

Inception Workshop

Pilot Project on Deployment of Electric Cookstoves in Lao PDR

(in person and online) Microsoft Teams meeting

Vientiane, Lao PDR
Tuesday 30 April 2024 (Vientiane Local time, GMT +7)

Background

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 7 dedicated to energy, sets the target to achieve universal access to clean fuels and technologies for cooking by 2030. According to the 2021 Tracking SDG7 Report, more than 2.6 billion people globally lack access to clean cooking facilities, relying on solid biomass, kerosene or coal as their primary cooking fuel.

The Clean Cooking Alliance reports that 4 million people die every year from illnesses associated with smoke from cooking.¹ WHO reports that in poorly ventilated dwellings, indoor smoke can be 100 times higher than acceptable levels for fine particles.² Inefficient cooking practices and the subsequent pollution have negative health impacts including pneumonia, stroke, ischaemic heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and lung cancer. Exposure particularly impacts the health of women traditionally involved in cooking and young children who stay with them. Women and young children are also mainly involved in fuel gathering which increases the risk of musculoskeletal damage, consumes considerable time, limits other productive activities (such as income generation) and takes children away from school. Asia and the Pacific is home to around 60 per cent of the global population without access to clean cooking solutions. Approximately 1.1 billion people from the region primarily rely on open fires or simple stoves for their cooking needs.

Cooking is a cultural experience, deeply rooted in tradition, and local norms and customs. Experience has shown that effectively achieving a transition to the use of cleaner cooking fuels and technologies requires a great deal of behaviour change. Effecting change in cooking practices can be challenging - in order to be successful, policies and programmes should take into account local customs and preferences. While many programmes and policies achieved adoption in the short-term, there appears to have been a breakdown in sustained use. This is due to incompatibility of stove designs with local cooking practices, lack of maintenance and repair facilities, affordability constraints and underdeveloped supply chains.

Future policies and programmes can be made more effective through inclusive planning that substantially engages local communities and women. It is important to assure an enabling environment for industry growth

¹ <https://cleancooking.org/the-value-of-clean-cooking/>

² <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/household-air-pollution-and-health>

by advocating for effective and predictable policies and providing trusted, relevant data. Capacity building activities supporting behaviour change and awareness-raising interventions are the valuable components on the way to universal access to clean cooking. Traditional means of cooking are often part of the culture in local communities, this creates more barriers to replace them with new cooking solutions. Inclusive planning through a participatory and gender-sensitive focus can lead to more engagement and, as a result, higher adoption and health benefits. This will lead to improved health, reduced climate and environmental impacts, empowered women, and improved livelihoods.

Lao PDR represents a good example of the gap between electricity and clean cooking access. The [SDG 7 Road Map for Lao PDR](#) released in 2022, indicated that while universal access to electricity may be achieved in 2025, its rate of access to clean cooking remains one of the lowest in the region and the country is not on track to achieve 100 per cent by 2030 (Figure 1). The Road Map estimates that if no concerted efforts are undertaken, access would reach only 20 per cent by 2030, leaving 5.6 million people i.e. over 1 million households cooking with unclean fuels and technologies. Clean cooking often remains less visible but no less important given its impacts on human health and disproportionate burden on women and girls.

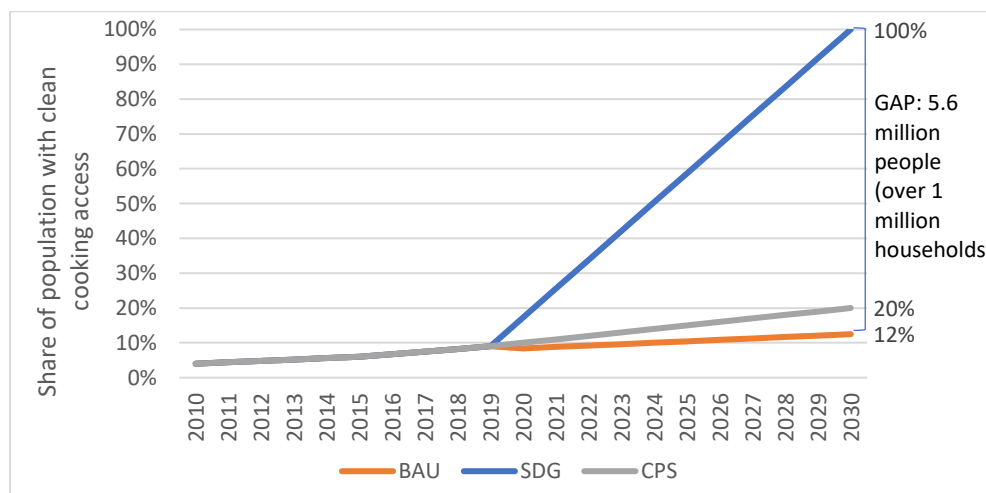


Figure 1 – Progress of Clean Cooking and Electricity Access in Lao PDR

For countries like Lao PDR which have close to universal electricity access from renewable sources, the opportunities for a significant expansion of the use of electricity for cooking to be supported via accessing climate finance are significant. For the consumer, the availability of highly efficient electric appliances such as rice cookers, infrared and induction stoves, air fryers and electric pressure cookers offer enhanced value for money and often time savings. Given Lao PDR’s growing hydro-based power generation system this offers the opportunity to reduce energy imports, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and allow enhanced access to clean cooking. Lao PDR presents a ready opportunity to leverage the gains by the provision of clean renewable

electricity by utilizing this energy for clean cooking. In addition to the benefits of clean cooking, the reduction of use of fuelwood and LPG offers significant environmental and energy security benefits for the country. LPG in Lao PDR is 100 per cent imported and is subject to supply disruptions and price spikes. This presents a significant opportunity to promote electric cooking as a mechanism for enhancing the range of higher tier cooking fuels available to consumers, to add new appliances and fuels to the ‘stack’ of fuels utilized by most consumers, developing targeted campaigns suitable to the diverse cooking needs of communities across the diverse geographies of Lao PDR.

Objectives

This inception workshop aims to bring together policymakers, researchers, practitioners, private sectors and other stakeholders of Lao PDR to discuss the challenges and opportunities of clean cooking in Lao PDR, and identify the appropriateness of a pilot project to accelerate the uptake of electric cookstoves. The key objective of this event is to discuss:

- discuss challenges and opportunities to clean cooking in Lao PDR;
- share lessons and experiences from existing projects aiming to promote clean cooking;
- identify barriers to accelerating the uptake of clean cooking with focus on electric cookstoves; and
- inform stakeholders about the proposed pilot project on e-cooking and solicit feedback.

Expected outcome

The workshop will contribute to a better understanding of the key challenges to achieve universal access to clean cooking in Lao PDR and identify opportunities and a suitable mechanism to implement the pilot e-cooking pilot project.

Beneficiaries:

The key beneficiaries of the event are stakeholders of clean cooking in Lao PDR. Lessons learned from this event can also be shared with other countries in the Asia-Pacific region to help develop similar pilot project to achieve universal access to clean cooking.

Event focal point

Anis Zaman, Economic Affairs Officer, ESCAP (md.anisuzzaman@un.org)

Inception workshop

To officially begin the project, ESCAP and the Department of Planning and Cooperation (DPC), Ministry of Energy and Mines (MEM), Lao PDR will jointly organize an inception workshop on 30 April 2024 in Vientiane. This workshop aims to bring together different stakeholders to share ideas and invite suggestions to ensure that the clean cooking program reflects the local context of Lao PDR.

Agenda of the Inception Workshop

Landmark Mekong Riverside Hotel

WJV8+FRR, Thatkhao Village, Sisattanak District, Vientiane

30 April 2024, 09:30 – 16:00 hrs (Vientiane, GMT +7)

[Click here to join the meeting online](#)

Meeting ID: 356 975 952 163, Passcode: EfvNqH

Time	Item	Facilitator(s)/ Presenter(s)
09:30-9:45	Registration	MEM, Lao PDR
09:45-10:00	Welcome address	Dr. Akhondeth VONGSAY , Director General, Department of Planning and Cooperation, Ministry of Energy and Mines, Lao PDR - TBC
	Welcome address	Mr. Bakhodir Burkhanov , UN Resident Coordinator, Lao PDR - TBC
	Opening remarks	Michael Williamson - ESCAP
10:00-10:15	Overview of clean cooking in Lao PDR – challenges and opportunities	Ministry of Energy and Mines, Lao PDR
10:15-10:30	Policy perspectives on clean cooking	Michael Williamson - ESCAP
10:30-11:00	Group Photo, morning tea and networking	
11:00-11:15	Outline of the proposed program	MECS and ESCAP
11:15 – 12:00	<p><u>Regional and national perspectives and experience on clean cooking</u></p> <p><u>Facilitator: Anis Zaman, ESCAP</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jacqueline Lam - Overview of SEforALL's work on clean cooking - TBC ● Ms. Dechen Dema, Executive Engineer, Department of Energy, Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, Royal Government of Bhutan – TBC 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ms Karuna Bajracharya, Country Director, Clean Cooking Alliance, Nepal – TBC ● Mr. Vincent Wierda, IDE Energy Lead, Africa Asia and the Pacific, United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) – TBC <p><i>Open discussion and audience Q&A</i></p>
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch
13:00 – 14:15	<p><u>Panel discussion: Solutions to the challenge of achieving universal clean cooking access</u></p> <p><u>Facilitator: Mr. Michael Williamson</u></p> <p><u>Panellists</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mr. Khammanh Sorpaseuth, Deputy Director General of the Department of Energy Efficiency and Promotion, Ministry of Energy and Mines, Lao PDR - TBC ● Mr. Baburam Paudel, SNV Lao PDR ● Mr. David Tow, Managing Director Asia Pacific and Head of Climate Positive, Tasman Environmental Markets (TEM) Asia Pacific Pte Ltd. - TBC ● Dr Simon Batchelor/ Dr Richard Sieff, Modern Energy Cooking Services (MECS) - TBC <p><i>Panel discussion and audience Q&A</i></p>
14:15 – 14:45	Stakeholder feedback and discussion
14:45 – 15:00	Wrap up and way forward
	ESCAP/MECS/ MEM
15:00 – 15:30	Coffee and networking