

TRACKING SDG7: THE ENERGY PROGRESS REPORT 2026

PUBLISHED BY IRENA

October 2026

In June 2026, IRENA the International Renewable Energy Agency, published the [Tracking SDG 7: Energy Progress Report 2026](#).

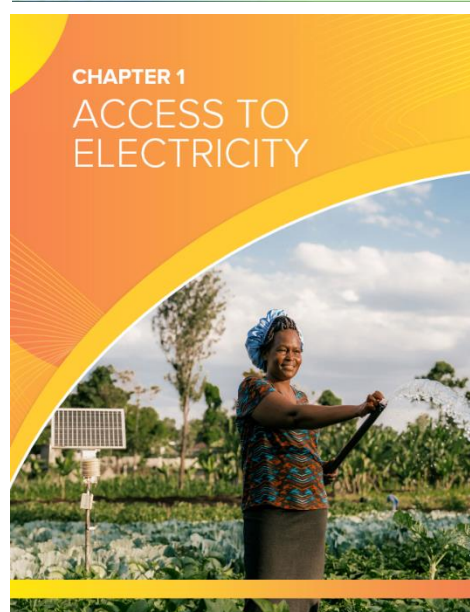
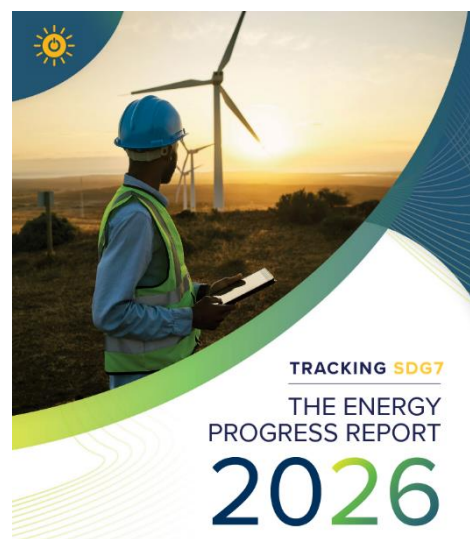
[This Report is an annual inter-agency publication monitoring global advancement towards Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) 7](#), which aims

to ensure affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all by 2030. The Report aims to provide the international community with a global dashboard to register progress on energy access, energy efficiency, renewable energy and international cooperation to advance SDG 7.

Jointly produced by IRENA, in collaboration with the International Energy Agency (IEA), the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the World Bank and the World Health Organization (WHO), the 2026 edition was chaired by UNSD. The authors stress that the global energy transition is unfolding against a backdrop of compounding crises that have repeatedly disrupted progress and whose full implications remain uncertain at the time of publication. Successive shocks have underscored the fact that progress toward SDG 7 depends not only on ambitious policy, but also on geopolitical stability and the resilience of international cooperation. In this context, accelerating renewable energy deployment and improving energy efficiency in line with SDG7 provide a critical opportunity for strengthening energy security by diversifying energy sources, reducing dependence on fossil fuel imports and bolstering macroeconomic resilience.

The latest data underscore both the substantial progress made in recent years and the significant challenges that remain on the path to 2030. [The Executive Summary of the Report summarizes on page 18 the Outlook for progress toward the 2030 goals](#):

Outlook for progress toward 2030 goals. A series of crises, including current energy crises, are creating headwinds. Even so, policy and technological innovations have delivered meaningful results, especially in boosting renewable energy deployment and improving energy efficiency. The COVID-19 pandemic and the 2022 energy crisis slowed progress in electricity access, notably in Africa, where advances have been reversed. The SDG 7 goal of achieving universal energy access by 2030, as well as related efforts to put the world on a 1.5°C pathway, require investment and policy support for renewables, energy efficiency, and energy access. Unfolding developments connected with ongoing wars and related impacts on energy and economic systems may further impact the outlook to 2030.



Outlook for access to electricity. Progress on electricity access has been significant in the past two decades. Since 2000, the world has reduced the number of people without access by 925 million, and 40 countries have reached at least near-universal access. However, the International Energy Agency (IEA) projects that around 645 million people will lack electricity access in 2030—85 percent of them in Sub-Saharan Africa—underscoring the need to step up efforts. Achieving universal electricity access by 2030 will require significant investment and policy support, as well as accelerated deployment of renewable energy. Debt burdens, cuts in international aid, and population growth outpacing electrification are the main headwinds, making an increase in concessional finance and robust national electrification plans indispensable.

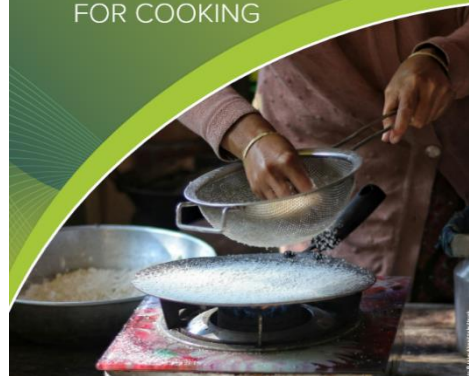
Outlook for access to clean cooking. Universal access to clean cooking by 2030 remains out of reach under current policies and investment. The IEA and the World Health Organization (WHO) estimate that between 1.6 and 1.8 billion people will still lack access to clean cooking by the end of the decade. On the positive side, these estimates project a continued decline in the use of polluting fuels and an increase in the use of gaseous fuels and electricity for cooking. Improvements out to 2030 will continue to be marked by strong regional disparities, as has been the case in past years. While significant progress has been made in Asia, the number of people without access to clean cooking in Sub-Saharan Africa is increasing, largely because the rate of population growth is outpacing gains in access. According to IEA estimates, reaching full clean cooking access by 2030 would require USD 8 billion annually until the gap is closed, half of it for Sub-Saharan Africa alone.

Outlook for renewable energy. Renewable energy is the fastest-growing energy source today, with renewables surpassing coal as the predominant electricity source globally in 2025. To meet the tripling pledge in the COP28 outcomes (as well as climate targets, the IEA's Net Zero Emissions by 2050 Scenario, and IRENA's 1.5°C Scenario) far more ambitious investment and policy support will be required. In other words, modern uses of renewables must reach a 32–35 percent share of TFC and 68 percent of electricity generation by 2030. At the same time, coal remained the largest source of electricity, providing 34 percent of global generation. Current NDC collective targets amount to only about 5.8 TW—roughly half the tripling goal—meaning ambition must nearly double within less than five years.

Outlook for energy efficiency. Early estimates for 2024 show only a 1 percent annual rate of improvement in energy intensity, against a 2 percent annual improvement average since 2010. Given today's policy trends, that improvement rate is expected to accelerate to around 2.2 percent annually, owing to the increased electrification of end uses. But doubling the average annual rate by 2030 will require strong policy action and a substantial increase in investment. The IEA's Net Zero Emissions scenario estimates the necessary rate of improvement to be just over 4 percent, slightly higher than the SDG 7.3 target of 3.8 percent. IRENA's 1.5°C Scenario estimates more than 5 percent per year will be needed from 2025 to 2030. Energy efficiency is therefore central to meeting sustainability and climate goals.

Investment needs. Achieving the SDG 7 targets will require a substantial increase in clean energy investment. The IEA and IRENA estimate average annual energy-transition related investment in the range of USD 3–5 trillion by 2030, up from the USD 2.2 trillion placed in a comparable set of energy investments today. Though today's rate is twice the amount flowing to fossil fuels, it remains insufficient. IEA's Net Zero Emissions by 2050 Scenario calls for average annual energy

CHAPTER 2 ACCESS TO CLEAN FUELS AND TECHNOLOGIES FOR COOKING



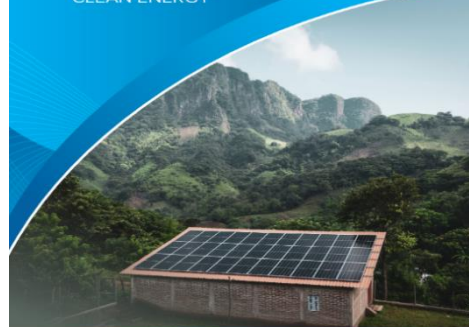
CHAPTER 3 RENEWABLES



CHAPTER 4 ENERGY EFFICIENCY



CHAPTER 5 INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC FINANCIAL FLOWS TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN SUPPORT OF CLEAN ENERGY



investments of USD 3 trillion through 2030; IRENA estimates that the UAE Consensus targets on renewables and efficiency will require around USD 5 trillion per year. Investment in renewable power capacity must rise to USD 1.5 trillion annually. Energy efficiency investment must grow sevenfold to approximately USD 2.6 trillion per year. Investment flows remain heavily concentrated in China, the European Union, and the United States, leaving emerging markets and developing economies critically underfunded. Addressing the investment gap, particularly in developing economies, is essential for advancing the energy transition and ensuring universal access to sustainable energy.

Additional information may be accessed through the [Tracking SDG 7 website](#).

To know more

[Energy Progress Report 2026 in IRENA website](#)

[Energy Progress Report 2026 PDF](#)

[Energy Progress Report Executive Summary](#)

[Energy Progress Report in IEA website](#)

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