



## HETA IN DRC

# HEALTH ELECTRIFICATION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS ALLIANCE

**HETA is Power Africa’s flagship initiative to expand energy access and digital connectivity for health facilities across sub-Saharan Africa. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, HETA works with public and private sector partners to amplify investments in health sector priorities such as reducing maternal and child mortality and ensuring clean water, sanitation, and hygiene, while contributing to broader health system resilience in peri-urban and rural areas.**

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) reports high infant and maternal mortality rates, malnutrition, poor vaccination coverage, poor access to improved water sources and sanitation, and frequent and early fertility. Malaria is the principal cause of morbidity and mortality, accounting for 11 percent of deaths overall, 60 percent of hospital visits, and 19 percent of deaths among children under 5 years. In 2021, only about 20.8 percent of the population had access to electricity, although that figure rises to 43.8 percent in urban areas ([World Bank](#)). Data are limited on health facility electrification, but it is likely that less than 30 percent have access to electricity, and many with access have an unreliable supply—due to grid connection challenges or gaps in operations and maintenance (O&M) support to keep solar photovoltaic (PV) systems running.

Digital connections are expanding, but mobile network operators still cover less than half the population; 75 percent of DRC is covered by 2G networks, with only 54 percent covered by 3G, and internet usage at less than 20 percent ([GSMA](#)). The unreliability of electricity and digital connectivity poses a substantial challenge for improving health outcomes and has implications for critical inputs at health facilities—including reporting and information systems, energy-dependent medical equipment, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) systems. WASH is a crucial point of intervention in DRC. Only about 12 percent of the population uses safely managed drinking water, with just 13 percent using a safely managed sanitation service and only 19 percent having a handwashing facility with soap and water available at home ([United Nations](#)).

## HETA’S SOLUTION

HETA, led by Abt Associates, represents the next phase of USAID and Power Africa investment to improve health facility electrification and digital connectivity in DRC. HETA partners are installing solar PV systems with battery storage to ensure consistent energy supplies and deploying signal-boosting technologies to digitally connect health facilities. HETA is focused on catalyzing partnerships to rapidly expand energy access, digital connectivity, and WASH for health facilities in central-southern DRC (Kasaï Central, Kasaï Oriental, Lomami, and Sankuru provinces), while engaging public, private and civil sector actors to lay the groundwork for longer-term investments in these crucial elements of the health system.

HETA is implementing the following activities from October 2023 through September 2024:



- Assessing the market in Kasai region to identify gaps and recommend solutions to improve energy access, digital connectivity, and WASH
- Implementing sustainable, high-impact activities to electrify and digitally connect health facilities and support WASH
- Building partnerships among public and private sector stakeholders and investors
- Facilitating capacity strengthening programs to support inclusive business models for O&M

Through these efforts, HETA is working with stakeholders to develop revenue-generating and community-integrated models with built-in O&M plans, and will expand in subsequent years as more needs are identified and implementation resources are mobilized.

## HETA'S PARTNERS IN DRC

Power Africa and USAID DRC provide initial funding to convene partners and stakeholders and catalyze leverage contributions that will extend HETA's reach and impact. Other partners provide co-funding and customization of sustainable business models to meet facilities' needs for power, connectivity, and WASH.

- **Abt Associates:** Prime and lead integrator, also providing program oversight and health system strengthening expertise in DRC.
- **bechtel.org (Bechtel's social enterprise):** HETA founding partner and electrification technical advisors.
- **OffGridBox:** Provides a ready-to-install module with solar panels and lithium battery storage to ensure reliable power and clean drinking water for clinics, supporting improved service quality and reduced infant mortality and waterborne illnesses, while generating income for communities.
- **Other private sector partners** provide co-funding, digital connectivity solutions integrated with health facility electrification, and women-led, community-based business models for sustainable O&M.

HETA's work supports Government of DRC priorities for electrification, digital connectivity, and WASH as essential infrastructure for a resilient health system. We are proud to work with the Ministry of Health, the National Agency for Electrification and Energy Services in Rural and Peri-urban areas (ANSER), provincial governments, and other partners committed to DRC's health, energy, and economic empowerment goals.

**TOGETHER, WE ARE POWERING AND CONNECTING HEALTH IN DRC.**

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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**Power Africa** is a U.S. Government-led partnership that convenes the collective resources of the private sector, international development organizations, and governments to increase energy access and end energy poverty in sub-Saharan Africa. **HETA** is a USAID Global Development Alliance and a Power Africa flagship initiative to accelerate health facility electrification and digital connectivity in the region. Abt Associates leads HETA (Cooperative Agreement 72067422CA00003) with RESOLVE, bechtel.org, and Orange. These founding partners work with a vibrant network to conceptualize, customize, and co-fund sustainable energy and connectivity solutions for stronger, greener, and more resilient health systems. (Cover photo: [USAID DRC](#))

