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Ethiopia's state-owned power company, Ethiopia Electric Utility (EEU), provides electricity to about three million customers across the country. The ultimate goal of EEU, and the Government of Ethiopia, is to extend electricity service to all of the nation's 100 million citizens. However, there are challenges to making this goal a reality.

Most of Ethiopia's geothermal resources--that is, its vast underground reservoirs of steam and hot water--have yet to be tapped, which may result in delays in expanding electricity services to its citizens.

Power Africa's East Africa Energy Program (EAEP), funded by USAID and implemented by RTI, has been working with EEU to address these imbalances and improve the utility's cash flow. By supporting the financial and operational health of EEU, the program is helping the utility provide an uninterrupted supply of energy to essential healthcare facilities during the pandemic and beyond.

In light of shocks such as COVID-19, Power Africa's support through EAEP has contributed significantly to EEU's financial health. In January 2020, the utility reported that its revenues had increased by approximately \$9 million over the previous year; in March, the utility reported an approximate \$17 million increase over the previous year. Those changes represent a \$26 million increase over the same period in the previous year. This work helped give EEU's bottom line a critical boost before the pandemic took full effect.

Also, thanks to the change in EEU's meter-reading process, the number of resolved customer complaints increased by 25%, demonstrating new efficiencies in customer service and a commendable level of responsiveness by staff.

The willingness of EEU to adjust its processes demonstrates the energy company's commitment to the journey to self-reliance and its goal of expanding electrical services to an increasing number of Ethiopian citizens. EEU's success at reconciling inefficient systems, adhering to a comprehensive turnaround plan, and focusing on improved accountability points to a brighter future for the entire Ethiopian power sector.



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