

**Power Africa Off-grid Project (PAOP)**  
**Question and Answer**  
**RFA No: PAOP- RFA-2021-006**  
**RFA Name: Productive Uses of Energy**  
**Date: Wednesday, November 10th, 2021**

1. **Question:** In describing productive use which are the focus of this grant, the RFA talks about financial models and agricultural uses. Would productive uses by artisanal fishermen be included within the scope of the grant?  
**PAOP Response:** PUE is a broad definition for income-generating activities. Artisanal fishing activities would be considered as PUE for this grant.
2. **Question:** If two applicants apply for a project involving the same technology, would that be eligible?  
**PAOP Response:** If this refers to two applicants applying for a grant with technology from the same manufacturer, then yes both could be eligible as long as the manufacturer is not a partner or subcontractor named in the grant application.
3. **Question:** If the main applicant is the entity registered in Liberia, is it possible/advisable to have a manufacturing partner included in the proposal as an official partner, that is not registered in-country, or should they just be mentioned as a service provider and nothing more?  
**PAOP Response:** This is up to the applicant, PAOP will not dictate partnership arrangements for the applicants.
4. **Question:** For this project, would e-mobility be defined as eligible PUE technologies, if they are charged on stand-alone solar?  
**PAOP Response:** Yes, as long as the transport is being used to generate income.
5. **Question:** 'Motor vehicles' are listed as restricted goods and the grant will not pay for solar installations. Instead, the project will fund piloting business model and not the technology itself. So, would the grant pay for any equipment or does the project only pay for wages, travel and any other operational costs?  
**PAOP Response:** Grant funding may be used to pay for equipment excluding items listed in the RFA under prohibited goods and services, the exception to this would be for off-grid e-mobility projects that are used for productive use (i.e. income generating). Also, the grant will not pay for the construction of a solar minigrid system.
6. **Question:** Are there any restrictions to the budget allocation that goes towards either inventory, capex and/or opex.  
**PAOP Response:** No, there are no restrictions to the budget allocation that goes towards either inventory, CAPEX and/or OPEX.
7. **Question:** Can a Company who submits Application X as the Main Applicant also be mentioned as a partner (not main applicant) in a different Application Y?

**PAOP Response:** Yes, a company can apply as main applicant and be mentioned as a partner (not main applicant) in a different application; however, the joint venture/s or partnership/s should meet all eligibility criteria stipulated in the request for applications.

8. **Question:** Are finalists/shortlists in the BGFA 1 also eligible to apply for PAOP- RFA-2021-006? Will their applications under PAOP- RFA-2021-006 be considered independently of the BGFA 1?  
**PAOP Response:** Yes, the company is eligible if it meets the eligibility criteria in the request for application. Yes, it will be considered independently of the BGFA 1 as the BGFA grant is unrelated to the PAOP grant.
9. **Question:** We are currently recipients of AECF funding. Will their applications under PAOP- RFA-2021-006 be considered independently of the AECF?  
**PAOP Response:** Yes, the applications will be considered independently of the AECF as the AECF grant is unrelated to the PAOP grant.
10. **Question:** Is there mandatory certification for the appliances?  
**PAOP Response:** Product certifications are not mandatory but are encouraged.
11. **Question:** Can the max funding of \$150K be increased for specific projects, where justifiable?  
**PAOP Response:** No, the maximum funding of \$150,000 cannot be increased. Additionally, final funding levels will depend on the content and quality of applications received, needs, availability of funding, and competing priorities.
12. **Question:** Do Foreign exchange losses qualify as eligible costs?  
**PAOP Response:** No, foreign exchange losses are not eligible costs as budget should be presented in US Dollars.
13. **Question:** What is the maximum amount of grant amount that can be requested as an advance payment?  
**PAOP Response:** The advance amount, should the Project determine is necessary, will be determined by the pre-award assessment results of the selected applicant.
14. **Question:** Are both this grant and AECF innovation fund coordinated in terms the 25th and 26th deadlines?  
**PAOP Response:** The AECF innovation fund is not related this grant window and the dates have not been coordinated.
15. **Question:** Can you use pay as you go method to consumers for solar technology example farmers etc.?  
**PAOP Response:** PAYGO models or other end user finance models are welcome as far as it is used to boost productive use technologies. Solar technologies for domestic use will not be considered.
16. **Question:** Will PUE products sale be counted as connection as part of the 6 million connection?  
**PAOP Response:** No, PUE sales are not counted towards the 6 million connections, PAOP has a separate PUE indicator which tracks PUE device sales.

17. **Question:** In terms of revenue requirement, is the \$25,000.00 gross or net?  
**PAOP Response:** It is the gross revenue.
18. **Question:** Annex E including the CV for key personnel etc. are these required at the application stage or the award stage or both?  
**PAOP Response:** Below files are not required by the submission deadline with the application; however, these are required prior to any award.  
Annex E: Required Certifications (signed and dated).
  - Proof that the applicant is eligible to work in the country.
  - Past performance business referral letters for previously performed similar work.
  - CVs of key personnel, management and technical, who will oversee the project,
  - Organizational diagram.
19. **Question:** What is the length of this application, Annex A? I think I read somewhere in the call 10 page, but the Annex A template is about 42 pages.  
**PAOP Response:** The technical application, to be submitted using “Annex A – Technical Application Form”, should not exceed 10 pages excluding cover page, additional pictures, and any other annexes.
20. **Question:** Do you also support agro-processing economic empowerment projects?  
**PAOP Response:** This depends on what the project is doing, it will be considered if its outcome is one of the following:
  1. Increase availability of off-grid PUE products
  2. Increase off-grid PUE product demand
  3. Reduce high off-grid PUE product uptake costs and/or introduce new end user financing options.

There is a caveat that we normally do not consider Commercial and Industrial solar (C&I) or other large-scale solar solutions, nor will we consider projects that are grid-tied/plan to use the off-grid solutions for back-up power.
21. **Question:** We referred to the possibility of creating consortia between international and local firms (consultancy company and a local business for instance). How should the structure of the questions to Company Summary be in case of Consortium? Which kind of consortia are eligible?  
**PAOP Response:** If one company is the prime/lead of the consortium the questions would be answered in reference to the prime/lead. Otherwise please provide information related to all members of the consortium. There is no prescribed type of consortia that are eligible; however, the joint venture or partnership should meet all eligibility criteria stipulated in the request for applications.
22. **Question:** A portable solar charging system that is plug and play for the purpose of rural community charging phones and or for running a barber shop, etc. Is this considered building off-grid as this funding is not supporting building off-grid?  
**PAOP Response:** Portable solar charging could be considered if these are used to power businesses and will not be considered if it is for household electricity. More importantly it is to demonstrate how the system will boost productivity and increase incomes in off-grid settlements.

23. **Question:** Is there a list of potential local partners we can work with to build proposal?  
**PAOP Response:** There is no list of potential local partners provided; it is up to the applicant to form their own partnerships.
24. **Question:** Will a solar home system be considered on this project since it basically used for rural dwellers and low-income communities?  
**PAOP Response:** Solar home systems for households or domestic usages will not be considered. All off-grid solutions must be used to boost income and productivity.
25. **Question:** Can we modify the budget template to suit our needs? Or can we add rows if we require more budget lines correct?  
**PAOP Response:** No, the budget template cannot be modified. However, applicants can add rows under each budget category.
26. **Question:** Will you consider a grant application targeting artisanal fishermen or is the grant only for farmers.  
**PAOP Response:** Yes, application targeting artisanal fishermen will be considered as well as cottage activities such as sewing, welding, and different mini-grid applications, etc.
27. **Question:** The revenue requirement - is it the revenue of the local entity in Liberia?  
**PAOP Response:** This is dependent on what your entity is, if the applicant is a larger company that has subsidiaries in Liberia, then the applicant could put in the entire company's revenue. We will also consider partner/consortia revenue if a local entity does not meet the minimum criteria.
28. **Question:** If a portable solar charging is put in a community to charge phones for fees or to power a barber shop for fees. How do you count these?  
**PAOP Response:** As there are many different types of projects that could be proposed, PAOP is not evaluating applications based on the number of estimated PUE sales. For charging stations and swappable batteries, however many batteries, the project would count the number of devices and not the number of times that the device is rented out.
29. **Question:** About the USAID system built in Kwendin, Nimba will that be taking into consideration?  
**PAOP response:** The grant welcome initiatives to boost PUE activities as anchor load to existing mini grid systems. The grant will not finance any mini grid construction or extension.
30. **Question:** Do you include e-mobility as a form of PUE?  
**PAOP Response:** E-mobility could be considered if it is used as part of a business and not for personal transport. This could be in the form of scooters with solar-powered rechargeable batteries used for delivery or other forms of goods transportation, as part of a taxi service, or any other business model where the transportation incorporates off-grid energy and is used to generate income/serve a productive purpose.
31. **Question:** Is there a minimum or maximum grant amount?

**PAOP Response:** There is no minimum threshold; however, individual grants awarded as a result of this RFA, and submission of a final application are intended to be for a maximum of 150,000 USD.

32. **Question:** We are still a startup company. We planned to launch our pilot soon but believe our innovation - and the partnerships we are developing with an MFI and an Agri-input supplier is worth supporting. In this case, do we need referral letters for previously performed similar work or we should generate a referral letter from the agribusiness we are developing the pilot project with?

**PAOP Response:** The business referral letters are required for previously performed similar work and not from anticipated future work. Additionally, applications should meet all eligibility criteria stipulated in the request for applications. If your organization does not meet certain eligibility criteria (including operational experience in Liberia), we recommend you partner with an organization who does.

33. **Question:** The PAOP results will be up by February 2022, what if we launch our planned pilot and begin generating revenue before then? Are we eligible to apply now? If no, when is the next round of application coming up?

**PAOP Response:** All applications that meet the eligibility criteria as stipulated in the request for applications will be considered. Please refer to the RFA. There is no planned follow-on round for this RFA.

34. **Question:** What do you term as “proof that the applicant is eligible to work in the country”? Applicants must provide

**PAOP Response:** This is documentation which demonstrates that the applicant is a separate legal entity in Liberia; documentation such as legal registration documents or tax compliance documents.

35. **Question:** Is there a required budget allocation between the cost items (i.e., Salaries, Benefits, Consultants, Equipment, Travel etc.)

**PAOP Response:** No, there is no required budget allocation between cost categories.

36. **Question:** We don't have a US TIN number, should we provide a Liberian TIN number in Required Certifications?

**PAOP Response:** No, this is only applicable to US organizations.

37. **Question:** What you are saying is that PAOP does not fund a pre-revenue startup?

**PAOP Response:** This grant window is for the scale up of an existing business model/operation, it is not designed for pilot projects. Any applicant that meets the minimum criteria in the RFA will be considered.

38. **Question:** Our US parent has a DUNS number. However, the Lead Applicant (Liberia Co) does not have the DUNS number. Can we use the Parents?

**PAOP Response:** No, the DUNS Number is a specific or unique identifier for a business or legal entity; hence if selected the Liberian company will be required to provide a DUNS number specific to itself prior to an award.

39. Question: Will this project fund installation for schools and clinics  
**PAOP Response:** No, the project will not fund installations for schools and clinics.
40. **Question:** Is this project going to fund fishponds solar use for supply of water that provides oxygen for fish. And meanwhile, aquaponic farm system as well?  
**PAOP response:** Fishponds and aquaponic farm system projects could be considered if they contain an off-grid component and meet the minimum criteria as listed in the RFA.