

Venture Building Program for eCooking Businesses

CLASP, as a co-implementer of the Modern Energy Cooking Services (MECS) programme is driving the shift to cleaner, healthier, and safer electric cooking (eCooking) by supporting market leaders, visionary founders, and impact-aligned businesses advancing modern eCooking solutions across Africa and Asia. We bring an applied R&D lens together with commercial discipline, offering targeted financial, technical, and business support to strengthen each company's path to scale. Our aim is to generate the evidence that accelerates investment, reduces early risk, and helps promising eCooking ventures grow into sustainable, commercially viable businesses.

Geographic focus: Ghana, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Malawi, Nepal, and Uganda.

Is your organization a strong fit?



Are you an eCooking venture developing or distributing electric cooking appliances and operating in, or planning to operate in, the target African or Asian markets?



Are you at a stage where targeted testing and validation could unlock your next phase of commercial financing?



Do you have early unit economics that are promising but still need to be tested, stress-tested, or adapted across contexts?

If this resonates, our concessional instrument can help you strengthen the proof points investors look for, reduce early risks, and move you confidently toward your next fundraise.

A three-tier venture pathway

Our support is structured to match a company's readiness, learning needs, and potential to scale. Ventures progress through tiers based on evidence, milestone achievement, and commercial progress.



Tier 3: Venture Qualification

Timeline: 4–8 weeks, early pilot

- Review fit against our readiness criteria (TRL, team, traction, economics)
- Small catalytic grant deployed to deepen assessment
- Field validation of product performance and customer behavior
- Understanding team capability and operational discipline

Outcome: Preparation for Investment Committee (IC) review



Tier 2: Venture Strengthening

Timeline: 1 year

- Upon approval by IC - \$200,000 USD non-dilutive, equity-linked concessional instrument
- Applied commercial and technical support
- Testing unit economics, pricing, and subsidy pathways
- Distribution and service model validation
- Digital and carbon readiness checks
- Development of financial models and learning agenda

Outcome: De-risked ventures with validated proof points, positioned to attract Series A or other follow-on investment.



Tier 1: Developmental Capital for Scale-Up

Timeline: 2–5 years

- Larger concessional instruments to validate scale-up
- Focus on operational milestones, carbon financing, and market expansion

Outcome: Scaled businesses driving widespread adoption of eCooking

The process

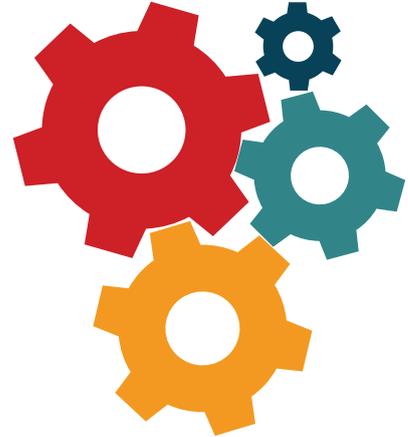
Stage 1: Initial screening (1–4 weeks)

Assess opportunity against our framework

Stage 2: Due diligence (4–8 weeks)

Onsite engagement and case development

Stage 3: Investment decision (8–12 weeks)



Investment Committee's investment decision based on outcomes of stages 1 and 2

Portfolio management: Activities will focus on investor readiness, governance, impact measurement and reporting, networking and partnerships, capacity building and technical assistance, and commercial viability.

How to Apply

Step 1: Review the eligibility criteria

Confirm your readiness level, user traction, and alignment with our focus markets.

Step 2: Complete the Readiness Self-Assessment

Submit the MECS TRL & Venture Readiness Self-Assessment [link](#) to help us understand where you are on your journey.

Step 3: Prepare a short concept note (2–3 pages)

Include:

- Your product and target market
- Early evidence of customer uptake and unit economics
- Key questions you want to test or validate
- What success looks like at the end of the testing phase

Step 4: Submit your materials

Email to: ventures@clasp.ngo
Subject line: MECS Venture Application – [Company Name]
Review frequency: Quarterly
Only ventures meeting the minimum requirements will be contacted.

Who we are

CLASP is the leading global authority on efficient appliances' role in improving people's lives and reducing climate emissions. With 25 years of expertise and offices on five continents, CLASP collaborates with policymakers, industry leaders, and other experts to create a more sustainable future for people and the planet. CLASP and our partners are dedicated to solving the world's most pressing, interconnected crises: the climate emergency, poverty, inequality, and access to energy.

About MECS

Modern Energy Cooking Services (MECS) is a UK Aid-funded programme accelerating the shift from biomass to clean, modern cooking. Working across 16 countries, MECS partners with governments, industry, and researchers to build evidence on affordable, energy-efficient electric cooking and its role in wider energy transitions. By linking modern cooking with investments in reliable and renewable electricity, MECS helps countries plan for cleaner, more sustainable cooking futures. The programme is implemented by Loughborough University in partnership with CLASP and ESMAP.

Disclaimer

Our venture-building support focuses on experimental development—testing and refining products, services, and delivery models where outcomes are not yet proven. Support is designed to generate practical evidence that can be reused and built upon by ventures, investors, and policymakers. All concessional support is tied to clearly defined learning and testing activities. CLASP does not provide general working capital or unrestricted business finance. Concessional support is awarded only after successful progression through Tiers 3 and 2. The process is competitive, and we work with a small number of ventures each year.