Rwanda plans to start extracting methane gas from Lake Kivu in December 2025, a move expected to ease household energy costs while creating new business opportunities in the Western Province.

Jean Bosco Ntibitura, Governor of the Western Province said the project, led by Gasmeth Energy, will attract investors and workers to Karongi District, urging local businesses to prepare for the economic boost.

“Gasmeth will employ a large number of people. Many will come to work on this project and will need services here,” Ntibitura said while opening the Karongi District Exhibition and Trade Fair on Aug. 18. “It is important for businesses, the private sector and partners to prepare to receive and serve them well.”

The government signed a 25-year agreement with Gasmeth Energy in 2019 to extract and process methane from Lake Kivu. The company expects to produce 40 million cubic meters of gas per day, enough to supply 300,000 to 400,000 households.

Construction of the processing plant began in 2022 in Karongi’s Bwishyura Sector, where preliminary works are underway. If operations begin on schedule, methane gas could reach households by 2027, providing a cheaper alternative to imported cooking gas.

The shift is also expected to reduce reliance on firewood and charcoal, which remain the primary cooking fuels for most households. The Seventh Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey (EICV7) shows that as of 2024, 75% of households used firewood, 18.8% relied on charcoal, and only 5.4% had access to gas, biogas or electricity. In Kigali, 23% of households reported using gas, compared with 59% using charcoal and 17% relying on firewood.

Officials say tapping Lake Kivu’s vast methane reserves could both lower costs for families and cut environmental damage linked to deforestation. At the same time, the project is expected to create jobs and expand investment opportunities in the energy sector and local service industries.