

# 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



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17 ROOMS GLOBAL FLAGSHIP  
2021 ROOM DOCUMENTS  
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This document summarizes the ideas and actions that emerged from Room 7, a working group for Sustainable Development Goal 7 on Affordable and Clean Energy, that convened as part of the annual 17 Rooms global flagship process in 2021. The [17 Rooms initiative](#) is co-hosted by the Center for Sustainable Development at The Brookings Institution and The Rockefeller Foundation. Each Room, one per SDG, was asked to identify actionable priorities that can be advanced by the end of 2022 to improve some component of 2030 outcomes for its respective Goal. Corresponding documents prepared by the other flagship Rooms are available [here](#), alongside a synthesis report prepared by the 17 Rooms secretariat.

## **Room 7: To meet the SDGs, we need better energy targets aligned with the full spirit of SDG7**

Context: Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 7 is to “Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all by 2030.” The principal targets are (7.1) universal electricity access, which is conventionally accepted as focused on households with a very low target of just 50 kilowatt-hour (kWh)/person/year; (7.2) higher share of renewable energy; and (7.3) double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency.

The problem: We believe that SDG7 is appropriately ambitious and comprehensive—both in its reach (everyone should have access to energy) and in its impact (that access should be affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern). However, the metrics that track those goals focus primarily on the “access for all” component, leaving aside measurement of the characteristics of access that are needed to allow energy to bring people out of economic poverty. Access alone is insufficient if it is just the first kWh and may not be reliable, affordable, or scalable. Similarly, access to modern energy is not limited to electricity alone but must include modern cooking. The continued use of wood or other biofuels for cooking is a severe manifestation of energy poverty, with both local and global impacts, especially for the health of women and girls.

### We agree:

- Energy, and especially electricity, is multipurpose. Any goals or metrics must be aligned with the needs for cooking, heating, cooling, and productive uses.
- Household energy consumption is essential for raising human welfare, but energy systems must also be built to enable economic activity, transformation, and industrialization.
- Rising incomes, urbanization, and population growth will all contribute toward greater energy demand in coming decades. Trends in the transportation sector and the digital economy are further adding to future demand for reliable and affordable electricity.
- Meeting other SDGs requires a step-change in energy consumption above the current targets. This is especially true for Goals 1 (no poverty), 5 (gender equality), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 9 (industry, innovation, infrastructure), 10 (reduced inequalities), 11 (sustainable cities), and 13 (impact of climate change).
- Any new energy metrics must be simple to understand, measurable, and aligned with meeting the full ambition of SDG7 and related SDGs.

In 2022, we propose to support:

1. *Adopting a reliability target.* Some measure of outage frequency and/or duration is a fair proxy for quality. Such a metric could be created using existing utility measures plus independent verification (e.g., feeder monitoring, remote sensors or satellites).
2. *Adding universal clean cooking as a target.* The IEA already collects [data on clean cooking](#), though we would suggest counting all energy sources used as primary cooking fuel beyond traditional biomass that reduce emissions and adverse health impacts of indoor air pollution. (This definition could be revisited as technology evolves.)
3. *Tracking energy for productive use.* The U.N. could adopt a target for non-residential electricity consumption, such as the [Modern Energy Minimum](#), a proposed floor of 1,000 kWh per person per year, inclusive of electricity used at home and an average floor for the wider economy. The Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet, launched by the Rockefeller Foundation along with the IKEA Foundation and Bezos Earth Fund on November 3 2021, uses the 1,000 kWh minimum to select eligible countries. The U.N. and World Bank can follow suit.