

# ENERGY ACCESS FOR THE URBAN POOR

## Accelerating Energy Access for the Urban Poor

About 1 billion people currently live in urban slums and informal settlements. These communities often lack access to legal, safe, and affordable electricity. Power distribution utilities are sometimes hesitant to operate in these communities due to the potential of non-payment of bills, electricity theft, and the additional costs and risks of working in areas outside of planned urban environments. For their part, the urban poor often do not possess land tenure. And policy and regulatory frameworks lack provisions that could help facilitate the delivery of energy services in these areas.

Ensuring adequate energy access for the urban poor is imperative to achieving the [Sustainable Energy for All](#) goal of universal energy access by 2030. With rapid urbanization occurring in developing countries and cities expected to house 64 percent of the world's population by 2050, dedicated efforts on urban electricity access are needed to meet universal electricity access by 2030.

To help countries address this, the Energy Sector Management Assistance Program ([ESMAP](#)) has launched an [Energy Access for the Urban Poor](#) program that seeks to increase or improve access to electricity for the poor in urban/peri-urban areas. Work at the country level began in 2014 following extensive consultations with practitioners from around the world, development partners, and World Bank operational staff.



The program includes the following components designed to mainstream energy access for the urban poor:

### SCALING UP WORLD BANK ASSISTANCE

The program will support the scale up of World Bank operations in the energy and urban sectors. Financial and technical support will be made available to clients for the design and implementation of activities to expand access in urban poor communities. The program will also organize South-South knowledge exchanges to bring country practitioners together and bridge experience and knowledge gaps. Assistance may involve assessment of implementation issues,



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*The Energy Sector Management Assistance Program (ESMAP) is a global knowledge and technical assistance program administered by the World Bank. It provides analytical and advisory services to low- and middle-income countries to increase their know-how and institutional capacity to achieve environmentally sustainable energy solutions for poverty reduction and economic growth. ESMAP is funded by Australia, Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, as well as the World Bank.*

pre-feasibility and design studies, action plan development, expert visits, practitioner workshops, and study tours.

For example, the program supported the implementation of the Kenya Slum Electrification Project financed by the World Bank and the [Global Partnership for Output Based Aid](#). ESMAP's assistance included an assessment of barriers to electricity connection uptake and a knowledge exchange held in Nairobi to introduce Kenya Power, the national utility, to successful examples of slum electrification in Brazil, Colombia, and South Africa. As a result, Kenya Power included elements of these programs in their own operations, which has contributed to an increased number of electricity connections in Kenya's slums.

Assistance is also provided in other countries to improve electricity access for the urban poor. In Haiti, the program is assisting the power utility, EdH, to regularize informal electricity connections in selected areas of Port-au-Prince, under the World Bank-financed Rebuilding Energy Infrastructure & Access Project. Similarly, support is being firmed up to assist the Jamaica's power utility in regularizing illegal electricity connections while reducing nontechnical losses. Support is envisioned for other countries in South and East Asia.

## KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS

The program will also support the development of knowledge products aligned with operational and strategic needs. The products—policy notes, good practice notes, strategic briefs, and analytical papers—will strengthen the global knowledge base and provide a

foundation for the World Bank and development partners to integrate issues of access for the urban poor into their energy operations.

A guidance note on low-income urban community engagement in slum electrification/nontechnical loss reduction is being developed. The note will provide power distribution utilities, World Bank Group's operational task teams and other key stakeholders with a menu of practices, options, and reference material that could be tailored and applied at various stages of the slum electrification/nontechnical loss reduction process, to ensure an effective and sustainable engagement with slum communities and customers.

## CITIES ALLIANCE PROGRAM SUPPORT

In an effort to incorporate energy access dimensions into city development strategies and slum upgrading operations, the program will collaborate with the [Cities Alliance](#), a global partnership for urban poverty reduction. The collaboration will initially focus on countries where the Cities Alliance has ongoing operations under its Land, Services, and Citizenship Program. The component will seek to advance access to electricity in informal settlements and slums in urban/peri-urban areas by: (i) conducting studies on the state of energy (both electricity and cooking fuels) access in urban slums/informal settlements to inform the preparation of city development strategies and action plans; (ii) providing training to enhance capacities of city authorities; and (iii) supporting the inclusion of safe and legal energy access into slum upgrading activities. A study is being carried out in Burkina Faso and support in another country is envisioned.