



LOGISTICAL COORDINATION AND HANDOVER MANAGEMENT OF THE FIVE BRIQUETTE PRODUCTION FACILITIES IN YUMBE DISTRICT

■ Stakeholders' Engagement Report

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Prepared For:
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Government of Uganda's pledge to localise the refugee response, the Clean Cooking Solution for BidiBidi Refugee Settlement project, under Building Resilience and an Effective Emergency Refugee Response (BRAER) Programme, was developed to test an approach on working closer with local organisations. The programme comprised of a clean cooking project designed for learning experience, with the ambition to strengthen the role of local and national organisations within the refugee response beyond the project.

Under the clean cooking project, the National Association for Women's Action in Development (NAWAD) implemented a briquetting project aimed at reducing the environmental impact associated with the use of firewood and charcoal consumption in Yumbe District. Through the grant from the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office through the British High Commission (FCDO/BHC), NAWAD setup five briquette production centres (physical space), equipped the centres with five (5) briquetting systems and trained beneficiaries on their operation. The briquettes were primarily produced from agricultural and forest residues. Each briquetting system distributed comprised the following components: 1) One crusher; 2) Two carbonizers; 3) One mixer; and 4) One briquetting press (manual or dual, solar- or electric-powered). The five (5) centers are at the following locations:

- **Drimbeni Center:** located in Drimbeni Village, Abara Parish, Odravu West Sub County, for the Host Community
- **Village 5 Center:** located in Igamara Village, Abara Parish, Odravu West Subcounty, for the Refugee Community
- **Innonga Center:** located in Innonga Village, Utakua Parish, Odravu West Sub County, for Host Community
- **Village 7 Center:** located in Kado Village, Utakua Parish, Odravu West Sub County, for Refugee Community
- **Village 10 Center:** located in Bolomoni Village, Loli Parish, Ariwa Sub County, for Refugee Community

The project having closed on 31st December, 2025, in accordance with the project's sustainability plan and grant agreement with NAWAD regarding the disposal of project assets, the British High Commission (BHC) in Uganda wishes to transfer the project assets and materials to the Clean Cooking Unit through Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development (CCU/MEMD) to ensure appropriate stewardship, accountability, and continued value for money for the assets.

In preparation for a smooth transfer and handover of the project assets and materials, the National Renewable Energy Platform (NREP) has been contracted to support the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, through the British High Commission in Kampala (FCDO/BHC) and Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development in the interim capacity for the period of three (3) months, that is, January to March, 2026 to manage the safety, transfer and handover of the assets.

Prior to the decommissioning of the Briquette Production Facilities, NREP held stakeholders' engagements with the community members and direct beneficiaries of the project to assess:

1. General public view about the usefulness of the centers to the community
2. Thoughts on what should have been done differently to make the centers more impactful to the community
3. Thoughts about the plans to decommission and transfer the centers to other places
4. Experiences on use of briquettes in the community
5. Views on the size and type of briquettes and size of stoves

Stakeholders' engagements were held across the communities hosting the five (5) briquette production facilities. Feedback from the engagements are presented on location basis in this report.

2.0 ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

2.1 Demand and usage patterns

Across all five sites, communities demonstrated positive perceptions of briquettes as a cleaner, safer, and time-saving cooking fuel, particularly for women. However, regular use remains limited and largely conditional, driven by:

- Affordability of briquettes and stoves;
- Limited awareness creation and user training;
- Absence of last-mile distribution mechanisms.

Where adoption exists, briquettes are often used selectively (e.g., during travel or long cooking tasks), rather than as a full fuel switch. This indicates latent demand, but not yet a commercially viable or self-sustaining market across all locations.

2.2 Capacity, governance, and operational readiness

While training was conducted, operational capacity at community level remains thin and uneven:

- Village committees were formed late in the project lifecycle, limiting their effectiveness.
- Technical skills for machine operation, stove fabrication, and business management are insufficient for autonomous operation.
- Continued reliance on external facilitation was evident across all sites.

This suggests that full community-led production is not viable at all five locations without additional investment beyond the current mandate.

2.3 Expectation management risks

A consistent theme across communities is misaligned expectations, including:

- Assumptions of free or subsidised stoves and briquettes;
- Perceived long-term guarantees linked to MoUs with landlords;
- Expectations that briquette production facilities would operate for five years, rather than one.

If unaddressed during handover, these gaps pose reputational, governance, and dispute risks for CCU/MEMD and FCDO/BHC going forward.

2.4 Implications for handover and stewardship decisions

Based on engagement findings and operational realities, the five centres do not present equal viability for continued production. A differentiated stewardship approach is therefore warranted:

- **Village 7 Center** showed relatively stronger production potential due to central location, feedstock availability, and training footprint and is recommendable to be retained as the production facility by CCU/MEMD post handover.
- **Drimbeni** is better suited for stove production and refurbishment, given existing unfinished stock and demand and is recommendable that CCU/MEMD and identified partners continue using it as a fabrication facility for stoves.

- The remaining centres, that is Innonga, Villages 5 and 10 Centers are more appropriately positioned as distribution and awareness hubs, rather than full production sites.
 - For sustained distribution and market penetration, CCU/MEMD and identified partners should improvise means of transport to facilitate distribution of briquettes across centers.
- This tiered approach aligns with CCU/MEMD objectives of sustainability, accountability, and value for money, while avoiding overextension of limited resources.

2.5 Asset Risk and Readiness Summary

2.5.1 Immediate risks (requiring urgent mitigation pre-handover)

- Faulty or missing padlocks at Village 10, Village 7, and Innonga Centers expose assets to theft. To this effect, NREP has procured and deployed the needed padlocks across the centers.
- Water entry into production rooms, including exposure of batteries and inverters. CCU/MEMD should prioritise closing up the openings to safeguard against water entry and potential damage of the equipment.
- Improper outdoor storage of carbonisers and mixers, accelerating corrosion. NREP has instructed the security personnel to ensure the equipment is well protected.
- Security personnel sleeping inside production rooms, posing safety risks. CCU/MEMD going forward should consider setting up a structure for the security personnel.
- Faulty inverter at Drimbeni centre requiring technical intervention. Upon decommissioning, NREP will contract a technician to repair the inverter.

Failure to address some of these issues risks rapid asset deterioration which could undermine FCDO value-for-money assurances.

2.5.2 Medium-term risks (affecting future usability and cost-effectiveness)

- Lack of feedstock storage facilities, leading to seasonal losses. Upon repurposing some of the centers to distribution facilities, their respective dryers could be converted to storage facilities for feedstock.
- Idle and incomplete products, including over 200 partially assembled stoves. NREP has instructed the local assemblers to complete the stoves at Drimbeni Center with an anticipation of them being distributed to the community at the decommissioning stage or left behind for CCU/MEMD as the first stock.
- Unsold briquettes left in dryers, risking spoilage and wasted production inputs. NREP intends to distribute the left behind briquettes to community members around the centers.
- Briquette design (honeycomb) poorly aligned with household cooking practices, reducing effective utilisation. In the medium to longterm, CCU/MEMD should consider redesigning the briquette making machines to produce stick briquettes, which are commonly used in settlements.
- Uncertainty around the promises made by NAWAD to landlords and specificities in the MoUs require urgent redress by all partners. NREP, CCU/MEMD, NAWAD and FCDO/BHC should have candid review and appreciation of the promises to mitigate against possible risks during decommissioning and future operations of the center.

2.5.3 Value-for-money (VfM) implications

Given the interim nature of the assignment:

- To uphold value for money invested in the briquette making machines, upon handover, CCU/MEMD should redesign the briquette making machines to produce stick briquettes before redeploying them to any of the settlements.
- Completing unfinished stoves and utilising existing briquettes locally and retaining them at the centers offers higher VfM than transporting them to Kampala.

Minimal solar systems retained at sites for lighting and security represent a low-cost, high-impact safeguard and upholds the reputation of FCDO/BHC within the communities.

3.0 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS

3.1 Village 10 Community

Question One: General public view about the usefulness of the centers to the community

Expressed community happiness about the project, noting that it saved them from fetching firewood in the bushes and contributed to the reduction in tree cutting for firewood in the community.

Noted that 37 out of the 184 households in the community had been trained in briquette making. Before, the community did not know how to convert biomass to biochar and accordingly produce briquettes. Also emphasised that some households had gotten used to using briquettes as they were smart, time saving, and improved the standard of cooking, especially for women.

Revealed that the project also provided jobs to the community members such as salespersons, security personnel, operators and trainers of trainees.

Question Two: Thoughts on what should have been done differently to make the centers more impactful to the community

Highlighted that what made the project of lesser impact to the community is the fact that the technology was very new to the people and community members had never used briquettes before nor encountered them in their lives.

Recommended that the project should have provided at least 50 briquettes for free to each household instead of just three (3) to test how they work. Also noted that three (3) briquettes would only cook for one (1) day and this was not sufficient time to cause change in household behavior.

Noted that no thorough training on lighting of the briquettes was done which led to many households giving up on using them hence necessitating sensitisation of the community. Highlighted that only a few people are still using briquettes in the community and visit the center with raw materials to produce their own briquettes or to buy already made briquettes. For example, about five (5) households bring their raw materials to produce briquettes, while only three (3) households still buy briquettes with cash.

Hinted that the community's minds were not changed as the project did not invest enough in awareness creation. Noted that community mindset challenges had been mentioned in the project baseline study, but never addressed during implementation. Noted that sensitization was only done at the tail-end of the project instead of doing so from the inception stages.





The community noted that they should have as well been trained on how to locally produce stoves to enable them make a living. Further recommended that NAWAD should have given out the stoves for free and concentrate on sale of briquettes. This approach would have eliminated the excuse of not having stoves in the first place to use briquettes. Stoves costed fifty thousand shillings (UGX. 50,000), which was too much for the community members to afford.

Given that trainings were conducted at the center, they expressed a need to have shower rooms at the facility. Noted that the latrine was already full because it was also used as a shower room during the trainings.

Initially, the project manager gave the community money to collect the feedstock, which changed their mindset about the project and always expected money before giving out their biomass feedstock. Recommended that the provision of the feedstock by the community should have been voluntary, rather than monetarized.

Question Three: Thoughts about the plans to decommission and transfer the centers to other places

Expressed worry and concern about what could be next for the project following its closure on 31st December, 2025. Hinted that it would not be good to take away the facility because there are already people in the community that are used to using briquettes and taking the facility will draw them back to firewood usage.

Also highlighted that, in the public view, the facility should be maintained as it is located at the border of Bidi Bidi and Terego, providing a business case for extending briquettes to Terego as well. Also, it would help to extend knowledge to other communities given its location in the trading center, which attracts many people, especially on the market day.

Emphasised that all centers have a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the landlord, wondering what would happen if the facilities are moved, given the MoUs are for five (5) years.

Question Four: Experiences on use of briquettes in the community

Highlighted that households only tend to use briquettes when they have a journey, enabling them to leave their food cooking on the briquette stove while on days without travel, they use firewood.

Question Five: Views on the size and type of briquettes and size of stoves

Noted that there has generally been no complaint about the size of the stoves as people were free to use either briquettes or charcoal on the stoves provided. Also highlighted that bigger stoves should be produced which would limit the use of charcoal on the stove because charcoal is more expensive than briquettes and does not cook for long.

3.2 Village 7 Community

Question One: General public view about the usefulness of the centers to the community



Highlighted that the community benefited from the briquettes produced at the center as well as the flexibility of the center to allow people to bring their biomass feedstock to produce their own briquettes.

Noted that the center trained four (4) trainers of trainees from each of the villages; village 6, village 7 and village 8, making a total of 12 ToTs all together.

Emphasised that the entire village was trained in briquette production, with about 40, 30 and 25 people in villages 7, 6 and 8, respectively.

Question Two: Thoughts on what should have been done differently to make the centers more impactful to the community

Hinted that there were no stoves at the center yet the community kept asking about them and hence the absence of stoves limited the adoption of briquettes in the community.

Noted that a few people from the community have labored to come to the center to buy briquettes and recommended that it would have been good to extend briquette delivery services to communities instead of them coming to the facility. For example, use of a tuk-tuk (tricycle) that would go around communities to deliver briquettes to households.

Question Three: Thoughts about the plans to decommission and transfer the centers to other places

Highlighted that people have just gotten to understand the benefits of the project, particularly briquettes as a fuel and now there is a plan to move it. Noted that it would be realistic to keep the facility for at least two (2) years before moving it so that it continues serving the community. Hinted that the facility is near several villages, that is, it is in the center of villages 10, 7, 8, 6 and 5. Pointed to the fact that it is not feasible for people to move to village 10 over village 7 to get briquettes. Also, noted that there is a lot of biomass raw material near the facility and feedstock can easily be collected from the landlord's forest at no charge. The facility also serves as the training center for communities and ToTs and it is a bigger storage space.

Question Four: Experiences on use of briquettes in the community

Noted that the few people using the briquettes have not complained about them so far. However, most complain about the price not being affordable saying that UGX. 400 is too much for them.

They recommend starting at about UGX. 200 and gradually increase it with demand growth. Also noted that it was the first time that beneficiaries were requested by a partner to pay for a service and most of them were not familiar with the practice.

Question Five: Views on the size and type of briquettes and size of stoves

Noted that apparently there has not been any complaint about the size of briquettes or stoves by the beneficiaries.



3.3 Innonga Village Community

Question One: General public view about the usefulness of the centers to the community

Highlighted that cutting down of trees was rampant in the community, but with the briquettes, the community is only using leaves and branches to make biochar. Also noted that because of using briquettes, women are no longer at a risk of being raped that mainly happened during the fetching of firewood hence improved community safety.

Question Two: Thoughts on what should have been done differently to make the centers more impactful to the community

Noted that charcoal users are mainly in the urban areas and that there should be arrangements to have the produced briquettes under the project also supplied in the urban areas of Yumbe district.



Question Three: Thoughts about the plans to decommission and transfer the centers to other places

Highlighted that the Innonga Facility is strategically located at centre of all the five (5) briquette producing facilities and also serves Kado, Raranga, and Komo village. Stated that already 20 – 30 people in the community use and buy briquettes from the center.

Raised a concern that if the center is converted into a distribution facility rather than production facility, the number of briquette users could reduce given that several of them were bringing their biomass feedstock to produce briquettes. Pointed out that there is a forest a few metres from the center where feedstock can be sourced. Also noted that the community is open to the idea of swapping biomass feedstock for briquettes at the facility in case it is changed to a distribution center, using a 1:0.6 ratio for biomass to briquettes.

Noted that the change in the operations of the center might demoralize the landlords since they expected to benefit from the facility for a long time. The MoUs signed indicated that the project would be running for five (5) years, however, it now turns out that the project has ended in just one (1) year.

Question Four: Experiences on use of briquettes in the community

Stated that previously, the community used to eat dirty food with ash from firewood, but with the use of briquettes, the food is clean and the community is enjoying it.

Question Five: Views on the size and type of briquettes and size of stoves

Noted that there is a difference between urban and rural cooking practices. In rural areas, one cooks for over ten (10) people and if they are to use the provided briquette stoves, one has to cook several times and thus, the size of the stoves and briquettes should be increased to accommodate bigger family sizes and restaurants in the settlement.

3.4 Village 5 Community

Question One: General public view about the usefulness of the centers to the community

Appreciated the community centred structure of the project and its ability to create jobs and opportunities particularly for women and youth. Noted that each village has a briquettes committee formed to oversee and manage the center following the departure of NAWAD to continue producing briquettes for the people.

Highlighted that the community had lost significant number of trees and with the community now using only leaves and branches to make briquettes, this practice is saving the remaining trees in the village. Also noted that people are now able to cook and eat on time without delays that were caused by firewood shortage and wetness. Emphasised that over 30 people in the community are using briquettes to cook at home.



Question Two: Thoughts on what should have been done differently to make the centers more impactful to the community

Stated that transportation of briquettes remains a hinderance, noting that it is hard to take the produced briquettes to the target markets. Recommended that the project should have included a tuk-tuk (tricycle) or motorcycle to facilitate the delivery of briquettes in the community.

Also highlighted that the production and/or distribution of the stoves should have been done at the facility to enable community members to access them.

Recommended that capacity building of the community, particularly the committee members on operation and management of the facility should have been done during the inception stages to enable continuity and sustainability. Noted that the formation of the committees was the last project activity, yet it should have been executed among the first project activities.

Question Three: Thoughts about the plans to decommission and transfer the centers to other places

Noted that with the decommissioning of the center, delivery of briquettes across the different villages and centers might be affected since the project does not have transport means. Recommended that probably, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development should get a tuk-tuk (tricycle) to support in distribution and delivery of briquettes and biomass feedstock across the villages and centers. Pointed to the fact that continued awareness creation in the community is important for the continued use of briquettes post decommissioning, noting that the community still needs to understand the benefits of briquettes.

Question Four: Experiences on use of briquettes in the community

Highlighted that the quality of the briquettes produced at the center is good compared to other briquettes from different partners. And noted that the stoves provided by the project were good, not producing smoke while cooking. Stated that the briquettes are cheaper for the community than charcoal. For example, about one (1) kilogram of charcoal is at UGX. 1,000 while briquettes are at UGX. 400 and thus many people who initially used charcoal have transitioned to briquettes.

Recommended that the price of briquettes at the start of the project should have been UGX. 300 instead of UGX. 400 to enable several people to afford them. Noted that currently the village committee is selling three (3) briquettes at UGX. 1,000.

Question Five: Views on the size and type of briquettes and size of stoves

Stated that people with big families have complained about the size of the stoves provided under the project since they have to use big saucepans to cook and the same has been raised by the restaurant operators in the community. Noted that NAWAD had promised to also supply bigger stoves but they were never delivered yet several people continue to request for them.



3.5 Drimbeni Village Community

Question One: General public view about the usefulness of the centers to the community

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Reported that the project has protected the community trees considering that instead of cutting the trees, the community just prunes and uses leaves and branches to produce briquettes.

Highlighted that the center serves five (5) villages namely, Drimbeni, Ukangali, Tipanga, Bare and Igamara villages



Question Two: Thoughts on what should have been done differently to make the centers more impactful to the community

Noted that the number of operators and ToTs should have been increased as there are only four (4) ToTs in the community of which three (3) of them double as the operators.

Hinted that awareness creation was done on a small scale and thus might have affected the number of households that adopted the use of briquettes whence recommending that going forward, awareness should be intensified.

Question Three: Thoughts about the plans to decommission and transfer the centers to other places

Highlighted that people always bring their feedstock to produce their briquettes and that there should be a provision to cater for such cases if the center is converted to a distribution center. Also noted that the center serves as a stove making point and if converted to a distribution center, where will the stoves be made from? Pleaded that the production of stoves should not be stopped because stoves are highly demanded in the community.

Indicated that there had been a promise by NAWAD to train several ToTs on stove production and there are several people in the community interested in such trainings and are questioning when these trainings would be done.

Question Four: Experiences on use of briquettes in the community

Articulated that food cooked on briquettes is different from the one of firewood as it never has smoke and is always clean. Indicated that when going for farming activities, households put only two (2) pieces of briquettes and put their beans to cook. On return, they would find them ready with no need of adding more like it is with charcoal and firewood.

Question Five: Views on the size and type of briquettes and size of stoves

The community complained about the price of stoves as being prohibitive to them, with each stove costing UGX. 50,000, which is largely considered very high and propose to buy the stoves at a subsidized price of may be UGX. 15,000



4.0 GENERAL COMMENTS & OBSERVATIONS

- The padlocks at Villages 10 & 7 and Innonga Centers are faulty and/or inexistent, which leaves the assets at risk of theft. Padlocks are urgently needed to ensure that the assets are safely stored.
- The bulbs at some of the centers do not work. Only two (2) out of six (6) security bulbs are working at the moment at Village 10 center.
- Water supply remains another challenge. The rainwater harvest tanks only operate during the rainy season, whereas during the dry season, there is no water for mass production of briquettes. Recommend working with Water Mission to provide water to the center through piped water system, noting that all places around the community had piped water already.
- The security guards sleep inside the production room, which is risky for their lives.
- There is no storage facility for the feedstock. For example, during the period of January to March, feedstock is abundant due to the harvest season, but there is nowhere to keep this feedstock and soon people will burn it in preparation for the next planting season.
- During rainy seasons, water gets inside the production room and onto the batteries which might damage them.
- The inverter at Drimbeni center is faulty and needs technical attention to revamp it.
- Several stoves were left behind halfway their assembling to final product at Drimbeni Center. These stoves are estimated to be over 200 in number.
- Several briquettes were produced before the project closure and were left in the dryers at each of the centers.
- Several respondents kept referring to promised benefits to the landlords from the centers under the MoUs by NAWAD. However, they never clearly pointed out what kind of benefits they are.
- The size of the briquettes produced seemed smaller for the size of stoves that the project provided to households.
- The choice of honeycomb over stick, cylindrical or round types of briquettes might have not been appropriate for the settlement given that once lit, it must burn to completion, no option of extinguishing the fire once done cooking. However, with the other types, like round and stick, the user can limit usage by putting fewer pieces of briquettes on the stove.
- The way carbonizers and mixers were kept is not appropriate. Most of these were just left out in open spaces which exposes them to moisture and consequently rust.



5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Must-do actions prior to handover (within current mandate)

- CCU/MEMD should clearly communicate the scope and limits of post-handover operation of the centers to the communities to establish rapport and stakeholder acceptance.
- CCU/MEMD should put in place post-February security arrangements and residual risk ownership mechanisms regarding the operation of the centers.

5.2 Immediate handover considerations for CCU/MEMD

- Adopt a differentiated center model: briquette production – at Village 7 Center; stove fabrication – at Drimbeni Center; and distribution – at Innonga, Villages 5 and 10 Centers.
- Prioritise awareness creation in the communities to stabilise demand and stimulate adoption.
- Capacity building for village briquette committees, operators as well business development services of community actors in the briquette value chain should be prioritised for sustained briquettes business in the settlement.
- Improvise transport means to facilitate mobility of products and feedstock across the centers and the community for sustained production and distribution.

5.3 Lessons learned for future programming (not interim deliverables)

- Align briquette form factor with household cooking behaviour.
- Front-load awareness creation and expectation management.
- Establish governance structures early in project lifecycles.
- Integrate transport and distribution planning from inception.

This framing ensures recommendations are realistic, proportionate, and auditable, consistent with FCDO/BHC assurance requirements.

5.4 Governance, roles, and next steps: “Post-Handover Roles and Residual Risks”

- **NREP:** responsibilities limited to interim asset/product safety, documentation, and supported handover (ending March 2026).
- **CCU/MEMD:** assumes stewardship, asset/product management, residual risks related primarily to asset condition MoU oversight, and future operational decisions.
- **FCDO/BHC:** expectation management, MoU interpretation, approval of interim outputs, officiating at handover

6.0 CONCLUSION

In preparation to decommission and transfer the project assets, NREP team engaged stakeholders from the communities around the five (5) centers to appreciate the community views on usefulness of the centers, recommendable alternative approaches by the community, planned decommissioning of the centers, experience using briquettes, and size of briquettes and stoves provided under the project.

The engagements reviewed that community awareness about briquettes was not adequate, resulting in fewer households adopting briquettes. The formation of village briquette committees in communities around the centers was a brilliant idea however, was a delayed activity towards the tail end of the project hence limiting the committee members' capacitation and appreciation of the project and benefits of using briquettes.

The choice of honeycomb over round or stick type of briquettes by the project remains abstract, considering that refugees often have limited food to cook, the use of honeycomb briquettes comes off as wastage given that one cannot limit the quantity they put on the stove. Respondents noted that some households would break the honeycomb into small pieces in order to minimize wastage of the fuel. For future deployment of the briquettes making machines by CCU/MEMD, it could be worth considering remodifying them to produce stick briquettes rather than honeycomb briquettes.

At the closure of the project by NAWAD, several products, that is, stoves and briquettes were left behind, with an estimate of 200 incomplete stoves. NREP proposes that these be completed and either be given to the communities at decommissioning or be the starting stock for the centers under CCU/MEMD. Likewise, the available briquettes could be distributed at decommissioning or kept as first stock for the centers under CCU/MEMD.

For any of the current centers that is to be retained, CCU/MEMD should prioritise community awareness creation on briquettes, ensure to secure a transport means for distribution and delivery of products and feedstock across the centers as well as for community awareness drives. For the centers that will be converted to distribution centers at decommissioning, a smaller sized solar system should be left behind to provide direct current power for security.

CCU/MEMD and its partners going forward that will be managing the centers ought to have a prior understanding of the established MoUs between NAWAD and the landlords, especially on the expectations therein.



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