

Request For Applications (RFA) Power Africa Off-grid Project (PAOP)

RFA Title:	Solar Electrification of Healthcare Facilities in Sub-Saharan Africa
RFA No:	PAOP- RFA-2020-004
Date of Issuance:	May 07, 2020
Closing date for questions:	May 14, 2020 (Questions should be sent via email to paopgrants@powerafrica-offgrid.org)
Responses to be published:	May 19, 2020
Closing date for this RFA:	May 28, 2020 at 17h00 SAST (GMT +2) Late applications will not be considered
Estimated award date:	July 01, 2020
Duration of funding:	Maximum 12 months

Overview of funding opportunity

The Power Africa Off-grid Project (PAOP), a United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-contracted project implemented by RTI International, seeks applications to fund one or multiple awards to provide incentives, in the form of grants, to qualified organizations/companies to catalyze the growth of off-grid energy access solutions to improve the readiness and resilience of healthcare within sub-Saharan Africa. This RFA provides prospective applicants with a fair opportunity to develop and submit competitive applications to PAOP for potential funding.

The grants will be awarded and implemented in accordance with USAID and US Government regulations, and PAOP grant management policies and procedures. Please see the detailed description of the application requirements in “Section III: Application Merit Review Criteria” below.

Grant activities may be conducted in sub-Saharan Africa countries. PAOP will partner directly with organizations based in the countries where the work will be conducted.

Soft copies of this document are available from the RTI International website: www.rti.org/rfp.

To ensure uniform disclosure to all potential applicants, applicants should submit clarification questions by email to paopgrants@powerafrica-offgrid.org by May 14, 2020 at 17h00 South African Standard Time (GMT+2). PAOP will not respond to telephone inquiries. Answers will be posted on the RTI website (www.rti.org/rfp) on May 19, 2020.

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Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the PAOP or USAID, nor does it commit PAOP to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. Further, PAOP reserves the right to reject any or all applications received. Similarly, an invitation to clarify your application is not a commitment to fund that application, nor reimburse any costs incurred during the preparation of the application.

The PAOP grant review and approval process eliminates the possibility of any unilateral decision on any given application. PAOP staff will not ask for, and applicants are prohibited from offering, any money, fee, commission, credit, gift, gratuity, thing of value, or compensation to obtain or reward improper favorable treatment regarding this solicitation. Any improper request from a project employee should be reported to ethics@rti.org.

Sincerely



Miguel Franco

Chief of Party, Power Africa Off-grid Project
Power Africa Contractor

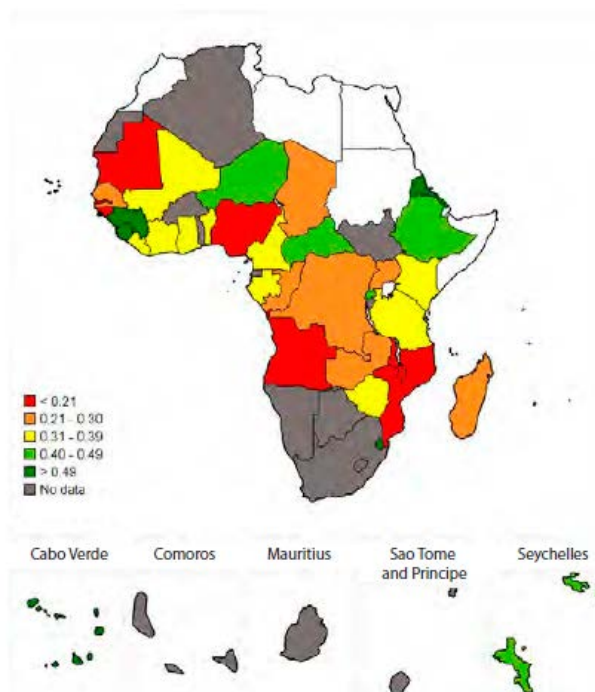
SECTION I. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

a. Program Background

The Power Africa Off-grid Project (PAOP) is a four-year contract between the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and RTI International. PAOP intends to accelerate off-grid electrification across sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) to support Power Africa’s Beyond the Grid initiative, which contributes to the goal of facilitating 60 million new electricity connections by 2030. Power Africa defines access as the direct or actual number of new households and businesses connected to electricity via an on-grid or off-grid solution. PAOP focuses on accelerating off-grid energy access through solar home systems (SHS) and micro-grids, with the goal of facilitating six million new electricity connections by 2022.

On average, throughout the sub-Saharan African region, access to essential health care services is only available to approximately 32% of the population. Confounding the low availability of health care services are the low rates of electricity access for rural healthcare facilities. Combined, the state of healthcare infrastructure in rural sub-Saharan Africa leads to low resilience of the system and an inability to adequately respond to and withstand outbreaks (e.g. Ebola or COVID-19).¹ As shown in Figure 1, most of the sub-Saharan region is ill-equipped to sustain services during an outbreak or disaster. For example, Mali is less than 40% equipped to sustain healthcare services in the face of an outbreak.

Figure 1. Comparison of resilience index across countries in the WHO African Region



Source: The State of Health in the WHO African Region, 2018

¹ WHO Regional Office for Africa, “The State of Health in the WHO African Region: An Analysis of the Status of Health, Health Services, and Health Systems in the Context of the Sustainable Development Goals.”

As the West African Ebola virus epidemic (2014-2016) demonstrated, an effective outbreak response relies on a resilient healthcare infrastructure, which includes electricity access for rural clinics. Lessons learned from the Ebola outbreak emphasize the deficits and weak points facing most of the sub-Saharan region.

- Need for basic services (i.e. electricity) for remote quarantine and treatment centers.
- Lack of electricity access leads to breakdowns in communication and information.
- Vaccines and medication often require refrigeration and many rural healthcare facilities lack the power and subsequent equipment to provide this cold storage.
- In the last-mile communities, the closest healthcare facilities may be too far to feasibly receive services.
- Ambulatory services are ill-equipped or nonexistent in rural communities.²
- Robust supply chains are necessary to deliver medical equipment and supplies during an outbreak, however supply chains are often unable to handle the volume of goods required for an outbreak response or the supply chain simply does not reach the communities requiring the goods and services.³
- Sterilization facilities are lacking in rural healthcare facilities, leading to additional risks.⁴
- Clean water is necessary for effective healthcare services and is also often lacking in rural healthcare facilities.⁵
- Resources usually allocated to reproductive health are redirected to crisis response leading to an increase in maternal, neonatal, and stillbirth mortality.⁶
- Incidences of gender based violence (GBV) and violence against children also increase significantly in times of crisis, potentially adding additional strains on healthcare services.⁷

Through this RFA, PAOP seeks to support accelerated provision of off-grid solar energy access to health clinics in rural, peri-urban or urban communities in sub-Saharan Africa. PAOP's anticipated collaboration with SHS and micro-grid companies is aimed at improving healthcare facilities' infrastructure through provision of solar off-grid electrical energy production equipment and related electrical installations to guarantee the constant supply of essential energy services. The collaboration will contribute to the more efficient functioning of healthcare facilities. The solar infrastructure will create an added readiness in cases of crisis, such as, Ebola and COVID-19 pandemic where systems, including the electricity grid, may be significantly overwhelmed.

This grant funding call is geographically focused in sub-Saharan Africa⁸ only. Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to contribute matching funds. They should at a minimum, be operational in their target country(ies) and prove ability to meet milestones related to the deployment of the grant.

² Msomi, "Code Red."

³ Goentzel, "Travel Bans and Stockpiling Can Cripple the Ebola Response Supply Chain."

⁴ Galukande et al., "Improving Surgical Access in Rural Africa through a Surgical Camp Model."

⁵ Guo et al., "Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene in Rural Health-Care Facilities."

⁶ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/29149310>

⁷ <https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/emergencies/COVID-19-VAW-full-text.pdf?ua=1>

⁸ The focus is on West and East Africa

b. Program Description

This grant funding will support the scale up of existing business models or technologies for the electrification of health facilities. Proposals that include at least one of the following activities are preferred:

- Electrification of health facilities facing increased energy demands as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Introduction of new products or revenue streams, such as:
 - Lending to customers for health-related needs/expenses including insurance schemes.
 - New lines of revenue for OGS companies related to e-health/social messaging content on radios, tablets or solar-powered TVs.
 - Leveraging last-mile distribution networks to deliver medical supplies.
- Solutions to mitigate risk of maternal and child health, especially during night-time deliveries within or outside of a health clinic.
- Solutions that enable the electronic collection of health-related information and record keeping

Please note that preference will be given to applicants who have already developed solar system solutions and would like to customize and/or scale up the solution. No funding shall be provided for research and development of new, unproven solutions. All the applications need to provide a roadmap for technology validation (through pilot study) and demonstration of scalability. Annex A provides all the details required for the technical response.

SECTION II. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

a. Instructions to Applicants

Applicants must propose strategies for the implementation of the program scope described above, introducing innovations that are appropriate to their enterprise strengths.

b. Questions and Further Assistance

Questions concerning this RFA must be submitted in writing via email to paopgrants@powerafrica-offgrid.org (with RFA number PAOP-RFA-2020-004 in the email subject line as a reference) on or before the deadline for receipt of question(s) stated on the cover letter of this RFA. Questions will not be accepted by any other means. If it is determined that the answers to any questions are of sufficient importance to warrant a response, a Questions and Answers document and/or an amendment to the RFA will be issued and posted to www.rti.org/rfp on May 19, 2020. It is the responsibility of the organization to monitor this website for any amendments that may be posted later. Please read the RFA in its entirety and ensure that your response addresses all the items listed in the Technical Application Instructions and in the Evaluation Criteria.

c. Submission Information

Technical applications (together with documents listed below) shall be submitted in the format provided in **Annex A – Technical Application Form** and completed in English and may not be more than ten (10) pages (excluding cover page, executive summary and annexes B - E). For an application to be considered all documents listed below should be submitted in electronic copy to paopgrants@powerafrica-offgrid.org (with RFA number **PAOP-RFA-2020-004** in email subject line as a reference).

1. Annex A: Technical Application Form
2. Annex B: Grant Application Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Template
3. Annex C: Implementation Plan Template
4. Annex D: Detailed Budget (in excel) and Budget Justification (in word)
5. Annex E: Required Certifications (signed and dated)
6. A copy of the Applicant's valid legal registration in all countries proposed to work in the application,
7. A copy of tax compliance certificate or equivalent; and
8. Organizational diagram showing underlying sources of capital and investment structure.

Application documents (listed above) should be submitted in a zipped folder. The zipped folder file size should not exceed 20 Megabytes (20MB).

PAOP Submission email: paopgrants@powerafrica-offgrid.org (with RFA number **PAOP-RFA-2020-004** in email subject line as a reference). Only applications submitted to this email will be counted as official submission. **The submission deadline is May 28, 2020 at 17h00 SAST (GMT +2). Late applications will not be considered.** All interested applicants are encouraged to submit their application as early as possible.

d. Technical Application

Applicants are expected to develop their proposals based on their understanding of needs, their prior institutional experience, and their determination of the approaches that would be feasible, scalable, and successful within the context provided above. In all cases, applicants shall clearly explain the rationale for the proposed approaches chosen. Technical applications shall be submitted in the format provided in Annex A – Technical Application Form.

e. Cost application

Applicants are required to submit a detailed budget (in Microsoft Excel) with budget justification notes (in Microsoft Word) detailing how they will allocate the grant funds during the grant term, including proposed level of effort of staff who will work on the project. Grant funds may be used for the following types of costs:

- Operational costs related to the provision of the proposed activities, including salaries of personnel, relevant financial administration, and other costs directly related to implementing the project.
- Operational costs for activities related to the delivery of proposed activities, including service provision, trainings, and communication initiatives.
- Materials development, production, and distribution.

PAOP is not responsible for any costs associated with the development of applications in response to this RFA. All costs incurred in the preparation and submission of applications will be for the account of the applicant and will not be reimbursed. All grant activity costs must be within the normal operating practices of the applicant and in accordance with its written policies and procedures. In addition, costs must be compliant with 2 CFR 200 Subpart E, Cost Principles (<https://ecfr.io/Title-02/sp2.1.200.e>). The budget may include direct costs that will be incurred by the applicant to provide identifiable administrative and management costs that can be directly attributable to supporting the grant objective. The application form must be signed by a senior representative authorized to make commitments on behalf of the applicant.

SECTION III. APPLICATION MERIT REVIEW CRITERIA

Full applications will be evaluated against the merit review criteria as shown below and should not be more than ten (10) pages

Merit Review and Category	Points
Impact	30
Innovation	5
Viable and scalable solution	15
Leveraging of other funds/resources to increase the impact of the proposed intervention	5
Management and operational capacity	15
Commercial Sustainability/Financial self-reliance beyond the 1 year grant period	20
Cost efficiency	10
Overall Rating (out of 100 points)	

These merit review criteria elements are described more fully below.

- A. Impact. The proposed solution will have an impact by electrifying one or more healthcare facilities, beneficiaries receiving improved service in the health sector, or other meaningful quality of life improvement, including maternal health. More points will be awarded for solutions that 1) reach key health facilities involved, directly or indirectly, in the fight against COVID-19, 2) electrify the largest amount of healthcare facilities or beneficiaries, and 3) include gender considerations and will have a positive impact on maternal and child health. Justification must include demographics of populations served by the proposed health facility, types of services provided, and the facility's geographic setting. Candidates must take into account current access, source of electricity, and reliability of current electricity services. (30 points).
- B. Innovation. The proposed solution should introduce a new revenue stream, business model, enter a new market, scale up new technology, etc. This does not include the development of new, innovative technology, but rather the introduction of new or innovative uses/models for existing solutions (5 points).
- C. Viable and scalable solution. The proposed solution has already been piloted and is either ready for commercialization or already commercially available. The proposed solution should also be replicable to more than one healthcare facility. If proposing a clinic or other type of health facility (that is not a hospital), demonstrate how electrifying the proposed facility would ease the patient overload of hospitals. (15 points).
- D. Leverage of other funds/resources. Proposed solutions that demonstrate leveraging of resources from other donors, investors, or resources that improve the best value for money to increase the impact of the proposed intervention will be given preference (5 points).

- E. Management and operational capacity. Evidence of the capability to undertake and accomplish the proposed activities. The application should demonstrate the enterprise's effectiveness in terms of internal structure, technical capacity, and personnel. Also, the enterprise must demonstrate adequate financial management capability. The evaluation will be based principally on the background, qualifications, reputation, appropriateness, and skills of its personnel; and the "track record," reputation, and achievements (including development of self-sufficient, sustainable activities) of the enterprise. The candidates must include previous experience working with MOH/local health authorities if the proposed health facility is public. Previous experience and established relationships could potentially facilitate obtaining necessary approvals for rapid implementation. (15 points)
- F. Commercial Sustainability/Financial Self-Reliance. The extent to which the funded activity will result in building and strengthening the selected energy access solution to health clinics in rural areas and whether the activity itself is sustainable or will promote sustainability of the enterprise (20 points).
- G. Cost efficiency. The degree to which budgeting is clear and reasonable and reflects best use of enterprise and grant resources and demonstrates a clear commitment to real investment by the applicant. (10 points)

Additionally, PAOP will ensure environmental soundness and compliance in design and implementation as required by [22 CFR 216 Agency Environmental Procedures](#).

SECTION IV. AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

a. Catalyzing Off-grid Investment (COIN) Fund

The overall purpose of the PAOP's COIN Fund is to issue grants to project developers, projects, and private sector companies/actors that directly contribute to PAOP's goals through their own activities. The COIN Fund is structured to encourage leveraged funding as parallel funding of similar activities that help achieve common goals and accelerate results. Successful applicants are encouraged to demonstrate this specific aspect of generating other funding from non-PAOP sources to be applied to the program.

b. Award Information

i. Program Duration

The duration of programs funded under this RFA will be for a maximum period of 12 months from the date of award. PAOP reserves the right to incrementally fund activities over the duration of the program, if necessary, depending on program length, performance against approved program indicators and availability of funds.

ii. Anticipated Funding Availability

Final funding levels will depend on content and quality number of applications received, needs, availability of funding, and competing priorities. Individual grants awarded as a result of this RFA and submission of a final application are intended to be within the range of USD100,000 to USD500,000.

All grants will be negotiated, denominated and funded in local currency of host country. All costs funded by the grant must be allowable, allocable and reasonable. Grant applications must be supported by a detailed and realistic budget.

iii. Type of Award

Grants awarded under this RFA may either be fixed amount award grants (FAA), or cost reimbursable grants. PAOP / USAID shall retain the right to terminate the grant activities unilaterally in extraordinary circumstances.

For FAAs, PAOP will make payments based on submission and acceptance of specific verifiable milestones. Once an award is issued, it will include a fixed price payment schedule with milestones and deliverables negotiated during the final application and award process.

For cost-reimbursable grants, disbursement will be done only submission of a claim (invoice) to PAOP and after verification of expenditures incurred, and found reasonable, allocable and allowable. Cost reimbursable grants will be primarily used for larger interventions. Reimbursement will be scheduled on frequencies not more than monthly, and upon review and acceptance of financial reports.

Both types of grants require detailed budgets that indicate the intended use of the funds as this detail helps define reasonable, allocable and allowable expenditures.

c. Applicant Eligibility

- Applicants must be a registered company/enterprise (including micro-enterprises or groups of micro-enterprises), associations, cooperatives, and cooperative unions in the country/ies they are proposing to work and be in operation for at least one year at the time of application. All Applicants should:
 - Be legal persons;
 - Be formally constituted at the time of grant award;
 - Be compliant to government of Host Country regulations (submit tax compliance certificate or equivalent);
 - Have their principal place of business in host country/countries;
 - Organizations that already have a presence or are currently working in some of the mentioned geographical areas will be considered.

- Grant award(s) resulting from this solicitation will be required to provide a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number at the time of award. If the applicant already has a DUNS number, it should be included in their application. Otherwise, applicants will be expected to obtain a DUNS number before an award is made. PAOP will assist successful applicants with this process. DUNS numbers may be obtained online at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/pages/CCRSearch.jsp>

- Applicants must display sound management in the form of financial, administrative, and technical policies and procedures and present a system of internal controls that safeguard assets; protect against fraud, waste, and abuse; and support the achievement of program goals and objectives. PAOP will assess this capability prior to awarding a grant. Any falsification of proposal information may result in rejection/cancellation of the award.

d. Environmental Compliance

The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, Section 117 requires that the impact of USAID funded activities on the environment be considered and that environmental sustainability be considered in designing and carrying out development programs. The environmental impacts of USAID-financed activities must be identified prior to a final decision to proceed and appropriate environmental safeguards are adopted for all activities.

As part of its application/proposal, the recipient, in collaboration with the PAOP technical staff shall review all planned activities under the grant to determine if any environmental action and/or documentation must be completed prior to implementation.

e. Authority /Governing Regulations

PAOP COIN Fund awards are issued in the form of grants under contract and made under the authority of the U.S. Foreign Affairs Act and USAID's Advanced Directive System (ADS) 303. Grantees are expected to comply with the provisions of these guidelines and regulations, as applicable. USAID ADS 303 can be accessed at <http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303>

2 CFR 200 is not directly applicable to non-U.S. organizations; however, USAID applies some of these regulations to non-U.S. organizations through ADS 303 and the Standard provisions (USAID ADS 303.3.1). 2 CFR 200 can be accessed at <http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=12ac87ccfe859ca4c02abc695baa6227&mc=true&node=pt2.1.200&rgn=div5>

f. False Statements in Applications

Applicants must provide full, accurate and complete information as required by this solicitation and its attachments.

g. Conflict of Interest Clause

Applicants must provide disclosure of any past, present or future relationships with any parties associated with the issuance, review or management of this solicitation and anticipated award. Failure to provide full and open disclosure may result in PAOP having to re-evaluate selection of a potential applicant.

h. Prohibited goods and services

Under no circumstances shall the recipient procure any of the following under this award, as these items are excluded by the Foreign Assistance Act and other legislation which govern USAID funding. Programs which are found to transact in any of these shall be disqualified:

- a. Military equipment
- b. Surveillance equipment
- c. Commodities and services for support of police or other law enforcement activities
- d. Abortion equipment and services
- e. Luxury goods and gambling equipment
- f. Weather modification equipment

i. Restricted goods

The following costs are restricted by USAID and require prior written approval from PAOP and USAID to be allowable costs:

- a. Agricultural commodities
- b. Motor vehicles
- c. Pharmaceuticals
- d. Pesticides
- e. Fertilizer
- f. Contraceptives
- g. Used equipment
- h. Immovable property

j. Disclaimers:

- PAOP may cancel solicitation and not award.
- PAOP reserve the right to accept or reject any or all applications received.
- Issuance of solicitation does not constitute award commitment by PAOP.
- PAOP reserves the right to disqualify any application based on applicant failure to follow solicitation instructions.
- PAOP will not compensate applicants for response to solicitation.
- PAOP reserves the right to issue award based on initial evaluation of applications without further discussion.
- PAOP may choose to award only part of the activities in the solicitation, or issue multiple awards based on the solicitation activities.
- PAOP reserve the right to ask for further clarifications from the applicants or negotiate for adjustments on the nature, scope or scale of the investment prior to award determination to promote competition.
- PAOP will be contacting all applicants to confirm contact person, address and that the bid was submitted for this solicitation.

The following Annexures are included with this RFA:

ANNEX A: Technical Application Form

ANNEX B: Grant Application MEL Template

ANNEX C Implementation Plan Template

ANNEX D Detailed Budget and Budget Justification

ANNEX E Required Certifications