SEE - Clean Cooking

African Biodigester Component Project - Uganda

NEWSLETTER - **AUGUST 2023**

Foreword

Despite the growing demand for African-origin carbon credits over the years, countries in Africa retired carbon credits valued at $123 million in 2021. This, according to the Africa Carbon Markets Initiative(ACMI) is low in comparison to the global context, thus limiting the realisation of the impact of carbon financing on Africa's energy transition.

In this edition of the African Biodigester Component Newsletter, we explore the impact of carbon financing on Africa's biodigester markets. This was one of the key discussions at the project's inaugural knowledge exchange event which ABC-Uganda was honored to host in May. We also share insights from additional topical discussions at the ground-breaking ceremony which culminated in the signing of the Kampala declaration. I would like to thank RVO, all the ABC partners, the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Fisheries and in a special way, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development for the immense support towards the successful realisation of this event.

This issue of the newsletter also brings to the forefront key project interventions and success aligned with strengthening the biodigester supply chain with a focus on the private sector and sector associations.

I hope you enjoy our updates, and wish you a pleasant reading.

Esther Nyanzi
ABC Uganda Project Manager

> Despite the growing demand for African-origin carbon credits over the years, countries in Africa retired carbon credits valued at $123 million in 2021.

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Uganda hosts International Knowledge Exchange Event to advance biodigester technology in Africa.

Group photo comprising officials from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands Enterprise Agency, State Minister for Mineral Development in Uganda, Honorable Peter Lokeris, the SNV country director, Ms Phomolo Maphosa (c) and David Otieno, GIZ.

The African Biodigester Component (ABC) in Uganda was honored to host the project's first International Knowledge Exchange Event in Kampala, on May, 24th, 2023. The ground-breaking event was hosted by the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development and organized by SNV, GIZ and Biogas Solutions Uganda Limited in close cooperation with the Netherlands Enterprise Agency(RVO).

It convened key stakeholders in biodigester market development across Africa with the aim of facilitating regional learning and contributing to South–South exchange related to the development of the bio-digester markets in ABC's target countries and beyond.

The event provided a platform for collaboration among sector experts to examine challenges and explore solutions aimed at progressing clean cooking solutions and bio slurry organic fertiliser usage across Africa.

In his remarks, State Minister for Mineral development, Hon Peter Lokeris who was representing the Minister of Energy and Mineral Development in Uganda said that the use of woody biomass is still faced with unsustainable exploitation and utilisation, hence posing a challenge to users and the environment.

"...our countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa are highly dependent on Biomass as a main

source of energy for cooking and industrial heat processes. The case of Uganda 89.9% of the primary energy is supplied from Biomass," he said, underscoring the great need for all stakeholders to support efforts aimed at the sustainable use of the resource.

In 2021, the five-year ABC project funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NLMOFA) through the Netherlands Enterprise Agency was launched. The project, which forms part of the overarching Supporting the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem for Clean Cooking (SEE-CC) program focuses on developing sustainable biodigester markets in five African countries: Uganda, Kenya, Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. Its goal is to construct and install 50,000 small-scale biodigesters and 250 medium-scale biodigesters by the end of 2025, providing energy access to at least 250,000 people and reducing yearly CO2 equivalent emissions by 180,000 tonnes.

Speaking on behalf of the NLMOFA, Anneloes Hoff stated that the Dutch Government, in the new Foreign Trade and Developments Policy, has doubled its ambition on increasing energy access from 15 million people to 100million people, therefore collaboration with other key stakeholders through the SEE-CC program is key to realizing universal energy access by 2030.

In Uganda, where majority of the population uses unclean fuels, the ABC project is implemented under a consortium led by SNV, including GIZ, and Biogas Solutions Uganda, collaborating to increase the adoption of the biodigesters by installing at least 8,000 small digesters to provide energy access for 40,000 people.

"To put that target into context, in Uganda, SNV, development partners, and government have, over the years, supported the installation of 10,000 biodigesters, which are expected to reduce carbon emissions by nearly 350,000 tonnes over 15 years," said Ms Phomolo Maphosa, SNV Uganda Country Director. "Therefore, the ABC project is working to double the current uptake of biodigester technology."

> "...our countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa are highly dependent on Biomass as a main source of energy for cooking and industrial heat processes. The case of Uganda 89.9% of the primary energy is supplied from Biomass,"

Participants at the ABC Knowledge exchange event held in Kampala listen to remarks made by Jesus Gavilan Marin, Energy Programme Officer on behalf of The European Delegation.

AFRICAN BIODIGESTER COMPONENT PROJECT - UGANDA
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Uganda among 5 African countries that have committed to strengthening biodigester markets in Sub- Saharan Africa.

Government representatives from 5 ABC implementing countries visit the NaLIRRI biogas unit during the ABC Knowledge exchange event. NaLIRRI is ABC-Uganda's learning partner.

From 23rd to 25th May 2023, the African Biodigester Component (ABC) of the Strengthening the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem for Clean Cooking Programme – (SEE-CC) held an international annual Knowledge Exchange Event in Kampala.

The event drew over 150 actors from the energy and agricultural public and private sectors of ABC's partner African countries, i.e. Uganda, Kenya, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, and was hosted by the Ugandan Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development. It was organized by Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) , SNV, GIZ and Biogas Solutions Uganda Ltd - BSUL, and financed by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Union.

Making preliminary remarks at the event, Hon. Denis Ouedraogo, Burkina Faso's Minister of Agriculture, Animal Resources and Fisheries, stated that to foster sustainability of the biodigester market, African countries should build political will to promote the industry and secure enough funding for implementation. He further called upon stakeholders to prioritize the capacity building of actors on both the supply and demand sides.

For further details about the event, visit: https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/uganda-among-5-african-countries-have-committed-strengthening/?trackingId=oBbYJAgZSR6FRa1U14tT4g%3D%3D

Inside the Kampala Declaration: the commitment to spur biodigester markets in 5 African Countries

Government representatives from Uganda, Mali, Kenya, Burkina Faso and Niger display the signed copies of the Kampala Declaration, committing to support sustainable biodigester markets in the countries.

On 24th May 2023, in a concerted effort towards the creation of sustainable biodigester markets in Uganda, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Mali and Niger, government representatives from the five African countries signed a joint communique, the 'Kampala Declaration'.

The declaration formulated during a high-level meeting attended by ministers and high-level representatives from the five ABC implementing countries, as well as the eight member states of the West and Central Africa Alliance (WCA) for biodigester promotion at the ABC Knowledge exchange event held in Kampala highlights critical barriers and opportunities underpinning the development of sustainable biodigester markets including the value proposition from bio-slurry.

The communique brings to the forefront multifaceted challenges encompassing high upfront costs for technology purchase, capacity gaps, inadequate standards and limited adherence to the set standards, inadequate knowledge and awareness, and limited coordination.

In an effort to address the identified barriers, the declaration paves a roadmap through the pursuit of 11 interventions categorised into demand, supply and the enabling environment.

On the demand side, the declaration calls for enhanced awareness creation, communication, knowledge building, exchange and management with a strong focus on the biodigester business case to stimulate uptake, opportunities across the value chain, and health, energy, socio-economic benefits from the adoption of biodigesters as a holistic clean energy technology solution.

It also outlines the development of bio-slurry extension, compost market development, increased quality of livestock production, as well as organic fertiliser utilisation through appropriate mechanisms.

Furthermore, the establishment of requisite information management infrastructure and knowledge-sharing hubs for the sub-sector is underlined as a key intervention area to spur demand in the sub-sector.

In the context of supply, the declaration calls for sustainable capacity building to effectively respond to gaps in the sector, business development services (BDS) to create investment-ready businesses and project ideas, and supporting biodigester research and innovation ecosystem.

Equally important, the declaration emphasizes effective stakeholder coordination and an enabling environment for the key intervention pillars, innovative financing schemes for market players and supporting networks and alliances at National and Regional levels for a sustainable private sector to attain a conducive enabling environment.

In recognition of the impact of the biodigester sub-sector through direct contribution to 8 out of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the governments in the declaration reaffirmed their commitment to continue collaborating with development partners, and the private sector with a focus on the identified intervention areas to support the growth and sustainability of the commercial biodigester markets even beyond the ABC project lifetime.

A woman prepares a meal using biogas generated from a biodigester.

Exploring the Impact of Carbon Financing as a catalyst for Sustainable Development in Africa's Biodigester Market

Lack of access to finance for households is the most prominent barrier affecting biodigester adoption in Africa and Asia. This is according to a 2022 SNV report titled: 'Household bio-digester installations in selected countries in Africa and Asia in 2021'.

The average price of a biodigester in Uganda, a country where the average monthly household income in 2019/20 was UGX 190,000($51) is $500. One would need to save all their income for 9 months to afford a biodigester. There are currently about 10,000 biodigesters installed across the country, with potential for a lot more. However, high upfront costs remain a barrier, not only in Uganda, but also in other countries in Africa.

In Uganda and Kenya, carbon financing is in part addressing this challenge, and contributing to the achievement of SDG 7 on clean energy access.

This was evident during the recently concluded African Biodigester Component (ABC) inaugural knowledge exchange event held in Kampala, where carbon finance was a thematic topic of discussion.

Implementers of the project in Uganda, Kenya, Burkina Faso, Malawi and Niger along with the participants at the event critically engaged in a deep-dive session shedding light on carbon financing and its impact on biodigester markets.

The ABC project implemented by SNV, GIZ and Biogas Solutions Uganda Limited in Uganda emphasizes the need for carbon revenue to benefit the sector and contribute to market development.

Uganda currently has two registered biodigester carbon programs: Biogas Solutions Uganda Limited (BSUL) and Sistema.Bio.

Using different approaches, the carbon programs have transferred the benefits of carbon revenue to the farmers and the private sector.

Carbon finance shapes market development

Carbon finance in simple terms is payment received for trading greenhouse gas emission reduction.

Carbon finance aggregated by BSUL has been committed to safeguarding the investment of the households through a quality assurance arrangement including private sector training on quality control and customer satisfaction monitoring.

Over the years, BSUL has continually undertaken quality control trainings with the private sector and operated a customer care phone line to track and address end-user complaints.

Under the ABC Project, carbon financing guarantees households after-sale services for a year after the installation of a biodigester. On the supply side, carbon finance incentivises the companies to provide higher quality biodigester technologies and services with continued maintenance, repair and use of biodigester technologies.

Carbon finance increases energy access.

Recently registered as a carbon program in Uganda, Sistema.Bio retails prefabricated biodigesters at half the cost of an average biodigester on the market. A Sistema plant goes for as low as USD265. The carbon program is leveraging a pre-financing strategy to subsidize the upfront investment cost for biodigesters, which should increase access to clean cooking energy.

"At Sistema.bio we look to pre-finance carbon credits sales with an upfront based on expected carbon credit generation from the carbon program," Sistema's East African Regional Director of Sistema Bio, Engineer Madrine Maina said, stressing that the program has employed innovative financing models to enable farmers to afford biodigester technology.

"We are able to give financing or credit facilities to farmers or what we call lease to own. Currently, we have three (3) payment plans including; a cash plan, an 8 months payment plan and a 25 months payment plan."Maina explained.

Sistema has installed over 62,000 units on individual farms in 31 countries across the world. In Uganda, the company plans to install 10,000 biodigesters in five years.

More importantly, the programs have contributed significantly to carbon emission reductions in Uganda. The 10,000 biodigesters in existence are expected to reduce carbon emissions by nearly 350,000 tonnes over 15 years.

Lessons from Kenya

In Kenya, plans are underway to leverage carbon financing to scale the biodigester market, through a community-led approach.

Africa Bioenergy Programs Limited, the Kenya-based carbon program is transferring capacity for the provision of after-sale services, operation and maintenance training, lobbying and advocacy initiatives, marketing and promotion and grievance monitoring to communities through community-based organisations (CBOs). This innovation addresses an age-old problem of the functionality of biodigesters and the high cost of after-sale service provision.

"CBOs that will have attained a minimum membership threshold of 200 functional units will access carbon credits for their operations. Our current functionality rate is 85% meaning 15 out of every 100 would have a problem every year. From the carbon revenue earnings attained by the CBO, it means that they will have enough money to offer O&M services at the community level. For us that is the entry point guaranteeing farmers functionality across the life of their biodigester. Previously, ABPL used field extension officers who directly offered support services to farmers. However, this was costly and caused delays in addressing farmer challenges." Kevin Kinusu, the managing director of ABPL said.

Kevin Kinusu, the managing director of Africa Biogas Program Limited explains how carbon financing is leveraged for market development in Kenya.

6 Lessons from the Biodigester Knowledge Exchange Conference in Kampala

A man mixes cow dung in a biodigester to produce biogas and bio-slurry.

The month of May was nothing short of eventful for the African Biodigester Component project in Uganda. We were honoured to host the project's first annual knowledge exchange event in Kampala.

Hosted by the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development and organized by SNV, GIZ and Biogas Solutions Uganda Limited in close cooperation with the Netherlands Enterprise Agency(RVO), the knowledge exchange event provided a platform for multi-stakeholder dialogue and experience sharing on thematic areas in the biodigester markets in Africa. Moulded from the evolving market dynamics globally and blended with country-specific context, the knowledge exchange event engaged stakeholders in plenaries, panels and deep dive sessions. Discussions focused on carbon financing, innovations, access to finance, policies, market development and gender among others.

During the four-day conference, the following emerged as lessons and main points of concern:

01 High stakeholder interest in the growth of biodigester markets

Over 150 participants including donors, development partners, private sector, financial institutions and government representatives graced the event. The overwhelming turnup at the event was indicative of the high level of interest and commitment to supporting the growth of the biodigester market. Justifiably, biodigester technologies provide a viable option to the 2.4 billion people who still lack access to clean cooking solutions. The technology also mitigates air pollution, which according to a 2015 study leads to 3.2 million premature deaths per year- more than HIV/AIDS, Malaria and TB combined.

In line with its support for clean cooking, the Dutch Government in the new Foreign Trade and Developments Policy has doubled its ambition on energy access from 15 million people to 100 million people. This was emphasised by Anneloes Hoff, Policy Officer And ABC Principal,Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, " By 2030 the Netherlands wants to support access to clean energy to 100million people and collaboration with other key stakeholders is key through the SEE-CC program and are delighted to work together with the European Commission and Denmark to advance our common goal of realizing universal energy access by 2030."

SEE-CC is the overarching programme consisting of the ABC Project and the higher-tier clean cooking project, aimed at increasing access to clean energy in Africa and beyond.

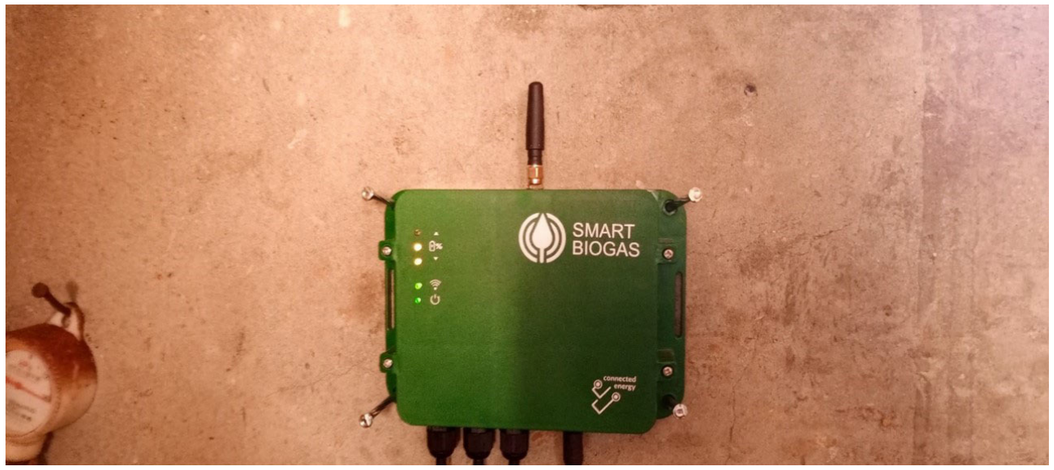
02 The biodigester markets in Africa are facing similar challenges

Presentations from ABC implementing countries revealed that the biodigester markets especially in Africa are facing similar barriers. Limited access to finance, limited awareness of the technology and its benefits, particularly bio-slurry, and a weak private sector are at the core of challenges cutting across all five ABC-implementing countries.

The prevalence of these crisscrossing challenges calls for the intensification of knowledge-sharing opportunities such as the knowledge exchange event from which innovative solutions can be generated.

03 An enabling policy environment principally exists in the 5 African countries, but implementation needs to be strengthened

While policies exist across all five countries, the majority focus on the overarching renewable energy sector. The existing policies promote strategies targeting marginalised groups, taxation, subsidies



A smart biogas meter. The technology monitors biodigester usage and provides information to the end-user and the biodigester enterprise.

and to some extent, organic fertilisers. The participants however proposed additional measures required to support the policies to translate into market growth. These included: harmonisation of the different frameworks at the national level to achieve shared ambitions.

Collaboration between different government actors that impact the biodigester technologies- ie Forestry, Energy, Water and Agriculture.

Create an unfavourable environment for the importation of chemical fertilisers.

Enforce standards and policies that protect stakeholders and beneficiaries from substandard products.

04 Carbon credits fast-track achievement of SDG 7

Carbon credits have proven to be essential to the realisation of sustainable development goal 7 linked to increasing access to clean energy. Carbon credits aggregated through carbon programs in various biodigester markets contribute to ensuring quality assurance and affordability of biodigester technologies. This stems from the transfer of the benefits derived from accrued carbon revenue from credits whose ownership has been foregone by the end user to the carbon program.

This has contributed to increased adoption of the technology and thus access to clean cooking energy, notably, Sistema Bio's 62,000 plants installed globally.

However, greenwashing in carbon markets undermines the integrity of the trade, to which stakeholders at the knowledge exchange expressed strong caution.

05 Innovation in the biodigester sector is paramount

Biodigesters, in spite of their long-standing existence in the market, have a poor track record of innovation. Minimal innovation has been done to improve the user experience and efficiency of biodigester technologies. In the recent past, there has been a steady increase in innovation, influenced by the global shift towards clean energy and improved carbon credit monitoring. Development partners are increasingly supporting innovation in digital metering. The entry of new market players such as Inclusive Energy with a focus on technology is also a testament to the attractiveness of the industry.

Overall, there is vast opportunity for innovation in the biodigester market that still lies untapped.

06 Consumer awareness of the benefits of organic food is a key demand driver for bio slurry fertiliser.

The ABC Project heavily rests on valorising bio-slurry organic fertiliser to holistically improve the livelihoods of farmers. In Kenya, farmers have made significant progress in commercialising bio-slurry. There is evidence of a strong private sector commercialising bio-slurry, which reinforces the objectives of the ABC project on bio-slurry valorisation. The companies attribute their success to increased consumer awareness which has seen an increase in consumer demand for organically produced foods giving rise to biofertilizers. In addition, documented improvements in soil texture, fertility and sustainability are key drivers for the bio-slurry. However, the challenge of costly certification by government bodies, and limited awareness remain major impediments to accelerated adoption of the fertiliser.

"In Their Own Words"
A Compilation of Participant Feedback

Victor Gathogo, ABC Project Manager, Kenya

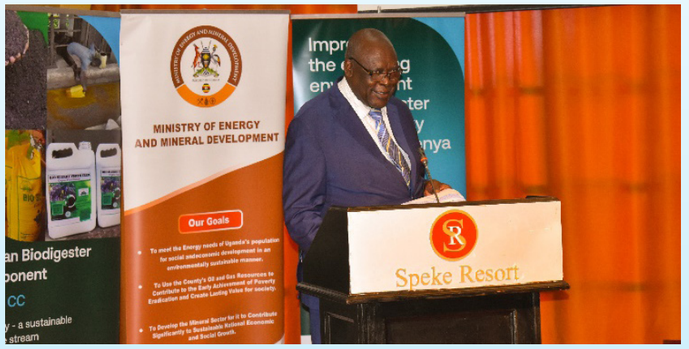
"My takeaway from the learning event was how the project can foster an enabling environment, catalyse strong, inclusive and sustainable private sector participation through supporting networks and alliances, harness the power of consumer financing, and collaborative approaches with the government for supportive policies to propel the thriving growth of biodigester markets."

Martin Van Dam, ABC Project Manager, Sahel

"It was inspiring to connect and have deliberate discussions with all those actors who work on different aspects of biodigester market development. Relatedly, the knowledge exchange event was the ideal platform to bring together and acquaint all the ABC implementers to have important discussions about our work."

Hon. Peter Lokeris, State Minister for Mineral Development, Uganda

"I think this was a good forum to discuss issues affecting the Biogas Sub-sector here in Uganda, and the other partner countries here present. There were a number of sessions discussing other pertinent issues around this subject, such as gender, carbon finance, business cases for biogas, etc. I believe these are very aligned with regard to appreciating the opportunities and challenges in the sector. It is my hope that the issues and lessons picked are put into action. In particular, issues of continuous improvement of the enabling environment; multi-sector stakeholder coordination; access to finance for the different players; inclusive and sustainable business development services for the private sector; capacity building. Please focus on skilling our youth and women, the artisans, so that as the sector provides energy, also improves livelihoods; putting in place the necessary data management system, so that we can have evidence-based policy decision-making and supporting research, innovation and building a sustainable bioeconomy".



Florence Mutonerwa, UGAFODE

"54% of our customers are agriculturalists which puts them in position to access and enjoy clean energy. However, the cost of borrowing is high, which scares away customers, but that is the reason why we are here, to explore how we can derisk and risk-share to ensure end users access credit at a lower interest rate in comparison to the prevailing rate."

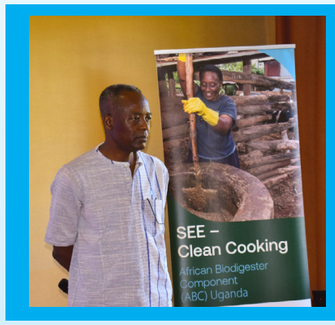
Dr. Brian Isabirye

Commissioner-Renewable Energy at Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, Uganda.

"We agreed that we need to have national strategies that are geared towards the development and adoption of this technology, those at a broader level but also those in particular areas such as communication strategies to improve that. We have also agreed that technology still suffers from limited attention in areas such as fiscal incentives, ie smart subsidies and tax incentives and similar support including capacity interventions where government can come in to derisk some of these investments."

Victoria Butegwa, GIZ - Uganda

"It was interesting to witness the collaboration of representatives from different countries to promote biodigester technology through the West and Central Africa Alliance (WCA). Of equal importance, Kenya, just like Uganda is heavily segmented with several associations supporting renewable energy. Because of this, it was interesting to understand Kenya's approach to sector support. Most outstanding was the signing of Memoranda of understanding with selected associations in commitment to shared goals and outcomes."



Jean Marc Sika Hivos

"Partner management and good communication are key success factors in interventions such as ABC."

Sylvie Deita YAMEOGO
Communication, Burkina Faso, WCA Alliance

Events specifically dedicated to biodigester technology are not common. So, bringing together in one place a set of private, public, technical and financial partners committed to promoting biodigester technology, as was the case in Uganda, was in itself a success.

As a member of the Alliance for the Biodigester delegation in West and Central Africa, it was an opportunity to strengthen partnerships, share points of view and propose a model of cooperation that engages governments to promote and create suitable conditions for a commercial biodigester sector. In a context where mainly rural populations are facing the effects of climate change, it is the responsibility of the State to preserve the living environment of the people by offering them an alternative for access to clean cooking energy and food security through the biodigester.

ABC Video

Hosted by the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development and organized by SNV, GIZ and BSUL in close cooperation with RVO, the ABC knowledge exchange was a three-day event that brought together biodigester stakeholders to contribute to the south-south exchange related to the development of the bio-digester markets in ABC's target countries and beyond. Watch this short Video summarizing the event proceedings encompassing discussions around policy, demand, carbon financing, innovations and market-based approaches.

Breaking Barriers: Bridging the biodigester Awareness Gap through Digitalisation of Uganda's Private sector.

Biodigester enterprises attend a digital marketing training organized by the ABC Project in Uganda.

About 42 million people in Uganda rely on firewood/charcoal for cooking, representing 90 per cent of the country's population. This has put pressure on the country's forest cover, which has been depleted to 8% up from 24% in the 1990s. Despite the existence of alternative cooking energy sources such as biogas, challenges of limited awareness affect the adoption of the technology.

Over the years, the government together with development partners have made efforts to increase awareness of the technology.

The government of Uganda, through the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development has developed favourable policies and supported initiatives aimed at scaling the adoption of renewable energy. In support of the government energy transition agenda, SNV in Uganda, together with Biogas Solutions Uganda Limited, has also carried out awareness campaigns at the grassroots to raise awareness of biodigesters and their benefits.

Under the African Biodigester Component project, a Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs funded initiative, SNV in Uganda and BSUL are utilising digital technology to bridge the awareness gap. Globally, digital technology especially social media has witnessed a tremendous increase in usage, accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic. According to the Digital 2023 Global Overview Report by Meltwater, the total number of internet users across the world now stands at 5.1 billion. Of those, 11.7 million are in Uganda.

In Uganda, and a common phenomenon worldwide, internet users predominantly use mobile phones to access the internet.

This trend has become the fulcrum on which the ABC Project in Uganda is pivoting to complement awareness-raising of biodigester technologies and their benefits across the country.

The project undertook a two-month digital marketing training for biodigester enterprises. The training aimed at equipping the private sector with digital skills to create a digital presence for their companies, across digital platforms such as Google My Business, facebook, twitter and tik tok. Using free and user-friendly software, the enterprises acquired skills in content marketing for example designing and branding promotional materials such as banners, flyers and videos.

In Uganda, the Global Overview Report indicates that there are currently 2 million social media users. The platforms, which primarily grant access and interaction at no cost, present an opportunity to raise awareness to a vast number of people sustainably. The sustainability of the private sector in Uganda's biodigester market is key among the pillars of the ABC Project.

Similarly, business sustainability was the reason why David Ucha, the managing director of Detra Energy & Enviromental Contractors Limited was drawn to the digital marketing training. The company based in the Central region of Uganda prior to the training could only be traced through its Facebook account, which was also not active. At the time, Ucha had no appreciation of the impact social media could have on his business. The reliance on digital media by businesses during the Covid-19 pandemic changed his perception.

Today, information about Detra can be accessed by a simple click of a mouse. The company has established a digital presence on google my business, twitter and activated its facebook account.

"The digital marketing training was very practical and timely as the shift towards digital becomes more pronounced. As a result, I have learnt how to position my company, building my network in the sector. Recently, I was contacted by an organisation to install biodigesters for its farmers. The organisation said that the contact information on the Detra twitter account led them to me," Ucha says.

Having glimpsed at the fortunes lying ahead with social media, Ucha is now determined to train further and hone digital marketing skills for his company's growth.

The impact of the digital marketing training transcends Detra Company. 20 additional companies received the training, resulting in the creation of a digital profile for each enterprise on atleast one platform.

At an industry level, this has contributed to awareness-raising efforts. The companies continuously educate the public on biodigester technologies and their benefits. They have created a community of biodigester actors, learning, sharing and promoting the technology.

By empowering the companies to actively raise awareness of biodigester technology, the ABC Project in Uganda is fulfilling a core objective of fostering a sustainable biodigester market beyond the project time.

David Ucha, Managing Director DETRA, trains in digital marketing at a training organised by the ABC Project recently.

Interproject Collaboration aims at scaling impact in Uganda

Projects working in the SNV energy and agri-food sector in Uganda have embarked on a collaboration aimed at scaling impact across the communities they work with. The African Biodigester Component in Uganda, a project promoting biodigester clean cooking solutions to farmers, has partnered with the Integrated Smallholder Dairy Programme (ISDAP) to promote the technology to the latter's 5000 farmer database in 12 districts across the country.

Biodigesters are technologies used to produce biogas energy and bio-slurry, an organic fertiliser that boosts soil productivity.

ISDAP aims to improve farmer livelihoods by strengthening the complementarity of dairy products within the integrated farm enterprises framework by leveraging mutual benefits among the enterprises and/or their by-products. The project currently works with a database of 5,000 smallholder farmers segmented into clusters referred to as village learning groups(VLGs).

For efficient farmer mobilization, monitoring and reporting on the progress of project implementation, ISDAP utilizes 50 village facilitators who double as farmers deliberately selected from within the villages they work.

In this collaboration, the ABC project is building the capacity of the VFs to become the technology's ambassadors; promoting and advocating for the transition from dirty fuels to clean energy amongst the farmer communities. The training undertaken by ABC focused on the biogas production process, utilization of bio-slurry, marketing skills and biodigester troubleshooting.

The VFs are also envisaged to bridge the awareness gap in the rural communities through sensitization of the farmers about the benefits of biodigesters spanning beyond biogas, but also bio-slurry.

Practical training of ISDAP Village Facilitators on the operation of a biodigester at a farmer household in Western Uganda. The VFs were trained by the ABC project in the spirit of collaborating for sustained impact.

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Gerald Kwizera, the ABC Monitoring and Evaluation advisor, briefs the ISDAP village facilitators about the ABC project.

The VFs are clustered into three groups: North Rwenzori region, which includes Western Uganda's villages of FortPortal, Bunyangabu and Kyenjojo, Ankole region and Kigezi region.

Speaking at the first training session of the VFs based in the North Rwenzori region on 27th June, Gerald Kwizera, the ABC monitoring and evaluation advisor, emphasized the importance of working with the grassroot communities to advance the project's objective of ensuring clean energy access and food security.

"Farmers are at the heart of ABC's interventions, enshrined within all components of the project's focal areas of demand, supply and enabling environment. We are therefore very excited to embark on this journey and would like to appreciate ISDAP for nourishing a collaborative spirit aimed at scaling impact across the communities," he said.

The training followed a recently concluded three-day momentous memoranda of understanding(MOU) signing ceremonies conceived by ISDAP between SNV and district government officials in western and Southwestern Uganda.

The MOUs, which incorporated ISDAP, ABC and the Inclusive Markets for Energy Efficiency in Uganda projects of SNV Uganda, spelled out the partnership between the government and SNV in advancing the socio-economic development of the people in the districts.

During the training, Rogers Adiba, the advisor smallholder dairy development at ISDAP, implored the village facilitators to take advantage of the available opportunities for farmers within the ABC project to improve their livelihoods.

Interproject synergies form part of SNV's broader commitment to collaboration and partnerships as key elements to enabling the accelerating and scaling of impact in contributing to the global transformation envisaged by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

About ABC Uganda

ABC is a 5-year programme (2021-2025). The programme aims to develop and strengthen demand, supply and the enabling environment to create sustainable biodigester markets in 5 African countries: Burkina Faso, Kenya, Mali, Niger and Uganda. ABC aims to facilitate the construction and installation of 50,000 small-scale biodigesters by the end of 2025. This will result in energy access for at least 250,000 people. It will also reduce yearly CO2 equivalent emissions by over 180,000 tonnes. In Uganda, the ABC Project aims to facilitate the installation of 8000 small-scale biodigesters.

SNV in Uganda, represented by the Country Director Phomolo Maphosa(c), signed a memorandum of understanding with FortPortal City, cementing the partnership with the government at an event in Western Uganda recently.

Strengthening the biodigester sector in Uganda: UNBA needs assessment calls for sector coordination

Hatimu Muyanja, the ABC focal point at the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development addresses the participants at the event.

A unified vision for strengthening biodigester sector coordination in Uganda was successfully reached by stakeholders who attended the validation workshop for Uganda National Biogas Alliance (UNBA)'s needs assessment.

This followed the dissemination of report findings during the workshop organised by GIZ Uganda under the African Biodigester Component (ABC) Project on 14th June.

The needs assessment exercise, which commenced in 2022, aimed to identify the gaps in UNBA, the umbrella organization for the biogas sector in Uganda. The alliance is mandated to promote biogas technologies across the country and improve the business environment for its members. The assessment further aimed to assess the alliance's capacity to effectively support sector growth and sustainability.

The findings revealed gaps in six focal thematic areas namely; governance and sector coordination, membership and membership capacity needs; communication and knowledge sharing; gender mainstreaming; financial sustainability; and, research and development.

Worth noting is the nullification of the alliance's Memorandum and Articles of Association citing gaps in the Articles, the alliance's legal status, trading licenses, tax registration, and administrative set up among others.

On a positive note, UNBA was found to have made progress in gender mainstreaming, with a section of marginalized groups represented in the sector.

Reflecting on the report, the participants highlighted the heavy segmentation of the energy sector split among numerous associations duplicating a similar mandate of promoting renewable energy in Uganda.

> **"Membership has expanded & streamlined in thematic working groups hence increased revenue. Visibility of UNACC is increasing and communication with stakeholders and reporting standard has improved,"**

"There are a number of associations in the sector, as a biodigester enterprise, I question which one I should subscribe to?" David Ucha, the Managing Director, Detra Energy and Environmental Contractors noted. Ucha's concern was underlined in the needs assessment report finding that states "Sector coordination is critically absent among the ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) implementing the biogas programs. Institutions, lack cohesion and clarity."

Subsequently, the participants called upon the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development to steer and coordinate the sector players and associations.

The ABC Project together with MEMD has now embarked on supporting UNBA to address the critical issues raised in the assessment report. To begin with, GIZ Uganda under the ABC Project is cooperating with MEMD and the umbrella association, Uganda National Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Association (UNREEEA) to support UNBA in conducting an Annual General Meeting (AGM) for its members. The AGM will provide a platform for members to elect a new board, update stakeholders on recent sector developments, and identify advocacy and service needs to inform the roles and responsibilities of the incoming Board. The AGM is expected to take place by September 2023 and ABC implementing partners aim to be part of this dialogue to inform project activities and capacity-building efforts.

Where it has worked

GIZ in the past has undertaken similar efforts aimed at providing capacity-building support to sector associations. Uganda National Alliance on Clean Cooking(UNACC), which faced similar challenges to those of UNBA, received support in the form of streamlining the alliance's governance and policies, staff capacity building and developing a sustainable finance mechanism.

"Membership has expanded & streamlined in thematic working groups hence increased revenue. Visibility of UNACC is increasing and communication with stakeholders and reporting standard has improved," Sarah Babirye, the Projects Coordinator UNACC said.

Sarah Babirye, the Projects Coordinator UNACC narrates how support from GIZ strengthened the association.

Other Project Updates

Awareness-raising drives: The ABC project amplified awareness-raising efforts by utilising a mix of above and below-the-line marketing approaches. Aligned with the project's market-led approach, the private sector is at the core of the implementation of the approaches aimed at increasing awareness of the benefits of biodigester technology. Four biodigester enterprises participated in two exhibitions (PEWOSA and UNACC) held in the central region. During the exhibitions, about one hundred people were sensitised on the benefits of the technology.

Biodigester Promoter trainings: The project has trained 254 promoters and extension workers in Kampala, Iganga, Masaka and Soroti districts to support the awareness-raising efforts of biodigester enterprises aimed at increasing adoption of the clean energy technology.

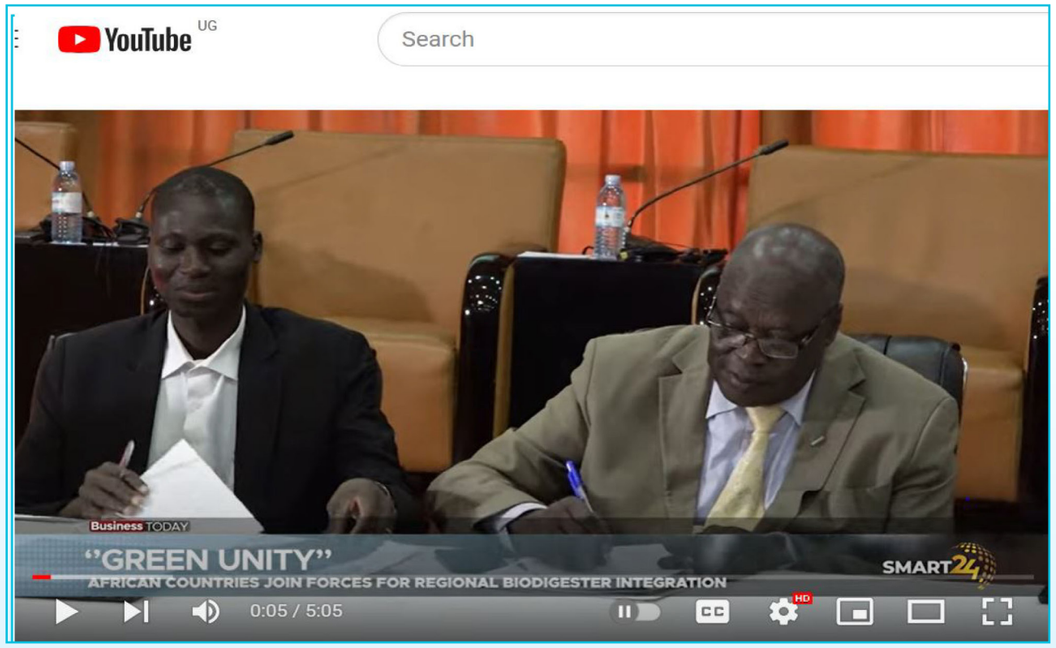
Increasing bio-slurry application: To holistically transform the lives of farmers, the ABC project emphasises the application of bio-slurry organic fertiliser for improved farm yields. To achieve this, the project is: training farmers on the application of the bio-fertiliser, establishing bio slurry demonstration sites and developing market for bio-slurry. 30 biodigester owners from Kyenjonjo, Wakiso, Mbarara, Isingiro, Kanungu, Mitooma, Rukungiri and Bushenyi were trained on bio-slurry composting to wholly benefit from the fertilizer.

The journey to bio slurry certification: A significant precursor to commercialising bio slurry is certification by the relevant government body. The ABC project is in the process of supporting a company through the bio-slurry certification process. Efficacy studies are scheduled to be conducted in August.

ABC Profiled: The ABC Project during the quarter was profiled by various media houses cutting across print, electronic and broadcast media. The profiling centred on the ABC knowledge exchange highlighting the project's progress, and important conversations aimed at spurring the growth of the sub-sector across Africa.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Umy_4ixEViU&pp=ygUUR3JlZW4gVW5pdHkgU21hcnQgMjQ%3D

https://youtu.be/xJrYrt4iFiA



Your feedback is valuable to us, as we strive to improve our newsletter, increase clean energy access and ensure food security. Please share your views via email to ckasemiire@snv.org.

Thank you!

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