



MODERN COOKING
FACILITY FOR AFRICA

ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT 2025





Photo:
MCFA investee
customers in Kenya –
Jason Mulikita for
MCFA / Nefco

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Funded by:



Facility Manager:

NEFCO

MCFA in brief

The Modern Cooking Facility for Africa (MCFA) is a multi-donor programme established and managed by Nefco – the Nordic Green Bank. MCFA supports the development of new markets for the clean cooking sector and aims to accelerate access to modern and affordable cooking solutions in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The programme helps companies selling higher-tier stoves in the clean cooking market to grow and scale up their businesses in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe (the project countries).

MCFA combines results-based financing with catalytic grant financing and technical assistance. The aim of MCFA funding is to function as a bridge between seed funding and carbon finance or commercial loans/equity.

The MCFA programme was announced in November 2021 and is funded by Sweden, Norway and the European Union.

Key achievements of MCFA in 2025



9

new portfolio companies



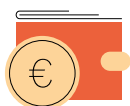
26,161

Clean Cooking Services sold



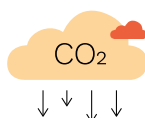
103,306

people with access to clean cooking



23.9

million euros in leveraged co-financing



55,639

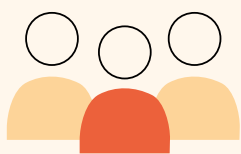
tonnes of CO₂e avoided



26.2

million hours in total time savings

MCFA's expected impact



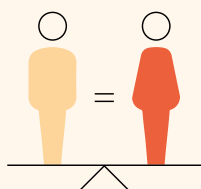
The aim is to provide up to 4 million Africans with **access to clean cooking** solutions by the end of 2029.



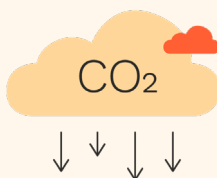
Increased access to clean cooking will **improve health and well-being**, especially for women and girls, by reducing exposure to harmful pollutants.



MCFA contributes to the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): **3, 5, 7, 13 & 15.**



Use of clean cooking solutions will increase the **time available for women and girls** for other activities and minimise the drudgery of fuel procurement and cooking, ...



...**reduce greenhouse gas emissions**



... and help **avoid deforestation and loss of biodiversity.**



Photo: Visit to MCFA investee customer in Kenya - Jason Mulikita for MCFA / Nefco



Heli Sinkko
Fund Manager
of the Modern Cooking
Facility for Africa

Photo:
Jussi Ratilainen for Nefco

Greetings from Nefco, MCFA's Facility Manager

Despite global challenges, the Modern Cooking Facility for Africa (MCFA) helped over 100,000 people in Sub-Saharan Africa gain access to clean cooking solutions in 2025.

Highlights from the year include growing the MCFA portfolio to 22 companies with a total agreement value of over 34 million euros, up from 22.3 million euros at the end of 2024.

Amidst global turmoil, MCFA remained focused on its mission. Nearly four out of five people in Africa still cook on open fires or traditional stoves, exposing households – especially women and children – to harmful smoke while driving deforestation and contributing to CO_{2e} emissions. Since 2023, MCFA portfolio companies have collectively lowered emissions by almost 70,000 tonnes of CO_{2e}.

The programme's technical assistance offering was scaled up significantly to address diverse operational barriers and strengthening company readiness to navigate the complexities of carbon markets. Targeted technical assistance helped companies improve their credit management systems, resulting in better repayment performance and an increase in sustained stove usage. Several companies took the first concrete steps toward carbon market readiness while others continued to pursue closer alignment with high-integrity carbon standards. Significant focus was also put on supporting gender-inclusive business models, reinforcing the commercial and social value of women's leadership in the clean cooking value chain. Companies demonstrated a strong gender focus in growing their distribution networks, which, together with gender-sensitive marketing approaches, proved effective in driving uptake and customer

“Significant focus was also put on supporting gender-inclusive business models, reinforcing the commercial and social value of women’s leadership in the clean cooking value chain.”

Heli Sinkko, Fund Manager, MCFA

retention. As our donors highlight in Section 2, uptake and adoption of clean cooking solutions is driven specifically by women who are active in their local communities.

In 2025, MCFA further improved its MRV system by connecting companies’ CRM systems with Prospect, an open-source tool for tracking SDG7 progress. This integration boosts accountability and, after the initial effort of setting up the integration, reduces both the workload and costs associated with reporting. Digital transformation through Prospect also promises easier access to accurate data for national and regional stakeholders, a goal that MCFA is proud to support.

Together, these developments demonstrate that MCFA is not only supporting short-term sales but catalysing deeper market transformation, laying the foundation for more resilient, professional and investable clean cooking ecosystems across Sub-Saharan Africa.

The results from 2025 reflect the resilience of the private clean cooking market in our project countries. While significant barriers have continued to limit large-scale expansion, the progress made in 2025 – achieved through the dedication of our portfolio companies and expert staff and the continued support of our donors: the European Union, Norway and Sweden – is something we should be proud of. In 2026, all agreed MCFA projects from both financing rounds will be under implementation and we hope to see even more positive economic, social and environmental impacts from our portfolio companies’ clean cooking solutions. It will also be time to focus on generating further knowledge, insights and learnings from the programme to disseminate to the wider private clean cooking sector.

Accelerating local market creation for modern cooking solutions

The MCFA Steering Committee, which serves as the programme’s strategic forum, is comprised of representatives from the programme’s donors – Sweden, Norway and the EU – who have extensive expertise in sustainable international development. Here, Anders Arvidson from Sida and Maria Gilani from Norad share their reflections on the importance of clean cooking in Sub-Saharan Africa and the role of the MCFA programme.

IMPROVING WELLBEING FOR WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

“Today, the combined impact of the lack of access to clean cooking solutions represents a quarter of Africa’s energy-related CO₂ emissions,” says Anders Arvidson, former Project Leader for Sida’s Power Africa Team. “Activating the market for clean cooking solutions benefits the environment while also improving people’s daily lives, including ensuring better health outcomes and greater gender equality.”

“Access to clean cooking solutions is central to MCFA, as the programme is designed to deliver measurable health, safety and economic benefits through the widespread adoption of modern, clean cooking technologies,” explains Maria Gilani, Senior Advisor at Norad’s energy section. “In many African countries, women remain primarily responsible for household cooking, which means that access to clean cooking solutions has a disproportionate impact on women and girls.”

Improving gender equality is a key objective of MCFA, alongside climate mitigation and poverty reduction. This includes supporting women’s leadership in the clean cooking value chain and ensuring safe, decent working conditions for all.



Photo: MCFA investee customer in Kenya – Jason Mulikita for MCFA / Nefco



Photo: Maria Gilani,
Norway's MCFA
Steering Committee
member - Norad

“Listening to women in local communities, both as users of clean cooking solutions and as entrepreneurs driving their delivery, can provide valuable insights into everyday needs and local conditions that inform stove designs suited to African markets,” Gilani continues. “In 2025, MCFA signed agreements with nine new companies, including Hanny G Investment Company in Tanzania, a female-led company serving institutional customers. Such partnerships illustrate how MCFA can support diverse business models and leadership profiles in the sector.”

LOCAL MARKET CREATION

The programme's core objective is market transformation at the local level. By fostering domestic markets, the programme seeks to attract investment, build local capacity and generate employment opportunities.

“We want to accelerate the development of local markets, mobilise capital and help create local jobs,” Arvidson says. “Modern cooking solutions strengthen multiple sectors, increasing the overall effectiveness of climate aid.”

Photo: Anders Arvidson, Sweden's former MCFA
Steering Committee member (until February 2026)

There are many potential ways to encourage local ownership within the clean cooking sector. Swedish Embassies in the project countries have proven invaluable in their insights and support. Gilani mentions that targeted incentives for locally owned companies could be considered, where appropriate and consistent with market development objectives. “One of the main objectives of the programme is to support private sector companies so they can grow and scale their clean cooking businesses,” Gilani points out. “Strengthening local ownership and participation is important for long-term market sustainability and alignment with national policies and priorities.”



MCFA'S UNIQUENESS

Clean cooking projects in Africa are nothing new – both Norway and Sweden have been involved in the sector for decades – but they have recently drawn more attention thanks in part to the Summit on Clean Cooking in Africa held in Paris in 2024, which was co-chaired by Norway. The sector has traditionally been led by non-governmental organisations, so MCFA's emphasis on commercial activity represents a new direction.

“MCFA is different from traditional development projects,” Arvidson continues. “It is not designed to deliver universal access on its own. Its comparative advantage lies in being quick and nimble: using procurement and results-based financing to accelerate market activation and incentivise new entrants. By demonstrating what works, MCFA helps lay the foundation for larger volumes of concessional and climate financing to flow, delivering scalable mitigation results. This model and methodology could also inspire innovative financing approaches in other sectors, such as education.”



PARTNERSHIPS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR MCFA'S CONTINUED SUCCESS

MCFA actively seeks synergies that expand access at scale, including World Bank's ASCENT and the Mission 300 programme led by the World Bank and African Development Bank. Mission 300 is enabling greater access to clean cooking solutions by increasing electricity access to 300 million people. MCFA emphasises the importance of coordination, with MCFA and its donors ready to contribute.

Such collaborations come more easily when donors, in this case Norway, Sweden and the EU, have similar goals, including climate change mitigation, gender equality and fair and sustainable development.

“We have good relationships within the Steering Committee. MCFA is a distinctive results-based financing programme, not least because it brings together like-minded donors and allows us to remain closely engaged in key processes,” concludes Gilani. “Regular Steering Committee meetings, which include open and constructive discussions and systematic updates on project progress, are a key strength of the programme. We can discuss ideas and challenges openly, and it is easy to raise concerns. Clean cooking in Africa is a complex issue and even if you design a robust programme there will be challenges in implementation. With MCFA having now entered the implementation phase, we are hopeful that it will contribute to meaningful, positive outcomes in the coming years.”

*Photo: MCFA investee customer in Kenya
– Jason Mulikita for MCFA / Nefco*

EU-Zambia Business Forum

The MCFA team from Nefco participated in the EU–Zambia Business Forum in Lusaka, held in November 2025, where it hosted an MCFA session on Leveraging carbon finance to accelerate clean cooking access in Zambia. The session brought together MCFA-supported Zambian companies, programme donors and sector experts to discuss how carbon finance and results-based funding can unlock private investment and scale up clean cooking solutions.

Nefco highlighted MCFA's role in providing bridge financing between early-stage funding and commercial capital, enabled through cost-efficient incentives and strong partnerships with the private sector, the EU, Sweden and the Government of Zambia – demonstrating that clean cooking is both a social priority and a viable business opportunity.



Photo: New MCFA portfolio companies were announced at the EU-Zambia Business Forum – EU Delegation in Zambia



From waste to resource

HomeBiogas enables farmers to turn animal manure into valuable biogas and fertilizer.

HomeBiogas began operations in Kenya in 2022, initially focusing on one small geographic area. Since then, it has expanded across the Central Kenya region, employed 70 people and installed more than 5,000 biodigesters.

The solution enables rural households to transition from firewood and charcoal to 100% clean cooking.

MCFA will provide up to EUR 2 million in results-based finance to the company, with the aim of attracting more private investment.

The farmer mixes manure and water and puts it in a sturdy rubber bag which is 7 metres long, 2 metres wide and 80 centimetres high. The waste decomposes naturally and releases biogas, which is captured by hoses that lead to the HomeBiogas stove. A nutrient-rich slurry comes out the other end of the system.

“Biogas offers a sustainable and dignified pathway for rural households to move away from unclean cooking solutions to clean cooking,” Mungai explains. “In addition, the technology provides organic fertilizer, supporting sustainable farming practices, improved soil health and food security.

“We are more excited than ever to ensure that as many households as possible adopt clean cooking.”

Daniel Mungai, Country Head of Commerce, HomeBiogas Kenya

“Working with MCFA has been highly impactful. Their all-round support has helped HomeBiogas not only expand our operations but also adopt more sustainable business practices through tailored training and capacity-building support.”

HomeBiogas aims to install 34,000 biogas systems in Western and Central Kenya by the end of 2028.

Biogas

Biogas is a renewable energy source produced by anaerobic digestion of organic materials. Agricultural residues, household waste, sewage sludge, wastewaters and industrial organic waste can be used as feedstock. As the waste decomposes, it releases primarily methane (CH₄) and carbon dioxide (CO₂). This can be burned as fuel or processed into biomethane, which is generally compatible with natural gas infrastructure.

Photo: MCFA investee HomeBiogas office in Kenya – Jason Mulikita for MCFA / Nefco



“The future looks very bright,” Mungai says. “We have barely scratched the surface in terms of reach and the potential to transition rural families to clean cooking. We are more excited than ever to ensure that as many households as possible adopt clean cooking through HomeBiogas innovations, supported by organisations like MCFA, by making biogas solutions more accessible and affordable.”

Simon, a small-scale farmer, invested KSh 49,000 in his HomeBiogas digester, which was installed in May 2025. The digester is

fed with manure from his chickens and cows and provides enough biogas for the daily needs of six people, including cooking and boiling water for showering. The resulting slurry from the biodigester is used to fertilise his banana trees and cow pasture.

On average, a Kenyan earns about KSh 78,000 per month, so a digester can be a significant investment. However, Simon previously spent KSh 7,000 per month on wood and LPG, so his investment should pay for itself in seven months, while the system should last 10-15 years.



“The HomeBiogas Farmer System is an effective, easy-to-use and low-maintenance anaerobic biodigester that converts animal waste into biogas and organic fertilizer,” explains **Daniel Mungai**, Country Head of Commerce for HomeBiogas Kenya.

Photo: Daniel Mungai, Country Head of Commerce, HomeBiogas Kenya – Jason Mulikita for MCFA / Nefco



“We are delighted to see HomeBiogas playing a key role in making biogas more visible, accessible and affordable for rural households in Kenya. Their solution shows how waste-to-energy technologies can deliver clean cooking, better livelihoods and environmental benefits at scale,” says **Aliona Fomenko**, Senior Programme Manager, Nefco.

Photo: Aliona Fomenko, Senior Programme Manager, Nefco – Jussi Ratilainen for Nefco

3. MCFA PORTFOLIO

MCFA portfolio

At the end of 2025, MCFA's portfolio consisted of 22 companies in six project countries. The majority of the programme portfolio – 14 companies – was procured through the first call for proposals (MCFA1), which was concluded in 2023. By the end of the year, nine companies, selected through the second call (MCFA2), had been contracted while a further three were still in the pipeline to be contracted.



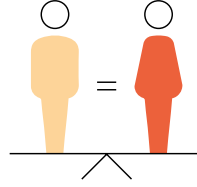
*Photo: Njeri Muhami,
Country Head of
Finance, HomeBiogas
Kenya – Jason Mulikita
for MCFA / Nefco*

Portfolio highlights



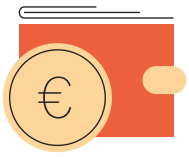
22

portfolio companies



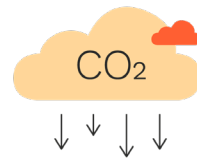
3

women-owned companies



21

companies offering PayGo or consumer financing to increase affordability



16

companies leveraging carbon finance

Geographic division

While MCFA has contracted companies in all project countries except Malawi, the largest number of companies are based in Kenya, followed by Zambia.

Number of companies

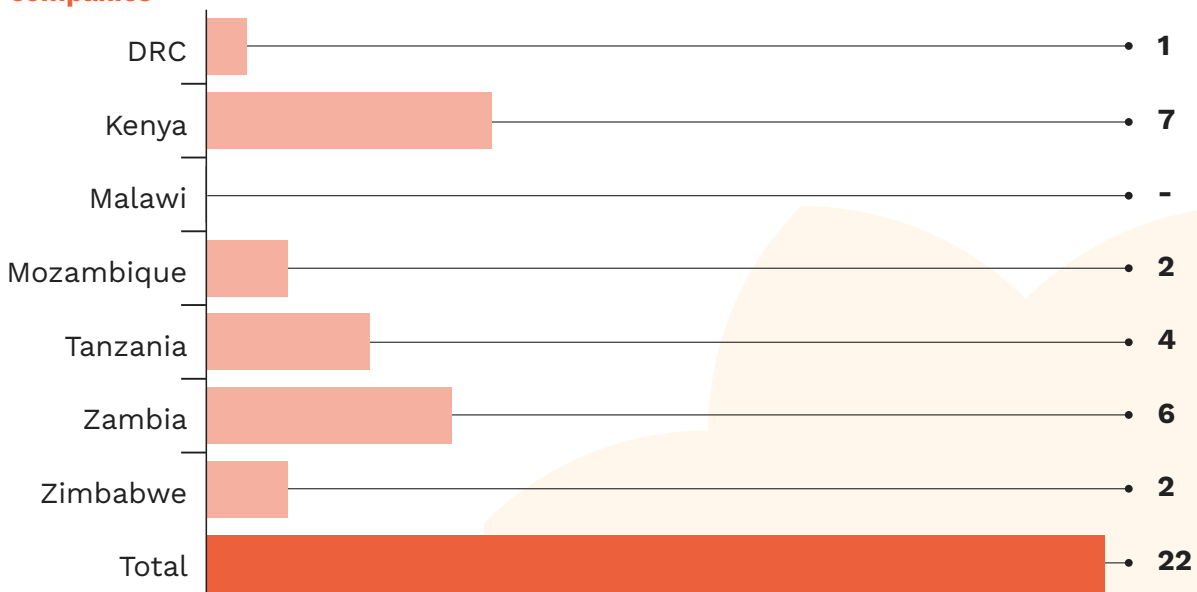


Figure 1. Number of portfolio companies per country

Technologies

MCFA can support clean cooking services provided through a variety of modern, higher-tier cookstoves powered by electricity, biogas, LPG, solid or liquid biofuels, or solar energy.

Read more about MCFA’s funding approach at [MCFA’s website](#).

Electric cooking solutions such as pressure cookers and induction plates continue to be the most prevalent technology, followed by modern biomass stoves and biogas solutions. While LPG was included as an eligible technology in the second funding round, no companies in the portfolio are currently selling LPG cooking solutions.



Photo: Gasifier stove – Jason Mulikita for MCFA / Nefco

Number of companies (Number of expected CCS)

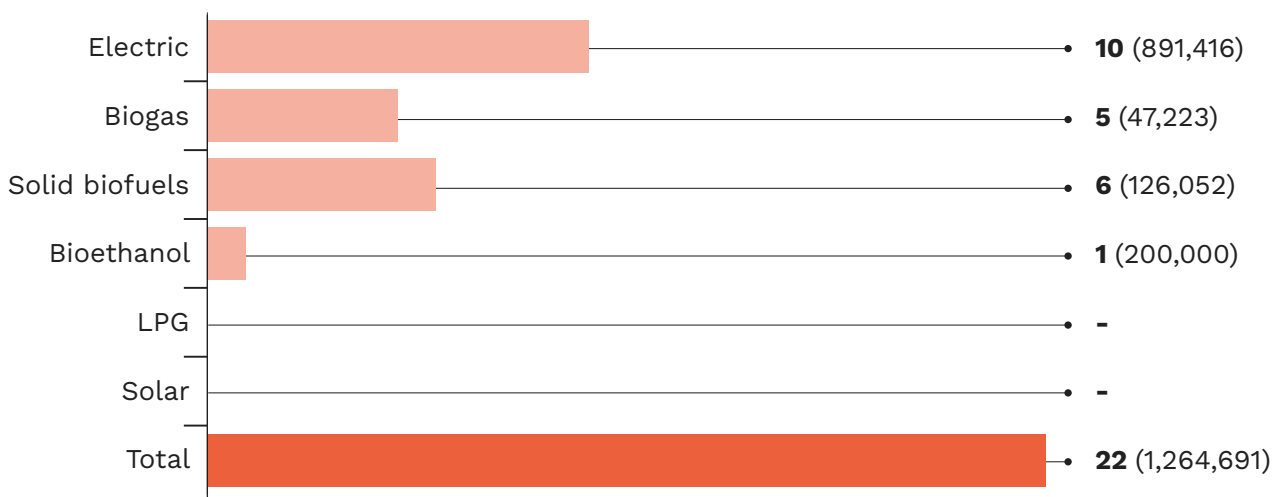
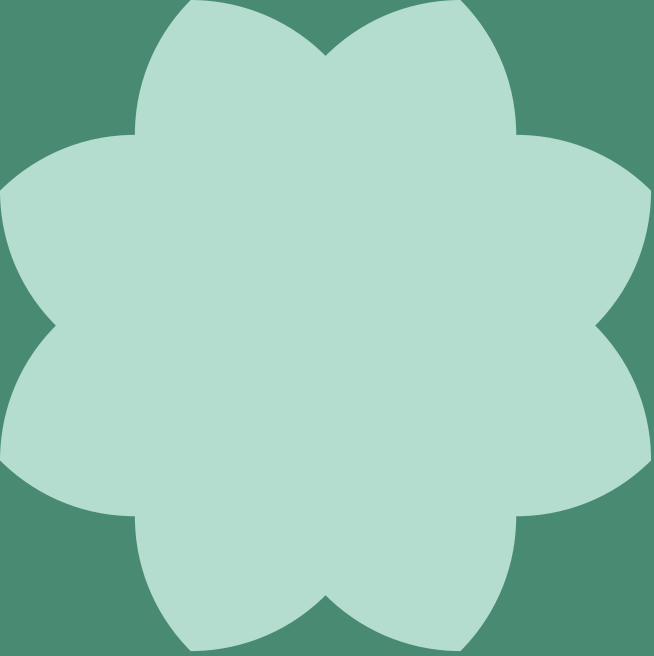
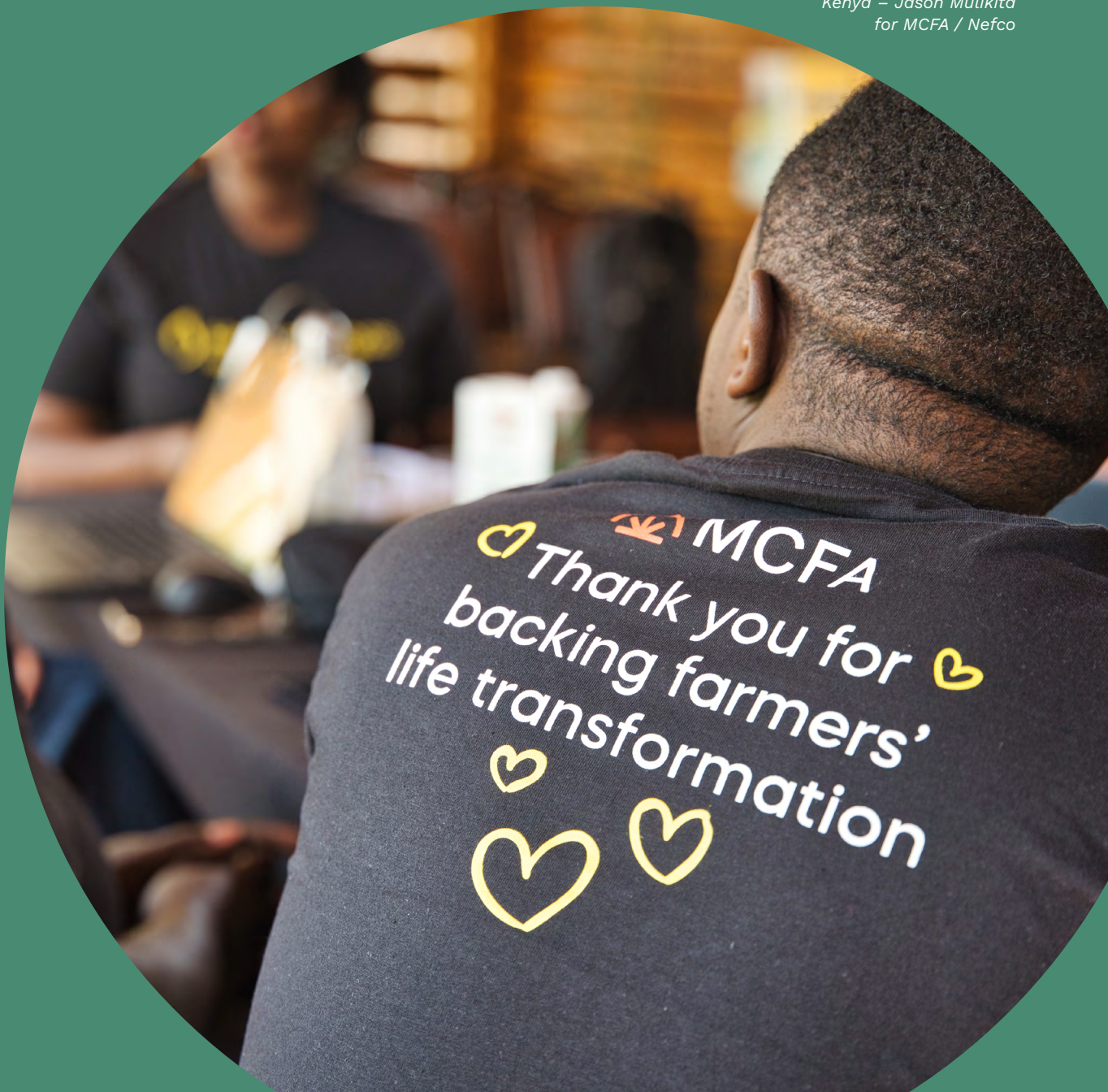


Figure 2. Number of portfolio companies and expected CCS per eligible technology



“Electric cooking solutions such as pressure cookers and induction plates continue to be the most prevalent technology, followed by modern biomass stoves and biogas solutions.”

Photo: MCFA portfolio company employees in Kenya – Jason Mulikita for MCFA / Nefco



Company portfolio overview

Country	Financed companies	Technology	Contracted	% of cumulative CCS target achieved	Number of contracted CCS ¹
DRC	BURN Manufacturing RDC	Electric	2023	0%	50,000
Kenya	African eCosync Energy	Solid biofuels (pellets)	2024	0%	13,000
	Better Cooking Company Limited (Ecosafi)	Solid biofuels (pellets)	2024	56%	25,000
	Bidhaa Sasa	Electric	2025	0%	110,000
	BURN Manufacturing Kenya	Electric	2023	12%	130,000
	HomeBiogas	Biogas	2024	33%	34,000
	KOKO Networks Limited	Bioethanol	2025	0%	200,000 ²
	Scode	Electric	2025	0%	96,420

¹‘Contracted CCS’ refers to the number of sustainable Clean Cooking Services that MCFA can incentivise over the 4-year implementation period.

² KOKO Networks stopped its operations in Kenya in February 2026.



Photo: MCFA investee customer in Kenya – Jason Mulikita for MCFA / Nefco

Country	Financed companies	Technology	Contracted	% of cumulative CCS target achieved	Number of contracted CCS ¹
Mozambique	BURN Manufacturing Mozambique	Electric	2023	0%	66,666
	ENGIE Energy Access Moçambique with Good Farmland Management Kenya (Sistema.bio)	Biogas	2024	0%	2,000
Tanzania	BURN Manufacturing TZ	Electric	2023	34%	130,000
	ENGIE Energy Access Tanzania with Good Farmland Management Kenya (Sistema.bio)	Biogas	2025	0%	2,700
	Hanny G Investment	Institutional stoves, solid biofuels (briquettes)	2025	0%	4,300
	Sayari Safi (UpEnergy Tanzania)	Electric	2023	31%	123,250
Zambia	BURN Manufacturing Zambia	Electric	2023	2%	80,000
	Emerging Cooking Solutions	Solid biofuels (pellets)	2023	33%	28,666
	ENGIE Energy Access Zambia with Good Farmland Management Kenya (Sistema.bio)	Biogas	2023	0%	2,392
	Ener-G-Africa Zambia	Solid biofuels (pellets)	2025	0%	40,000
	Greenlight Planet (Sun King)	Electric	2025	0%	44,060
	UpEnergy Zambia	Electric	2025	0%	40,600
Zimbabwe	Lanforce Energy	Biogas	2023	45%	6,131
	Powerlive Zimbabwe	Solid biofuels (pellets)	2025	0%	15,000

Table 1. MCFA portfolio overview



Clean cooking as-a-service

EcoSafi combines a modern gasification stove and pellet fuel with an innovative business model to expand clean cooking in Africa.

“People don’t cook over charcoal because they like it. They use it because it is available and they can buy a little every day,” explains **Jordyan Woodley**, CEO and Co-founder of EcoSafi, the Better Cooking Company. “Our stove is the best on the market in terms of design and pricing and covers a greater range of cooking needs. The biggest barriers to clean cooking are inaccessibility and the lack of customer-centred functionality.”

EcoSafi has developed the only Tier 5 biomass stove, which uses biomass pellets for fuel. The stove itself is too expensive for many families to purchase outright, so the company uses a subscription model. Customers pay for the pellets and receive free access to the stove, similar to an as-a-service (aaS) offering.

MCFA has offered the company up to EUR 1.5 million, primarily in results-based financing, which is expected to help mobilise additional co-financing. EcoSafi aims to provide 25,000 clean cooking solutions to 125,000 people in Kenya with MCFA support.

“The stoves burn a gas with a range of temperatures, just like LPG stoves,” Woodley continues. “Our fuel is the cheapest on the market, available in

daily quantities, smokeless and can be purchased from distribution points located near to customers.”

EcoSafi’s factories, which are powered by renewable energy, manufacture the pellets from agricultural waste such as sugarcane bagasse. Pellets are distributed through local dealers, who act like agents for EcoSafi.

“Stores might stock the pellets alongside their other merchandise,” says Woodley. “Yet I know of some women and church deacons who sell them from their homes to their neighbours as a part-time job. They can simply store the pellets in a spare room because they don’t need a fancy delivery system.”

“Another benefit of our stoves is that they don’t require a connection to the grid. Forced air gasification requires a battery to power the fans, so small solar panels are provided with the stoves in off-grid areas,” says Woodley. “Rural areas are some of the least electrified and use the dirtiest fuels. Our goal is for cooking with EcoSafi to become the new normal across the continent.”

Biomass pellets

Biomass pellets can be cleaner and cheaper than charcoal, but much depends upon the supply chain. The biomass must be sourced sustainably and produced and distributed efficiently. Agricultural residues are generally considered excellent feedstock for biomass pellets, but alternative uses such as livestock feed and for soil rejuvenation must also be considered to accurately calculate their benefits.



One of EcoSafi's customers is Martin, the owner of a restaurant near the Mau Forest in Kenya's Rift Valley. He previously used charcoal stoves, which covered the walls and roof of his restaurant with soot. He accepted an offer to try out a stove and liked it so much he now has four.

Not only is Martin pleased with the improvement in air quality, he is happy because the pellets are cheaper and offer faster cooking times than charcoal. These benefits have attracted the attention of restaurant customers and staff, who are interested in acquiring their own stoves.



Photo: Restaurant owner and customer to EcoSafi in Kenya – Jason Mulikita for MCFE / Nefco

Carbon finance and market development

Carbon finance has become a vital enabler for clean cooking projects, unlocking essential revenue for scale-up and long-term sustainability. However, the sector has faced increasing scrutiny in recent years, driven by legitimate questions about whether earlier methodologies and assumptions were sufficiently conservative or fit-for-purpose as expectations over climate impacts evolve. The industry is moving toward more rigorous, science-based approaches and strengthening MRV practices to enhance credibility and integrity.

In parallel, Article 6 of the Paris Agreement introduces a new framework for international carbon trading between countries, offering a compliance-driven alternative to voluntary carbon markets (VCM) grounded in the principles of transparency and integrity. For clean cooking companies, Article 6 presents both opportunities and challenges: it opens access to a new pool of buyers – primarily governments seeking to meet their NDCs – but also introduces more rigorous eligibility criteria and host country requirements as well as greater scrutiny of project assumptions. Early engagement with host country governments, alignment with national climate strategies and preparation for country-specific processes will be essential for project developers seeking to benefit from either 6.2 cooperative approaches or participation in the 6.4 mechanism.

In 2024, MCFA presented its first knowledge product under the MCFA Insights series, Unlocking High-Value Carbon Credits from Clean Cooking: A Guide to Accessing Article 6, written by HAMERKOP Climate Impacts. This study aims to support MCFA portfolio companies and other stakeholders in the clean cooking sector to navigate the evolving carbon market landscape and maximise benefits for clean cooking initiatives across Sub-Saharan Africa.

“The clean cooking carbon sector has faced increasing scrutiny in recent years, driven by legitimate questions about whether earlier methodologies and assumptions have been sufficiently conservative or fit-for-purpose as expectations over climate impacts evolve.”



Photo: Customer in Kenya cooking on an gasifier stove – Jason Mulikita for MCFA / Nefco

Core components of the impact management system

MCFA's impact management ensures transparent and evidence-based measurement of how clean cooking services (CCS) improve wellbeing, reduce emissions and support sustainable market development across its project countries. This approach supports accountability and generates learnings that benefit both programme steering and sector development.

THEORY OF CHANGE AND RESULTS FRAMEWORKS

MCFA's theory of change describes the overall logic linking financial incentives for modern cooking solutions to measurable reductions in climate-forcing pollutants, improved health outcomes, time savings and strengthened gender equality. Underpinning this are donor results frameworks, which ensure that the key performance indicators (KPIs) for the MCFA programme reflect expected outputs, outcomes and long-term contributions to the transition to clean cooking in target countries. The full description of the theory of change is available on [MCFA's website](#).

MONITORING, REPORTING AND VERIFICATION (MRV)

A key feature of results-based financing is ensuring that claimed results – in this case, sales of clean cooking services – are verified before any payments are made. This process, described in MCFA's MRV framework, includes confirming that payment requests meet eligibility requirements and verifying that reported clean cooking services have actually been provided to end customers.

DIGITAL RESULTS ARCHITECTURE: PROSPECT ENERGY SECTOR DATA PLATFORM

Prospect serves as MCFA's central platform for compiling and reviewing sales data submitted by portfolio companies. It has enabled the shift from manual monitoring to more automated verification processes. In the medium and long term, Prospect will eventually also support learning and planning at company, national and regional levels, helping to advance progress towards SDG7. In 2025, MCFA made significant progress in integrating portfolio companies' data collection within Prospect, with the results transferred through the automated system for the first time. Visit [Prospect's website](#) to learn more.

INDEPENDENT VERIFICATION AGENT (IVA)

An external Independent Verification Agent (IVA) – a partnership between NIRAS International Consulting and 60 Decibels – conducts telephone checks and, when needed, site-based verification. The approach builds on Prospect’s digital verification, reducing the need for extensive telephone surveys. Given the complexity of some project contexts, telephone verification is still used when necessary. The IVA also collects information on consumer protection, user experience and, in the case of fuel-based service delivery models, fuel availability. In 2025, detailed verification design documents were developed and put into use.

MCFA EVALUATIONS AND THEMATIC STUDIES

Independent evaluations and thematic assessments carried out by sector experts form a core pillar of MCFA’s impact management. They review programme-level progress and explore specific issues in greater depth, generating insights that support strategic steering and contribute valuable knowledge and lessons learnt to the wider sector.

“A key feature of results-based financing is ensuring that claimed results – in this case, sales of clean cooking services – are verified before any payments are made.”



Measuring impacts

NOT JUST SALES BUT LONG-TERM USE

Clean cooking service delivery is the core unit of MCFA’s monitoring and impact measurement. Supported companies must ensure that stoves – and, where relevant, fuels – are not only distributed but used by customers over time. Results-based payments are contingent on evidence of continued use, setting MCFA apart from similar results-based financing programmes. MCFA tracks digitally end-user payments to help confirm the sustainability of provided services.

INDIRECT MEASUREMENT OF HEALTH, CLIMATE, ENVIRONMENTAL AND TIME-SAVINGS BENEFITS

Directly measuring health improvements, time savings and avoided emissions at household level would be methodologically complex, labour intensive and costly. Instead, MCFA applies robust, science-based calculations that estimate these benefits indirectly, based on the type of stove and fuel used.

To do this, MCFA uses a toolkit that builds on the World Health Organization’s (WHO) Benefits of Action to Reduce Household Air Pollution (BAR-HAP) model. This tool was updated in 2025 by Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL) into the Clean Cooking Economic Co-Benefits Toolkit (CCEC).

The Excel-based CCEC Toolkit estimates reductions in climate-forcing pollutants, averted mortality and disability-adjusted life years (DALYs), and avoided unsustainable wood harvest based on the number of clean cooking services sold and sustained in a given time period. It incorporates case-specific parameters such as stove and fuel types, lab-tested technical performance, country context and expected usage.

All calculations draw on extensive scientific evidence compiled by organisations including the WHO, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), among others.

“Regular payments by stove-using clients serve as a proxy indicator of sustainability, demonstrating that the clean cooking company is delivering reliable, quality services.”

Petra Mikkolainen, Senior Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning Manager

Updated results framework

In 2025, MCFA reviewed the definitions and underpinning methodologies of the programme's key performance indicators (KPIs) to ensure alignment with evolving programme monitoring requirements. The list of KPIs is presented below.

CLEAN COOKING SERVICES KPIs:

- # of Clean Cooking Services (CCS) sold, disaggregated by Tier, by technology, by gender of the primary customer, by type of customer (household, business, institution), by business model and per country
- Kilos/litres of sustainable fuels sold to customers, disaggregated by fuel type



OUTCOME AND IMPACT KPIs:

- # of people with access to clean cooking
- Reduction in climate-forcing pollutants (tCO_{2e}/year)
- Averted mortality and DALYs
- Total time savings (hours/year)
- Unsustainable wood harvest avoided (kg/year)

COMPANY KPIs:

- Co-financing (EUR) leveraged by CSPs, disaggregated by type and source
- # of women-owned clean cooking businesses supported
- # of direct net jobs created, disaggregated by gender
- # of agents engaged, disaggregated by gender
- # of employees, disaggregated by gender
- # of employees in senior management positions, disaggregated by gender
- # of members of governing bodies, disaggregated by gender
- # of cooking service providers receiving or expecting carbon finance revenues from MCFA-supported CCS
- # of cooking service providers offering PayGo and other consumer finance sales models

Photo: Petra Mikkolainen, Senior Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning Manager, Nefco – Jussi Ratilainen for Nefco

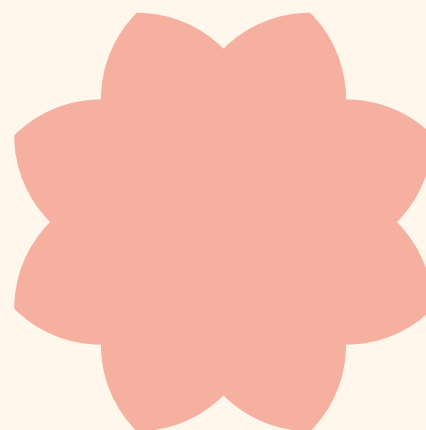
Achieved results

The results achieved between 2024 and 2025 demonstrate steady progress across the MCFA portfolio despite significant market, regulatory and macroeconomic challenges across the project countries. The operations of the companies financed under the first call (MCFA1) continued to mature in 2025, while the first investees contracted under MCFA2 began their implementation journeys in the second half of the year. Together, portfolio companies sold **41,049 clean cooking services (CCS)** by the end of 2025, with **67% purchased by women as primary customers**. This confirms MCFA's progress toward gender-responsive market development.

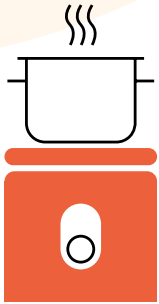
Across the project countries, performance varied according to market maturity, technology type and stage of company readiness. Kenya and Tanzania remained the strongest performing markets in 2025, supported by a combination of established distribution capacity, consumer familiarity with modern cooking technologies and a policy environment supportive of clean energy solutions. The rest of the project countries exhibited slower uptake, in part due to more challenging market conditions. In these countries, significant groundwork must be laid before scale can be achieved.

The results also highlight MCFA's distinctiveness compared to many other RBF programmes: the programme's **focus on long-term stove and fuel usage**, rather than one-time distribution, has already demonstrated added value in strengthening sustained impact. The Prospect digital platform has further enhanced data quality and reduced verification costs.

MCFA-supported companies continued to mobilise significant levels of **private and public co-financing**, confirming the programme's catalytic role. By the end of 2025, **EUR 37.4 million** in external funding had been leveraged against **EUR 8.7 million** in MCFA disbursements, resulting in a **leverage ratio of 1:4**. This reflects strengthened business models within the portfolio and MCFA's ability to de-risk early-stage companies and crowd in follow-on capital. Co-financing was sourced from a mix of equity, commercial loans, grants and carbon-related revenue streams, highlighting the diverse financial pathways emerging across the portfolio.

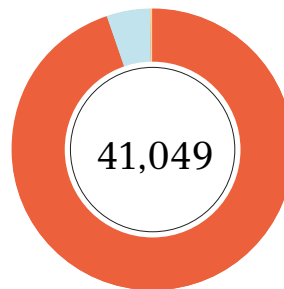


Results by the end of 2025



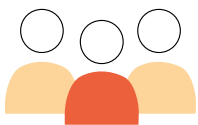
Clean Cooking Services sold and sustained

Target 1,264,691*
Achieved 41,049**



Clean Cooking Services per customer type 2023-2025

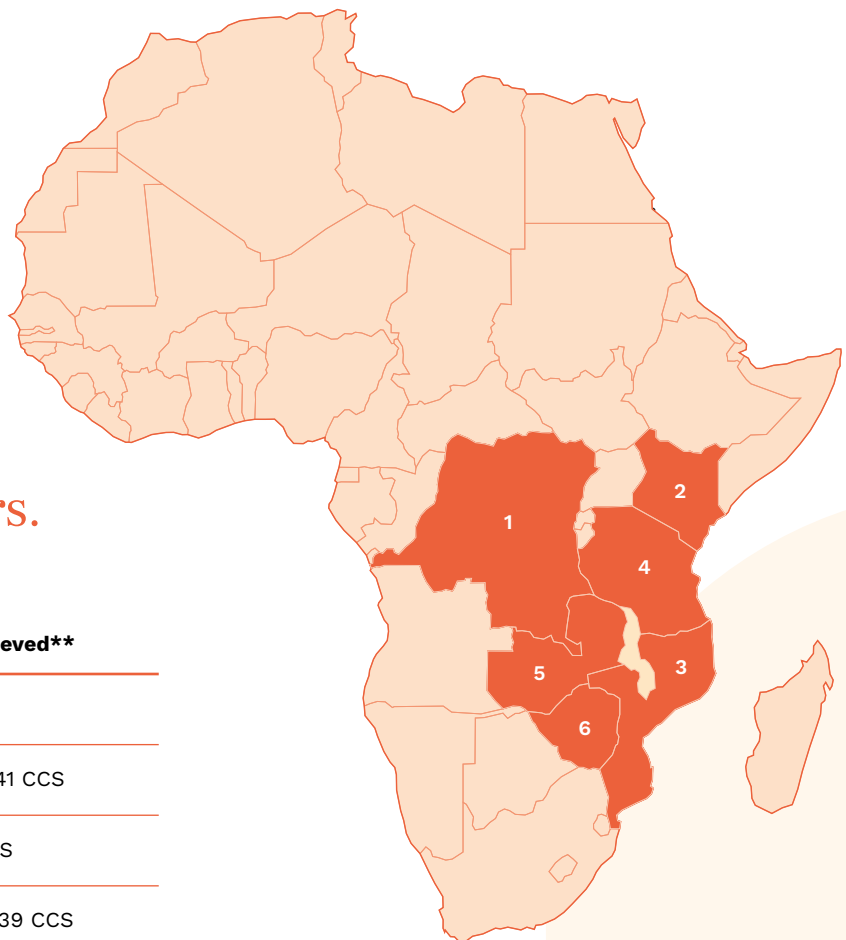
- Residential, 38,987
- Commercial, 2,056
- Institutional, 6



People with access to clean cooking

Target 5,034,077*
Achieved 178,434**

68% sold to women as primary customers.



Country	Target*	Achieved**
1 DRC	52,246 CCS	-
2 Kenya	614,222 CCS	13,641 CCS
3 Mozambique	71,628 CCS	1 CCS
4 Tanzania	266,138 CCS	23,439 CCS
5 Zambia	239,326 CCS	3,164 CCS
6 Zimbabwe	21,131 CCS	804 CCS

* End of programme target is based on the current funding agreements and is subject to change
** Achieved 2023-2025

Environmental and social impacts achieved 2023-2025



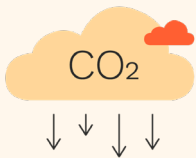
Averted mortality and disability-adjusted life-years (ADALYs)

147 years



Kilos of sustainable pellets sold to customers

1,724,280 kg



Tonnes of CO₂e avoided/year

69,374 tCO₂e



Unsustainable wood harvest avoided (tonnes/year)

26,921 tonnes



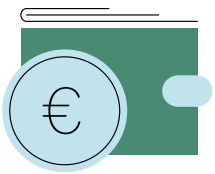
Total time savings (hours/year)

32.5 million hours



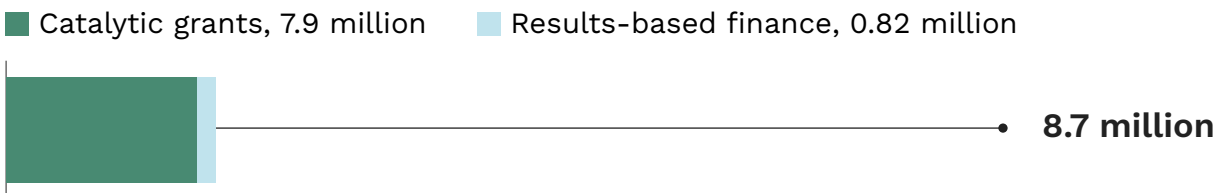
Photo: HomeBiogas biodigester in Kenya – Jason Mulikita for MCFA / Nefco

“Each euro invested by MCFA helped the companies raise four additional euros, reflecting MCFA’s role in reducing early-stage risk and enabling follow-on investment.”

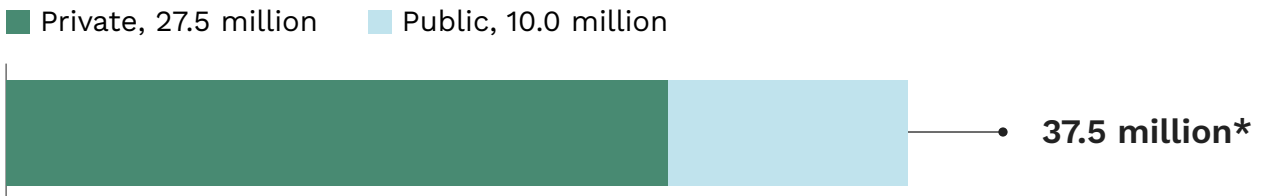


Funding, disbursements and co-financing

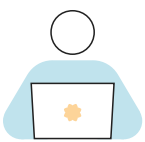
Disbursements to the companies 2023-2025



Leveraged co-financing by the companies 2023-2025

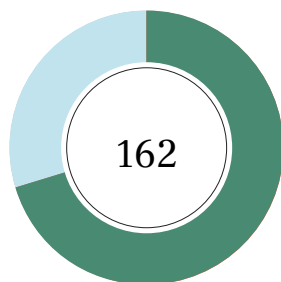


* Leverage ratio over 1:4



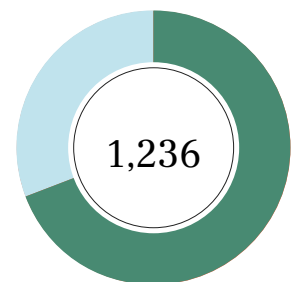
Direct FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) jobs created, net 2023-2025

■ Female, 114
■ Male, 48



Number of agents engaged, net 2023-2025

■ Female, 855
■ Male, 381





Beyond sales: a customer-first approach to credit management

Most MCFA investee companies offer clean cooking services to their customers on credit and operate in environments where financial sustainability is paramount. Yet, end-user credit entails a number of risks, including high default rates, customer dissatisfaction and inefficiencies in loan management.

“By redefining credit management processes and fostering a culture of accountability and customer care, the training sought to transform how companies approach financing.”

These may not only impact the bottom line but also hinder the impact goal of providing sustainable clean cooking solutions to customers. Recognising these challenges, Catalyst Energy Advisors and MAF Lab – arranged credit management training to equip MCFA investees with the tools and knowledge to address these problems effectively.

By redefining credit management processes and fostering a culture of accountability and customer care, the training sought to transform how companies approach financing. It emphasised moving beyond short-term gains and focusing on long-term success, for both the companies and their customers. This transformation is critical in ensuring that customers not only repay their loans but also derive maximum benefit from the products they finance.

The training was designed to transition participants from traditional credit management approaches to a more holistic model that integrates customer care, operational efficiency and financial sustainability. The ultimate goal was to establish practices that maximise



*Photo: Biogas stove –
Jason Mulikita for
MCFA / Nefco*

successful repayments while fostering long-term customer relationships.

Across four sessions, the participants explored the critical components of credit management, emphasising sustainable impact over mere sales. A robust onboarding process was also discussed, focusing on assessing customer readiness, financial capability and willingness to repay. Participants learned to cultivate positive customer relationships through continuous engagement and tailored follow-ups. Techniques to prioritise high-risk customers and reward consistent payers were introduced, alongside strategies to celebrate customer milestones that strengthen brand loyalty. In the final session, the participants discussed accountability frameworks and performance metrics, ensuring that team roles are aligned with both commercial and credit objectives.

The training concluded with actionable strategies for transitioning to a PayGo 2.0 model, characterised by a culture of customer care, proactive problem-solving and improved onboarding techniques. Key takeaways included the

significance of aligning customer and company objectives, fostering a learning environment and conducting consistent performance reviews. Participants were encouraged to apply these principles, ensuring not only financial viability but also enhanced customer satisfaction and organisational resilience.



Key training highlights:

- 1. Redefining Credit Management** – Participants explored ways to enhance their credit practices, including building robust onboarding processes to assess customer readiness, financial capability and repayment willingness.
- 2. Customer Engagement** – The training introduced strategies for continuous engagement, tailored follow-ups, prioritising high-risk customers and rewarding consistent payers. Celebrating customer milestones was highlighted as a way to foster loyalty and strengthen brand relationships.
- 3. Operational Efficiency** – Accountability frameworks and performance metrics were discussed to ensure team alignment with both commercial and credit objectives.
- 4. Transition to PayGo 2.0** – The programme concluded with actionable steps for adopting a PayGo 2.0 model, which prioritises proactive problem-solving, improved onboarding techniques and a strong culture of customer care.

Key takeaways:

- 1.** Aligning customer and company objectives strengthens financial sustainability and impact outcomes.
- 2.** Creating a culture of continuous learning and regular performance reviews fosters organisational resilience.
- 3.** Prioritising customer care and long-term relationships enhances both repayment success and customer satisfaction.

By adopting these principles, companies can achieve greater financial stability while delivering lasting value to their customers, ensuring the success of their clean cooking solutions

“By fostering accountability and prioritising customer relationships, the training encouraged companies to look beyond short-term sales gains, strengthening their financial stability while advancing their mission-driven goals.”



Photo: MCFA investee customer in Kenya – Jason Mulikita for MCFA / Nefco



Lessons learned so far

1. DIGITAL VERIFICATION IMPROVES DATA QUALITY, REDUCES THE NEED FOR MANUAL VERIFICATION AND SHORTENS DISBURSEMENT TIMELINES

Integrating portfolio companies into Prospect streamlines reporting and improves CCS data consistency. While there is an initial effort required to set up the integration and onboard users, early adopters benefit from faster verification, fewer discrepancies, quicker disbursements and more predictable cash flow. Digital verification approaches should be incorporated into RBF programme design early on.

2. MARKET READINESS VARIES WIDELY ACROSS COUNTRIES

Kenya and Tanzania, characterised by mature markets, favourable policy environments and relatively reliable grids, saw faster progress than less developed markets in other MCFA project countries. MCFA's market-driven strategy is aimed at adapting clean cooking services to each market's needs, while offering also vital catalytic grants for earlier stage business development efforts. For example, Zambia faces challenges from extended load-shedding and low LPG adoption due to cost barriers, as reflected in the relatively high number of solid biofuel projects in the country. Nevertheless, efforts to increase grid reliability and expand connections to mini-grids are expected to increase the viability of e-cooking in the country.



Photo: MCFA investee customer in Kenya – Jason Mulikita for MCFA / Nefco

Nearly all MCFA portfolio companies offer clean cooking solutions on credit or through fuel subscription models to improve accessibility.

3. CONSUMER FINANCE REMAINS BOTH A CRITICAL ENABLER AND A KEY RISK

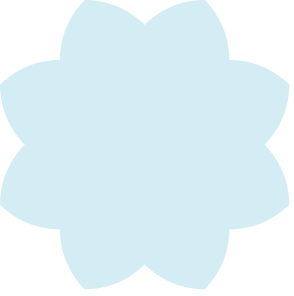
Expensive modern cooking services remain difficult for many to afford. Nearly all MCFA portfolio companies offer clean cooking solutions on credit or through fuel subscription models to improve accessibility. Although consumer financing is becoming common, the sector lags behind PayGo solar sector in adopting effective credit management practices. Training provided by Catalyst Energy Advisors stressed the need for stronger customer onboarding, active customer engagement and greater operational discipline. Companies with robust credit management see greater repayments, more satisfied customers and increased stove usage.

4. GENDER-RESPONSIVE APPROACHES STRENGTHEN PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

The high share of women purchasers in 2025 demonstrates the importance of ensuring gender-inclusive distribution channels, targeted marketing and after-sales support. Companies that intentionally engage women-led agent networks see higher sales and retention.

5. CARBON FINANCE SHOWS POTENTIAL WHILE PRE-FINANCING REMAINS A CHALLENGE – COMPANIES MUST ADOPT HIGH-INTEGRITY APPROACHES

Carbon finance can be a vital enabler for clean cooking projects, unlocking essential revenue for scale-up and long-term sustainability. However, the sector has faced increasing scrutiny in recent years, driven by legitimate questions about whether earlier methodologies and assumptions were sufficiently conservative or fit for purpose as expectations over climate impacts evolve. The industry is moving toward more rigorous, science-based approaches and strengthening MRV practices to enhance credibility and integrity. Donors, buyers and regulators demand high-integrity project principles – such as robust additionality, transparent baseline setting and conservative emissions calculations – aligned with the latest international standards (e.g. ICVCM Core Carbon Principles and the Article 6.2 and 6.4 mechanisms of the Paris Agreement). MCFA's technical assistance will continue to help companies meet these expectations, ensuring that carbon revenues are credible and sustainable while contributing to genuine climate benefits and development outcomes.



Service providers

MCFA is collaborating with several service providers to implement the programme:

Catalyst Energy Advisors, together with **Distill Inclusion**, **Gaia** and **MAF Lab**, provide advisory services to MCFA portfolio companies across areas such as operations development, credit management, corporate finance, environment and sustainability, and gender inclusion.

HAMERKOP Climate Impacts is a consulting firm specialising in climate finance, energy access and nature-based solutions. They have worked on assignments in over 50 countries, effectively supporting carbon project certification and implementation, offering climate finance advice, and guiding climate policy development. They support MCFA portfolio companies in navigating complex carbon markets.

NIRAS International Consulting and **60 Decibels** serve as the Independent Verification Agent (IVA) for MCFA, providing rigorous, third-party verification of programme results and customer satisfaction surveys. Together, they ensure that reported outcomes are accurate, credible and aligned with MCFA's objectives, strengthening accountability and supporting evidence-based learning and decision-making across the facility.

The Access to Energy Institute (A2EI) works with MCFA by managing **Prospect** and supporting its deployment for both the portfolio companies and the programme. Prospect, developed together with GET.invest, is an open-source digital public good that streamlines energy data collection, as well as aggregation, verification, and reporting.

Read more about MCFA's implementation arrangements on our [website](#).



“MCFA’s market-driven strategy is aimed at adapting clean cooking services to each market’s needs, while offering also vital catalytic grants for earlier stage business development efforts.”

Photo: MCFA investee customer in Kenya – Jason Mulikita for MCFA / Nefco

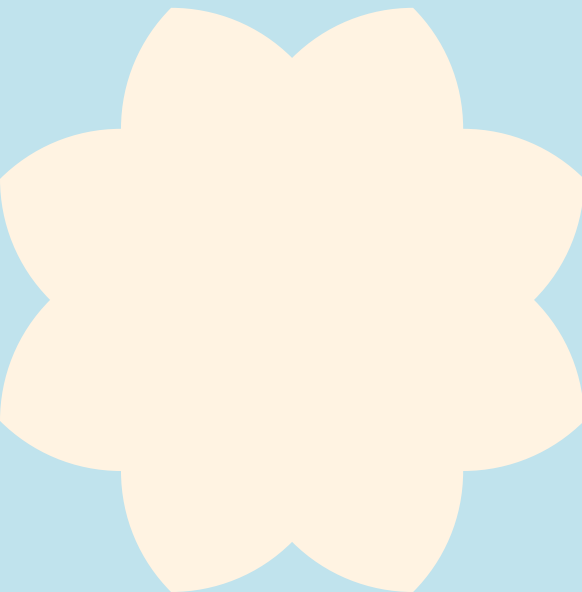




Photo: Special Funds team at Nefco - Patrik Rastenberger for Nefco

The MCFA Team at Nefco

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