Evaluation Brief · Tanzania Clean Cooking Project (TCCP)

Tanzania Clean Cooking Project: End-of-Programme Evaluation

What four years of matching grants, results-based finance and technical assistance achieved for clean cooking in Tanzania, and what comes next

Independent evaluation by TIME · Programme period: 2022 – 2026 · Funded by Sida

196,872
households reached with clean cooking solutions

984,360
people benefiting (modeled at five per household)

985
institutional cookstoves sold, 246% of target

133,858
tonnes of CO_2e avoided, 37% of target

13
investees supported across five contracting waves

US$5.09M
matching funds mobilized, 339% of target

256
direct jobs (full-time equivalent), 39% held by women

96%
of surveyed households use their TCCP-supported product

IN BRIEF

- TCCP **exceeded most of its targets**: 196,872 households reached (219%), 985 institutional stoves (246%), and US$5.1 million in matching funds (339%). Emissions avoided were the exception, at 37% of target due to a change in calculation methodologies.
- Households **use what they bought**: 96% use their product, and fuel spending fell by 42%, but **70% still cook with traditional fuel** as well, and most expect to keep doing so.
- **Results-based financing** produced the only independently verified results in the portfolio, at a fraction of the cost per household of milestone-based grants (about US$5 against US$22).
- Enterprise viability **can be confirmed for only 2 of 13 investees**, and the funding environment is shrinking as Sida and UNCDF's CookFund wind down in Tanzania.
- Women lead 4 of 13 investees, above the 20% target, but **hold 39% of jobs** against a 50% target, mostly in sales rather than production.

About the programme

The Tanzania Clean Cooking Project (TCCP) is a Sida-funded programme implemented by AECF. It began in July 2022 as a three-year, US$3.75 million programme. Additional Sida financing in September 2024 raised the budget to US$5.2 million and added a window for institutional cooking. A no-cost extension moved programme close to 31 August 2026, with monitoring through December 2026.

TCCP aims to accelerate the adoption of clean cooking among rural communities and marginalized populations in urban and peri-urban Tanzania. It supported 13 investees, contracted in five waves from 2023 to early 2026, to sell improved biomass and briquette cookstoves, LPG, and institutional cooking systems. It combined matching grants with technical assistance, policy advocacy, and gender mainstreaming.

- **Catalytic Fund:** grants of US$50,000 to US$75,000 for early-stage enterprises.
- **Growth Fund:** grants of US$100,000 to US$400,000 for growing enterprises. Both funds required a 1:0.4 match for male-owned enterprises and a 1:0.3 match for female-owned enterprises.
- **Results-based financing (RBF):** two established distributors, Burn Manufacturing and Sayari Safi, paid against independently verified sales.
- **Institutional window (from 2024):** clean cooking systems for schools and other institutions.
- **Sector support:** policy advocacy through the Tanzania Renewable Energy Association (TAREA), standards engagement and gender mainstreaming.

About the evaluation

This independent end-of-programme evaluation, conducted by TIME, assessed how far TCCP fulfilled its commitment to accelerating access to affordable clean cooking for households and institutions in underserved areas. It examined the validity of the Theory of Change and the market systems development approach, assessed the sustainability and scalability of results, and drew lessons for future programming.

The evaluation used a convergent mixed-methods approach against the six OECD-DAC criteria, with two further lenses: market systems development and the effectiveness of financing instruments. Attribution was assessed through triangulation rather than a counterfactual comparison. Each finding carries an evidence status: confirmed, partially confirmed, unresolved, or cannot be checked. Draft findings were validated with 43 stakeholders at the TCCP End-of-Programme Event in Dodoma on 27 August 2026.

Evidence base

Source	Coverage
Household and institutional survey	300 responses (269 households and 31 institutions) covering all 13 investees
Key informant interviews	22 interviews with Sida, the Ministry of Energy, TAREA, TACCS, peer funders (MCFA, UNCDF, World Bank/ESMAP), NMB Bank, AECF and all 13 investees
Focus group discussions	Discussions in Swahili with product users of eight investees
Document and portfolio review	AECF results tracker, investee progress and site-visit reports, independent verification reports, GHG workbooks and financial statements
Validation	End-of-Programme Event, 27 August 2026, with government, AECF, investees and sector associations

Limitations: *AECF site-visit "verified" figures matched investee self-reports exactly, so outputs were independently verified only for the RBF investees and a few others; the planned comparison group of non-TCCP market actors was not achieved; the GHG calculation method is not yet agreed; and headline figures are gross of any overlap with other funders. People-benefiting figures are modelled, not counted.*

Key findings

FINDING 1 | RELEVANCE AND COHERENCE

TCCP fit national priorities and a real financing gap, but a changed funding landscape now risks double counting

TCCP's design aligns with Tanzania's National Energy Policy, the National Clean Cooking Strategy 2024–2034 (which targets 80% clean cooking adoption by 2034), and Sida's climate objectives. Biomass still supplies about 85% of national energy, and an independent IRENA study confirms the financing gap facing small clean cooking enterprises that TCCP was designed to fill. The Ministry of Energy credits TCCP with contributing to national adoption targets, although its engagement with the programme has been ad hoc.

TCCP complements UNCDF's CookFund and the Modern Cooking Facility for Africa (MCFA), which serve different enterprise sizes, stages and geographies, and it has a productive advocacy partnership with TAREA. However, since 2025, the Rural Energy Agency (REA) has moved from coordinator to an active co-financier in the same household and institutional segments, with no shared mechanism to prevent the same stove from being counted or subsidized twice. At least one investee also received concurrent support from another programme. All headline figures are therefore gross of any multi-funder overlap.

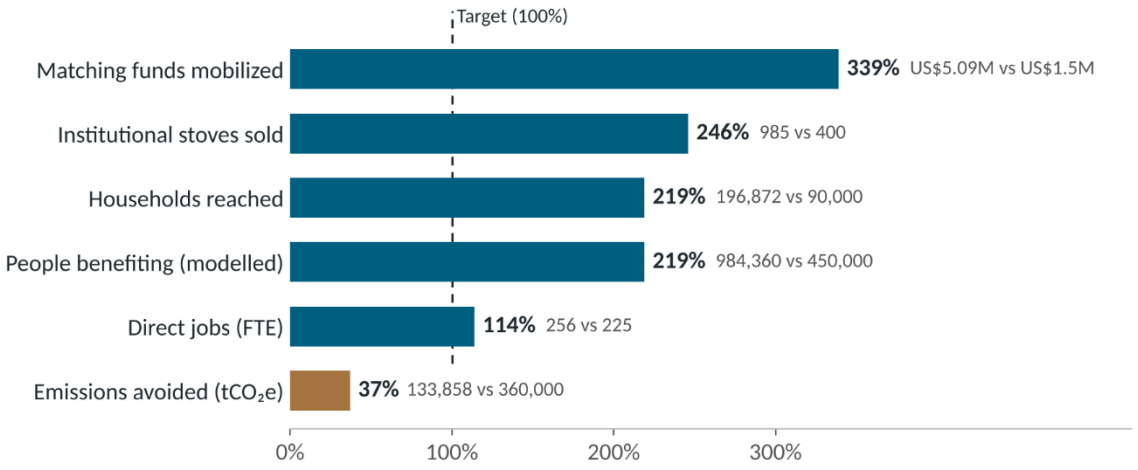
Evidence status: Confirmed for relevance; partially confirmed for coherence

FINDING 2 | EFFECTIVENESS

Most targets were exceeded, but only results-based finance produced independently verified results

Investees reached 196,872 households against a target of 90,000 and sold 985 institutional stoves against 400. Matching funds reached US$5.09 million against a target of US$1.5 million, and 256 direct jobs were created against a target of 225. Emissions avoided were the only indicator behind target, at 37%, largely due to a change in the calculation method.

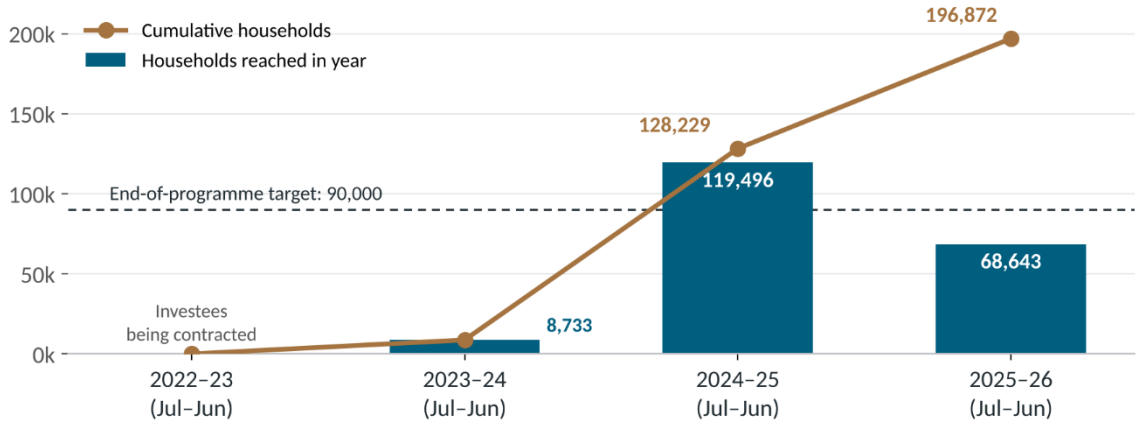
Figure 1. TCCP results as a share of end-of-programme targets



Source: AECF final results by investee (2026); TIME (2026). People benefiting is modeled as households × 5.

Delivery started slowly. Contracting delays pushed implementation from July 2022 to November 2023, and only 8,733 households were reached in the first year of sales. Reach then took off in 2024–25, when the two RBF distributors joined, and six investees were active: 119,496 households in a single year, 61% of the programme total, taking TCCP past its end-of-programme target a year early.

Figure 2. Households reached each year and cumulatively, 2022–2026

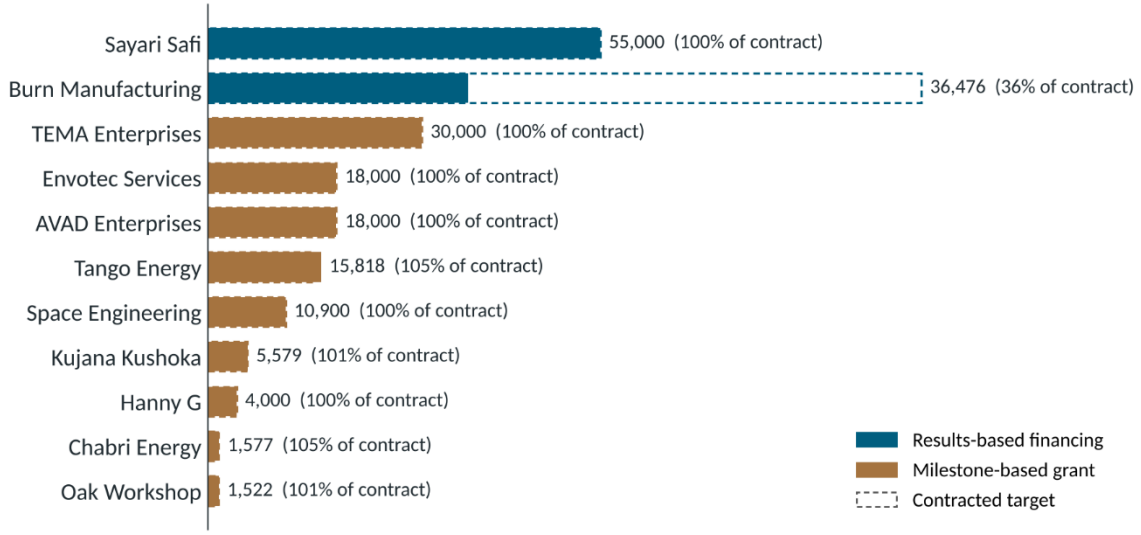


Source: AECF final report to Sida (2026), results by reporting year (July to June).

The two RBF investees provide the strongest evidence. Sayari Safi delivered its full commitment of 55,000 stoves, verified over two independent rounds. Burn Manufacturing reached 38% of its 100,000-stove target but exceeded its agent target by 86%. For most milestone-grant investees, AECF's site-visit "verified" figures reproduced investee reports exactly, sometimes to the cent, and four investees showed named data-quality problems, including frozen figures and a faulty profit (EBITDA) formula.

Twelve of the 13 investees met or exceeded their contracted reach targets, though most milestone-grant investees reported figures exactly equal to, or within a few percent of, their contracts. Burn Manufacturing was the only shortfall, at 36% of its household target. Excluding Burn, investees delivered 101% of contracted household reach.

Figure 3. Households reached by investee against contracted targets



Source: AECF final results by investee (2026). DN Products and Ecopower Solutions supplied only institutional stoves or briquettes and had no household target.

Technical assistance worked best when it answered a need the investee had already identified, such as marketing and finance training, and had little effect when it was generic. Results were also uneven by wave: Waves 4 and 5 had only seven to nine months of implementation before closing.

Evidence status: Confirmed for portfolio outputs; partially confirmed for milestone-grant investees

FINDING 3 | EFFICIENCY AND VALUE FOR MONEY

RBF delivered verified results at a much lower unit cost, and delays came in contracting, not payment

AECF's final report records US$3.12 million in grants committed to the 13 investees and US$2.82 million (90%) disbursed. The evaluation, working from SEK grant records, estimated commitments at about US$2.4 million and flagged the gap for reconciliation. On either basis, results-based financing delivered households at a markedly lower unit cost than milestone-based grants, as the spotlight below sets out.

Table 1. Value-for-money indicators (evaluation estimates)

Indicator	Result
Grant cost per household reached (portfolio)	US$12.19
Grant cost per tonne of CO_2e avoided	US$17.93
Non-grant share of total budget (TA, advocacy, M&E, staff and overhead)	38%
Disbursement once contracted	Generally timely
Documented, weighted investee selection scorecard	None found

Source: TIME (2026). Converted from SEK at about SEK 10.35 per US$. Unit costs combine verified RBF output with self-reported milestone-grant output, so they are not fully audited.

Disbursement followed each investee's actual procurement needs rather than a fixed schedule, which the evaluation judged sensible. Delays sat upstream, in contracting: one contract took five months to execute, and one investee's grant-financed equipment had still not cleared customs after the grant closed. Enterprise-level value for money could not be assessed for most investees because their financial data was unusable.

Evidence status: Confirmed

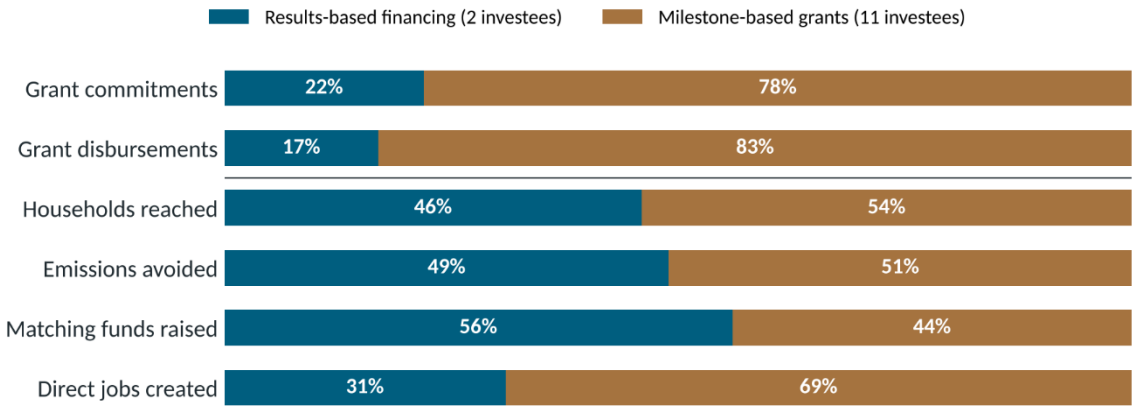
> *"Shipments previously took approximately one month, but the delivery period later increased to almost two months. These importation delays affected our ability to achieve the milestones within the agreed timelines."*
>
> — TCCP investee

SPOTLIGHT | MILESTONE GRANTS VS RESULTS-BASED FINANCING

RBF bought verified results cheaply from two ready-made distributors; milestone grants built the rest of the market

TCCP ran two financing instruments side by side. Two established distributors, Burn Manufacturing and Sayari Safi, received results-based financing (RBF), with payments released only against independently verified sales. The other eleven investees received milestone-based grants, released as agreed business milestones were met. The milestone window carried the portfolio's full technology mix: LPG, briquettes, smaller cookstove producers and every institutional stove.

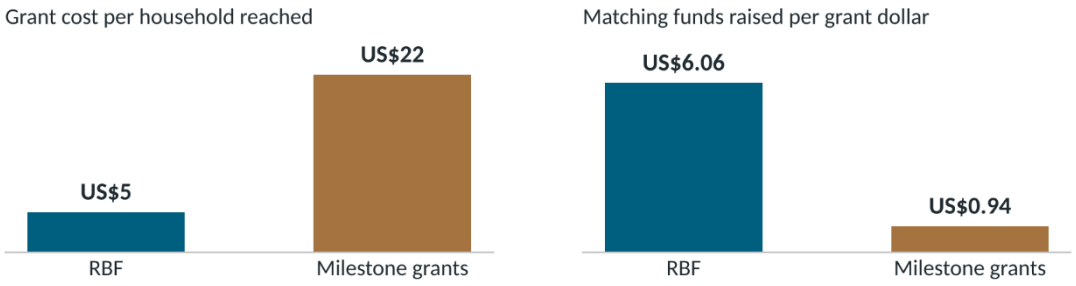
Figure 4. Share of TCCP funding and results by financing instrument



Source: AECF final results by investee (2026). Funding rows above the line; results rows below.

With 17% of disbursements, the RBF investees delivered 46% of households reached, 49% of emissions avoided, and 56% of matching funds. RBF costs about US$5 per household reached in grants, and each grant dollar was matched by about US$6.06 in the companies' own investment. RBF also protected funds against under-delivery: Burn Manufacturing reached 36% of its household target and drew only 49% of its US$400,000 commitment, with the balance reallocated to later investees. Sayari Safi met its targets and drew 92%.

Figure 5. Unit cost and leverage by financing instrument



Source: AECF final results by investee (2026), based on disbursements. The evaluation's output-weighted comparison of like-for-like investees found a narrower gap: about US$7 against US$15 per household.

Milestone grants cost more per household but bought different things: all institutional stoves and briquette production, LPG distribution in rural areas, and capacity at smaller and newer enterprises. Together, the milestone investees slightly exceeded their contracted household targets, raised US$2.22 million in matching funds (191% of what was contracted), and created 69% of direct jobs, 46% of which were held by women. Their weakness was verification: AECF's site-visit "verified" figures largely repeated investee reports. The evaluation also cautions that the RBF investees were the two largest companies and already had agents and stock in place, so scale explains part of the cost gap.

Table 2. Milestone grants and RBF at a glance

	Results-based financing	Milestone-based grants
Investees	2 (Burn Manufacturing, Sayari Safi)	11
Grants committed / disbursed	US$0.70M / US$0.47M	US$2.42M / US$2.35M (97%)
Households reached	91,476	105,396
Technologies	Household improved cookstoves	Cookstoves, LPG, briquettes and all institutional stoves
How payment is triggered	Independently verified sales	Agreed business milestones, checked by AECF site visits
Verification of results	Independent verification agent, 95–100% confidence	Mostly self-reported

	Results-based financing	Milestone-based grants
Women's share of direct jobs	24% (Sayari Safi)	46%

Source: AECF final results by investee (2026); TIME (2026).

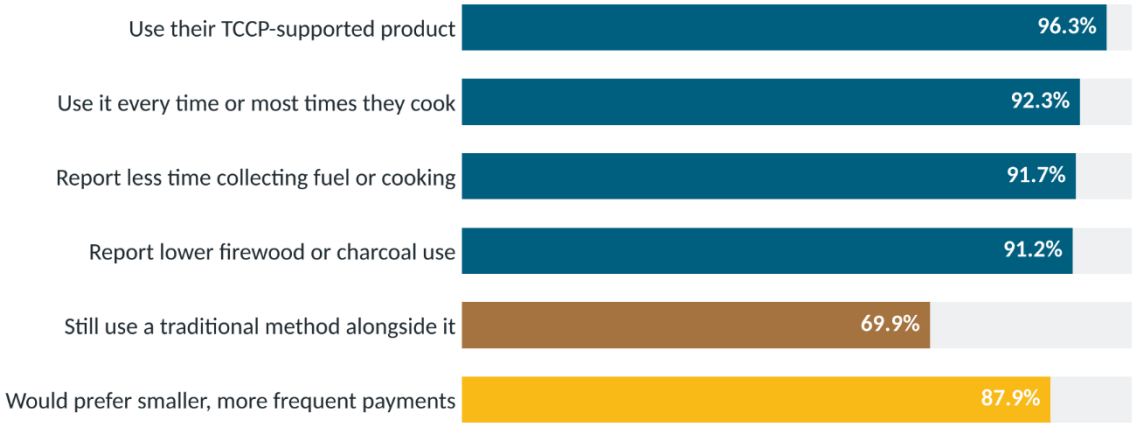
Evidence status: Confirmed for RBF verification and lower unit cost; the size of the cost gap is partially confirmed

FINDING 4 | IMPACT: ADOPTION AND HOUSEHOLD BENEFITS

Households use their new stoves and save money, but most still cook with traditional fuels too

The household survey provides strong, independent support for TCCP's core claims. Of the households surveyed, 96% use their TCCP-supported product, and 92% use it every time or most of the time they cook. Average weekly spending on cooking fuel fell by 42%, from TZS 16,502 to TZS 9,565, and 97% describe their kitchen as not smoky or not very smoky. About half report a change in household income or economic activity.

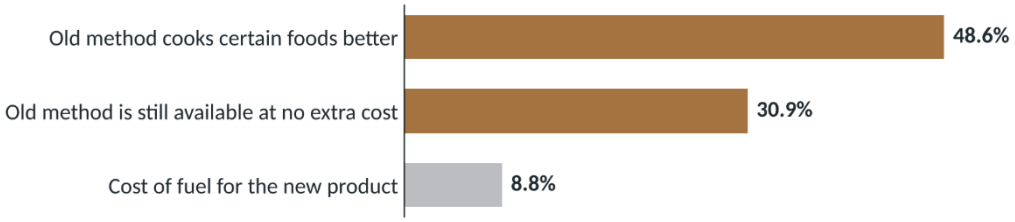
Figure 6. What surveyed households report about their TCCP-supported product



Source: TCCP impact survey, 269 households; bases vary by question.

However, 70% of households still use a traditional method alongside the new product, and two-thirds of these expect to keep doing so for the next year. Stacking is driven mainly by preference and free fuel, not cost. TCCP has changed what households own more than how they cook most of the time.

Figure 7. Why households keep using a traditional cooking method



Source: TCCP impact survey, households that stack.

Institutions report less smoke and firewood use, but their fuel spending has not fallen, possibly because non-carbonized briquettes carry little more energy than firewood. Positive unintended effects included higher student attendance where meals improved; negative ones included safety incidents at 2 of 14 institutions surveyed, which are not tracked systematically.

Evidence status: Confirmed for household adoption and benefits; partially confirmed for institutions

> *"We use the two hours we save to run our businesses."*
>
> — TCCP product user, focus group discussion

FINDING 5 | SUSTAINABILITY

Household use is likely to last, but most enterprises' viability cannot be confirmed as donor funding contracts

Continued household use looks secure. Among institutions, 71% plan to maintain their equipment without donor support, but only 54% have trained staff to do so. Viability can be judged with confidence for only two of the 13 investees: AVAD, which is self-sustaining and reinvesting profit, and Kujana Kushoka, which secured bank financing and won government tenders independently of TCCP. Burn Manufacturing does not yet generate enough revenue to operate without grant support. For most others, the financial data is unusable, or the question was not answered.

The funding environment is contracting. Swedish development assistance to Tanzania is being phased out, and CookFund is expected to close in late 2026. REA's subsidy programme is the main new source of public capital, but it competes with TCCP-supported enterprises rather than replacing donor support. Crowding-in of private capital is visible at three investees.

Evidence status: Partially confirmed

FINDING 6 | MARKET SYSTEMS AND FINANCE

There are early signs of market change, and the binding constraint is now bankable enterprises, not capital

Signals appear at each stage of the adopt-adapt-expand-respond framework. Competing LPG brands entered villages that AVAD opened first, MCFA recognizes TCCP investees as credible counterparts, and Kujana Kushoka won tenders worth about US$214,000 with the National Service and Prisons Service. These signals are reported by investees and peers; none comes directly from a non-TCCP market actor.

Commercial banks are entering the sector. NMB's clean cooking facility is commercially priced and would continue without donor backing, although lending to borrowers with little collateral depends on donor-funded guarantees. Banks report too few investment-ready enterprises: NMB had used only TZS 11 billion of a TZS 100 billion facility. At policy level, TCCP-funded advocacy by TAREA supported a recent LPG tax exemption, and testing with the Tanzania Bureau of Standards identified emissions weaknesses in some products.

Evidence status: Partially confirmed for systemic change; confirmed for commercial finance

FINDING 7 | GENDER AND INCLUSION

Women gained jobs in sales and distribution, but affordability gaps and uneven safeguards remain

Four of the 13 investees are women-led or women-owned (31%, against a 20% target), and women-led enterprises received grants 20% larger than standard. Women held 39% of the 256 jobs created, below the 50% target. Burn Manufacturing's agent network is the standout: 282 women agents, more than double the 120 planned, serving a customer base that is 67% female. Across investees, women work mainly in sales and men in production, a pattern TCCP reinforced rather than changed.

Female-headed households own TCCP products at slightly lower rates and are less confident they can afford them, even though they are not poorer. Affordability barriers differ by investee, from LPG refill costs to upfront stove prices and package size, and 88% of households would prefer smaller, more frequent payments. AECF's 2026 gender and safeguards framework exists on paper, but site-visit monitoring of it was patchy.

Evidence status: Confirmed for participation and affordability; partially confirmed for safeguards

Lessons and recommendations

1	**Make independent verification the standard for all grants** Default to results-based financing, or budget independent verification into every milestone grant so site visits record a genuine check rather than re-entering investee figures.
2	**Design for stove stacking, not just stove sales** Treat multi-fuel use as a likely lasting outcome. Revise the Theory of Change and monitoring to separate ownership, regular use, and full displacement of traditional fuel.
3	**Agree a deduplication protocol with REA** Prevent the same household or institutional stove being counted or subsidized twice and complete the Ministry of Energy's national clean cooking database as a shared record.
4	**Offer end users flexible payment options** Build smaller, more frequent payment plans and installments for LPG refills into future instrument design, not only financing for investees.
5	**Shift support towards bankability and commercial finance** Prioritize investment readiness, working capital and standing referral or co-financing arrangements with banks, plus bridge financing for public institutions. Reserve asset grants for clear additionality.
6	**Fix the data systems behind the results** Agree and document the GHG methodology with Sida, correct reporting templates such as the EBITDA formula, and introduce a weighted investee selection scorecard.
7	**Build gender and comparison evidence in from the start** Embed gender goals in business models, track Gender Action Plans as standing indicators, and include a non-recipient comparison sample in future evaluation designs.

THE OVERALL LESSON

Grants and verified results-based finance can put clean cooking products into hundreds of thousands of Tanzanian homes, but owning a clean stove is not the same as switching to it. Lasting change needs trustworthy data, payment terms that fit household budgets, and a pipeline of enterprises ready for commercial capital as donor funding recedes.

ABOUT AECF

The Africa Enterprise Challenge Fund (AECF) is a Pan-African development institution that finances early- and growth-stage businesses in agribusiness, renewable energy and climate-smart technologies. Combining grants, results-based and repayable finance, and technical assistance, AECF helps enterprises innovate, create jobs, and build resilient, sustainable incomes in rural and marginalized communities, with a particular focus on fragile contexts, women, and youth.

Since 2008, AECF has supported more than 700 enterprises across 26 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, reaching an estimated 37.4 million lives. AECF commissions independent evaluations of its programmes and publishes what it learns, including mixed results, so that evidence shapes future programming.

ABOUT THIS BRIEF

This brief summarizes the independent end-of-programme evaluation of the Tanzania Clean Cooking Project conducted by TIME (2026) and commissioned by AECF. The views expressed are those of the evaluators and do not necessarily reflect those of Sida. The full evaluation report and its thematic learning studies are available on request from AECF.

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