



Photo: Rodney Rascona

African Conservation & Clean Cooking Collective

AN INITIATIVE OF:





African Conservation & Clean Cooking Collective (A4C)

Launched at the Africa Climate Summit in September 2023, the A4C initiative strives to integrate clean cooking solutions with conservation and restoration efforts across Africa.

Today, more than 900 million Africans rely on polluting solid fuels and inefficient stoves to cook their daily meals. Without urgent action, over 1 billion Africans will still be without access to clean cooking solutions in 2030, with dire consequences for people and planet.

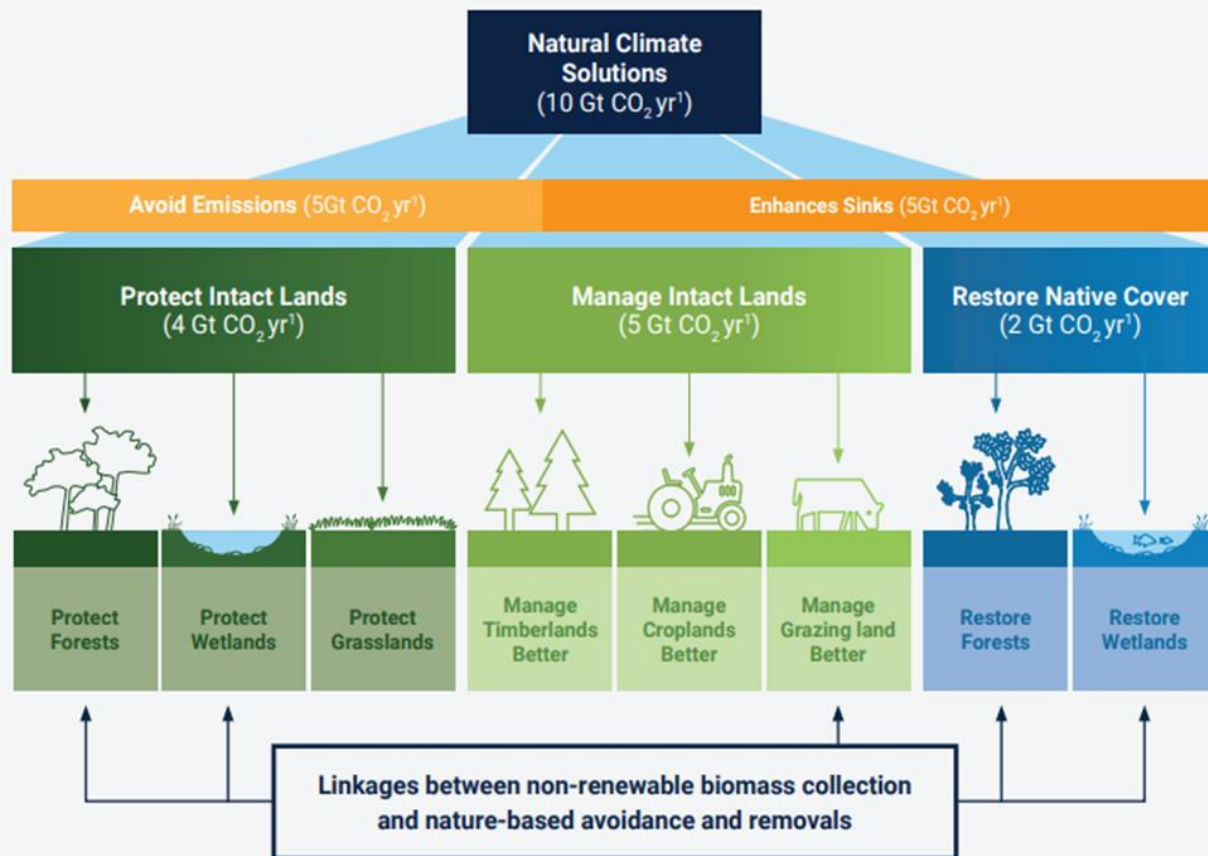
Rapidly reducing reliance on wood and charcoal for cooking is vital for protecting nature, adapting to climate change, and promoting sustainable economic growth.

The **Clean Cooking Alliance** has partnered with leading African conservation and development finance organizations – the **African Wildlife Foundation** and the **African Development Bank** – on a transformative new initiative that seeks to catalyze landscape-scale clean cooking transitions to protect Africa’s nature and enhance the resilience of the communities who depend on it.

Photo: Guerchom Ndebo

Understanding the clean cooking x nature nexus

Clean cooking plays an important role in emissions avoidance and removals from restoration, conservation, and improved management of natural ecosystems



Clean cooking can yield multiple benefits for local biodiversity and ecosystem recovery, sustainable livelihoods, clean air, community health, and female empowerment.

Clean Cooking:

Using modern stoves and fuels - transforms lives by improving health, protecting the climate and the environment, empowering women, and helping families save time and money.

Nature-based Solutions (NbS):

Actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural and modified ecosystems that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously benefiting people and nature.

Clean cooking x nature nexus:

Clean cooking is one of the most undervalued and underfunded tools to protect nature and livelihoods.

As populations grow in sensitive ecological areas with a high dependence on nature and unsustainable fuelwood harvesting, it will be increasingly critical to ensure that the challenges faced by these communities are at the center of conservation efforts and nature-based solutions.

Reducing demand for wood and charcoal in urban and rural areas is key to addressing forest degradation, which is a significant source of emissions and nature-loss.

Context: a longstanding & worsening dual crisis

Africa must transition quickly to clean cooking to achieve climate, economic, and sustainable development goals. This shift means making clean cooking a central part of large-scale efforts to conserve nature and restore landscapes.

Globally, around **35% of wood fuel harvested is unsustainable**, contributing to forest degradation, climate change, and poverty. Efficient stoves can **reduce fuel use by 30-60%**, reducing CO₂ emissions, black carbon, and pressure on forests.

Expanding access to clean cooking in both urban and rural areas can enhance ecosystem restoration, sustainable agroforestry, conservation, and community development.

Yet, despite some progress, incremental cookstove distribution programs are unable to keep pace with population growth. They can also distort local markets for clean fuels and appliances, and often fail to incorporate context-specific realities and preferences, limiting their adoption, use, and impact.

Approximately **30% of global mitigation needs** can be resolved through nature-based solutions (NbS) such as conservation and restoration of ecosystems. However, these efforts must also address the drivers of land degradation and habitat loss—including the use of unsustainable wood and charcoal for household cooking—in a more integrated and holistic way.

With deep, long-term ties to communities, conservation and restoration actors have a powerful role to play in accelerating access to clean cooking solutions, but they require support to: (i) **assess cooking needs** within a landscape; (ii) **identify context-appropriate solutions**; (iii) connect with **a pipeline of providers**; and (iv) **align funding streams** for both the nature and clean cooking components of a program.

Between 2025-2050, an additional 400 million wood and charcoal users are projected in Africa, placing further pressure on critical landscapes.



Photo: Gorilla Doctors

Vision: Clean cooking drives a nature-positive future

Transitioning to clean cooking is essential to safeguard conservation and restoration efforts, ensuring they deliver for climate, nature, and people.

What's the end goal? Accelerating the transition to clean cooking as a cornerstone for protecting nature-based solutions and guaranteeing they bring desired benefits for both people and the planet.

What's the rationale? Reversing nature loss requires clean cooking: To fulfil commitments for net-zero carbon emissions and nature-positive development, governments, investors, and companies should prioritize the transition to clean cooking in policy, investment, and supply chain decisions.

Why the Africa focus? Urgency for action is paramount, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, where access to clean cooking is notably low and where the number of people relying on polluting cooking fuels and stoves continues to rise.

Which gaps is A4C filling? Both nature-based solutions and clean cooking face significant finance gaps and hurdles:

- The nature-finance gap is substantial—requiring closing \$4.1 trillion by 2050—but investments are expected to grow rapidly in the next decade.
- Investment in clean cooking hovers around US\$ 215 million each year—a fraction of the US\$ 8 billion required annually to achieve universal access to clean cooking by 2030.

Why is A4C a gamechanger? As the first comprehensive initiative at the clean cooking-nature intersection, A4C will catalyze landscape-scale clean cooking transitions in rural and urban areas to protect and restore nature.



Photo: Gorilla Doctors

Approach: Increased collaboration for increased impact

A4C seeks to move away from siloed approaches by actively mainstreaming clean cooking into the largest conservation and restoration efforts on the continent.

The founding partners of this Collective bring extensive knowledge, trusted connections with various groups, and the capability to make a widespread impact in numerous communities, landscapes, and countries.

As the Collective's network of partners grows, so, too, will its capacity and impact.



Three-fold Mission

1

Technical Assistance

- Offering technical support and building capacities for implementation of holistic large-scale programs.
- Conducting comprehensive research and analysis and designing tools to support project design and monitoring.
- Developing and implementing a learning agenda to share best practices, tools and guidance and enhance scalability and replicability.

2

Financial Mobilization

- Unlocking finance for clean cooking projects aligned with conservation and restoration programs.
- Facilitating innovative financing approaches that enable simultaneous scale up of NbS and clean cooking projects.
- Mobilizing resources to embed clean cooking in the largest conservation and restoration projects in Africa.

3

Advocacy & Awareness

- Advocating for clean cooking to be a focal point in policy and investment discussions related to the nature agenda.
- Activating new voices - especially indigenous communities, women and youth - and showcasing African leadership and innovation through creative storytelling and media.
- Fostering a collaborative, cross-sector nature-clean cooking community.

Anticipated Outcomes

“This partnership is not only catalyzing clean cooking solutions; it also channels crucial support into conservation and development programs that will build a stronger and more prosperous Africa for future generations.”

Dr. Olufunso Somorin

Regional Principal Officer,
African Development Bank

- ▶ **Clean cooking is integrated within broader conservation and restoration initiatives**, as part of an enhanced systems approach to combat climate change, protect landscapes and biodiversity, support livelihoods, and safeguard NbS investments.
- ▶ **Innovative financial tools for nature-based solutions and clean cooking are aligned across different funding sources**. Scaling blended nature-based solutions and clean cooking will better capture the enhanced value of servicing communities in high conservation value areas.

- ▶ **Nature-dependent communities are empowered as conservation practitioners, through access to affordable clean cooking solutions**. Communities recognize and value the benefits of clean cooking to their landscapes, health, income and livelihoods, and are invested in sustained use.
- ▶ **Clean cooking supports economic activity and women's empowerment**. Jobs within the clean cooking supply chain and income generating opportunities resulting from increased efficiency and time-savings enhance the resilience of households and communities, especially for girls and women.



Enhancing community-led nature-based solutions in Kilombero, Tanzania

Overview

Tanzania is the fifth largest producer of charcoal in Africa. Unsustainable fuelwood production is a huge threat to the stability of forest ecosystems, with wood and charcoal being the main sources of household energy and livelihoods in rural areas. Kilombero Valley is one of Tanzania's most ecologically rich and diverse and landscapes yet is also a key target for charcoal production and supply to nearby cities. The landscape faces increasing challenges due to climate change and unsustainable land practices, including reliance on wood and charcoal for over 90% of Tanzania's population.

Anticipated impacts

To enhance the resilience of smallholder farmers and increase forest cover, this project will work with smallholder farmers in Kilombero Valley to implement agroforestry practices, woodlots, and clean cooking solutions. Woodfuel production in agroforestry systems can be a more sustainable alternative to collection from natural forest and woodlands, providing multiple benefits for smallholder farmers while limiting land degradation, raising incomes, and improving health and nutrition.

Potential for scalability

This project could serve as a blue-print to integrate clean cooking interventions with agroforestry initiatives, which can be replicated across the continent.

Prospective partners



Photo: AWF

AFRICAN CONSERVATION AND CLEAN COOKING COLLECTIVE

Empowering Local Restoration Organizations to Initiate Clean Cooking Transitions

Overview

DUAPA (“Good Tree”) is a youth-led local restoration initiative using nature tech to facilitate landscape restoration in rural and peri-urban areas across five countries: Ghana, Liberia, Kenya, Uganda, and Nigeria. These regions are home to 478 million people who are highly nature-dependent for their basic needs, including wood and charcoal for cooking. DUAPA project leads have identified lack of access to clean cooking solutions as a significant risk to restoration.

Anticipated impacts

Assessing the impacts of wood and charcoal cooking in DUAPA landscapes and integrating context-specific clean cooking interventions into DUAPA’s restoration projects will safeguard the permanence of reforestation and improve the health and livelihoods of nature-dependent communities.

Potential for scalability

This project could serve as a blueprint for community and youth-led nature initiatives. By creating tools and resources for reforestation projects to assess cooking impacts and needs, and guidance on how to identify the appropriate partners to implement context specific-solutions, this project could facilitate replication and scale, safeguarding countless nature investments and delivering immediate benefits to communities on the front-lines of conservation and restoration.

Prospective partners



CCA recently supported DUAPA to conduct clean cooking needs assessment surveys in five countries revealing significant demand and interest for clean cooking solutions.

Photo: DUAPA

Safeguarding Kenya's Tsavo-Mkomazi Landscape

Overview

The Tsavo-Mkomazi landscape straddles the boundary between Kenya and Tanzania. It is the largest contiguous wildlife area in Kenya, covering 4% of the Kenyan landmass and 52% of protected land, and is home to a third of Kenya's elephants and nearly one fifth of its black rhinos. However, the growing demand for firewood and charcoal, agricultural land, and pasture poses a threat to this vital ecosystem. Fostering community engagement in wildlife is vital for long-term ecosystem management.

Anticipated impacts

Empowering community members as conservation practitioners to understand the impacts of fuelwood harvesting is key to ensuring the permanence of restoration initiatives. Expanding access to clean cooking solutions for communities bordering the Tsavo-Mkomazi landscape, and adjacent urban and peri-urban markets driving demand for wood and charcoal, will reduce pressure on this vital landscape, limit human-wildlife conflict and improve standards of living for all people depending on the landscape.

Potential for scalability

This project could serve as a model for how to use clean cooking interventions to counter habitat destruction and help ensure communities are invested in long-term ecosystem management. It also serves as the starting point to expand clean cooking solutions into neighboring Tanzania, addressing cooking fuel demand across the entire landscape.

Prospective partners



Photo: AWF

AFRICAN CONSERVATION AND CLEAN COOKING COLLECTIVE

Protecting Mountain Gorillas and People with Clean Cooking in Rwanda

Overview

As part of forest conservation efforts, Rwanda has embarked on an ambitious \$300 million program to expand Volcanoes National Park (VNP) by 23%, increasing its size by 3,740 hectares. A larger park will support climate adaptation of endangered wildlife populations, especially mountain gorilla habitats by supporting a ~20% increase in population size and a 50% reduction in infant gorilla mortality. \$70 million will be invested in infrastructure and livelihoods to build community resilience, create jobs, and grow the economy.

Anticipated impacts

This project will map rural, urban and peri-urban demand centers for wood and charcoal from the park landscape and support the transition to clean cooking solutions for households and schools in these areas to safeguard VNP habitats, reduce human-wildlife conflict, and improve the resilience of communities.

Potential for scalability

This project could serve as a model for park-scale clean cooking interventions, which can be replicated across the continent. It also serves as the starting point to expand clean cooking markets into neighboring DRC and Uganda to protect the entire Volcanoes/Virunga landscape and gorilla habitat.

Prospective partners



Photo: Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund



Work with us

Through the transformative A4C initiative, the Clean Cooking Alliance, the African Wildlife Foundation, and the African Development Bank are leveraging complementary strengths in clean cooking, conservation, and finance to drive a holistic and coordinated approach to nature and clean cooking in Africa.

We are seeking mission-aligned partners to enable the impact of these efforts through fiscal sponsorship and in-kind support via input on program development, technical guidance, and more.

This is a unique opportunity for partners to showcase their commitment towards nature-positive development and clean cooking access.

For more information or to express interest, please contact partnerships@cleancooking.org.

“ This marks a historic milestone in the clean cooking and conservation sectors, towards holistically addressing one of the core drivers of nature loss and building resilience for communities across Africa’s most critical landscapes.

Jillene Connors Belopolsky
Chief of Staff & External Affairs
Clean Cooking Alliance

About the founding partners



The Clean Cooking Alliance (CCA)

works with a global network of partners to build an inclusive industry that makes clean cooking accessible to the 2.3 billion people who live each day without it. Established in 2010, CCA is driving consumer demand, mobilizing investment to build a pipeline of scalable businesses, and fostering an enabling environment that allows the sector to thrive. Clean cooking transforms lives by improving health, protecting the climate and the environment, empowering women, and helping families save time and money.



The African Development Bank

(AfDB) is a multilateral development bank established in 1964 to mobilize resources for the economic and social development of its African member countries. The AfDB strives to reduce poverty and improve living conditions on the continent through promoting sustainable economic growth and social development. The AfDB has been a champion for clean cooking on the continent, funding numerous clean cooking projects – establishing mechanisms like the Sustainable Energy Fund for Africa (SEFA), and most recently as an anchor investor in the world’s first impact fund investing in clean cooking solutions – Spark+ Africa.



The African Wildlife Foundation

(AWF) is the leading international conservation organization focused exclusively on Africa’s wildlife and wild lands. AWF’s programs and conservation strategies are designed to protect the wildlife and wild lands of Africa and ensure a more sustainable future for Africa’s people. Access to clean cooking is a significant challenge in all many of AWF’s landscapes. Increasing demand for firewood and charcoal, from both rural and urban areas, is driving substantial habitat and species loss and negatively impacting communities who are the main constituency for conservation.



“ Linking restoration efforts with a transition to clean energy is essential to reach our shared climate adaptation objectives. Making clean energy accessible requires an approach rooted in fairness that aligns with the African context.

Dr. Frederick Kwame Kumah

Vice President of Global Leadership, African Wildlife Foundation

Prospective A4C Partners

CCA is exploring additional partnership and project opportunities with leading conservation, restoration and finance organizations.

