the CCU translate national ambition into local coordination systems, while helping urban authorities understand where their mandates intersect with clean cooking markets, electricity access conditions, settlement upgrading and community-facing implementation.

These insights informed ENACTUS implementation choices, including a strong emphasis on public-sector capacity strengthening, facilitation of multi-level coordination, and support for market-enabled delivery models designed for low-income, high-density urban contexts.

In response to identified public-sector capacity gaps, ENACTUS prioritised targeted capacity strengthening for national and local government stakeholders, including capacity-building workshops and knowledge-exchange platforms focused on clean cooking policy, urban governance linkages, and the role of local governments in enabling clean cooking markets.

These engagements brought together urban authorities, MEMD-CCU, the Ministry of Local Government, private-sector actors, and development partners to strengthen shared understanding of urban clean cooking challenges, clarify institutional roles, and identify practical entry points for integrating clean cooking into local government planning, service delivery, enforcement and monitoring systems.

Local government focal persons established under ENACTUS have become key intermediaries linking national institutions, private-sector actors, and community structures. This provides a practical mechanism through which learning from market activation, community engagement and policy coordination can be carried into future programming.

Future programming should therefore prioritise institutional tools and routines that survive beyond project activities: focal-person systems, mainstreaming guidance, local government training materials, market-entry protocols, regulatory information products, and structured feedback loops between local governments, enterprises, communities and national institutions.

8. Conclusions and Learning

This Situation Analysis demonstrates how an evolving understanding of context informed ENACTUS implementation over time. By grounding decisions in empirical household evidence, institutional

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capacity diagnostics, and national policy direction, the project sought to support more inclusive, scalable, and sustainable clean cooking transitions in urban informal settlements.

The findings underscore the importance of aligning household-level interventions with institutional strengthening and policy frameworks, and highlight the central role of local governments in translating national clean cooking ambitions into practical, localised action.

Together, these lessons provide a practical foundation for future urban clean cooking programming in Uganda and offer insights for scaling inclusive clean cooking transitions in comparable urban contexts. They are also expected to inform future programming building on ENACTUS, particularly in strengthening institutional coordination, urban policy integration, and private-sector engagement.

A central learning is that clean cooking scale-up in informal urban contexts sits at the convergence of household energy behaviour, electricity access quality, municipal regulation, private-sector delivery and local government legitimacy. ENACTUS is therefore best understood not only as a clean cooking access project, but as a practical demonstration of how national clean cooking policy can be localised through urban governance systems.

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