1. **Question:** Are there limitations in applying for a company/consortium rewarded in the previous call that are eligible or on the contrary are in a "better" position to apply?

   **PAOP Response:** There are no restrictions on applications by past awardees, nor is any preference given to past awardees. All applications will be reviewed on merit.

2. **Question:** Is a project implemented in two countries eligible under the grant? We are a solar company based in Europe, we would like to partner with an NGO working in health sector in Niger and Senegal, and we have two different companies to partner with in each of these countries (one in Niger and the other one in Senegal). Would it be possible to present a project with a Joint Venture between us, a European based solar company, and an international NGO working in health sector in both Niger and Senegal, and two companies, one in Niger and another one in Senegal, but with no relations each other? In case yes, who should be the lead applicant of the project, being that the two local companies are working in their countries respectively and are registered each in its own country? Moreover, in terms of budget, shall the project in this case stay within the 500,000 USD budget or could be doubled the amount up to 1,000,000 USD, since the project would target two countries? Lastly, the limit of 3 JV members is inclusive of the lead applicant or the lead applicant is outside this number?

   **PAOP Response:**
   - Grant activities may be conducted in any or multiple of Kenya, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Uganda.
   - Joint ventures of up to 3 members including the lead applicant are permitted.
   - Lead applicants for successful applications will enter into a grant agreement with RTI, be contractually responsible for all reporting and be the sole recipient of funds from RTI. The choice of lead applicant is left to joint venture applicants to decide, but it should be noted that the lead applicant cannot be modified after submission.
   - The maximum individual award is US$500,000, meaning that no application can be awarded more than US$500,000, even if covering multiple countries. Organizations can be lead applicant on a single application only, but there are no restrictions on the number of applications an organization participates in as a non-lead applicant JV member.

3. **Question:** Is it possible for USAID/PAOP to provide a list of relevant licenses required for undertaking of the project in the 7 target countries as a resource for applicants?

   **PAOP Response:** As licensing requirements vary from country to country, applicants are expected to have working knowledge of applicable licensing requirements in-country and must hold relevant licenses.

4. **Question:** If capacity to deliver, financial resources, and other project elements demonstrate capability of an applicant to undertake the project in at least 2 countries?

   **PAOP Response:** Grant activities may be conducted in any or a multiple of Kenya, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Uganda. However, an individual organization can only be the lead applicant for a single application. Multiple countries in a single application are allowed.
5. **Question:** As an on-site cold storage technology provider, will we be able to profile our refrigerator products to applicants seeking to include these technologies as part of their proposed projects e.g through the off-grid productive use catalogs -

**PAOP Response:** We welcome collaborations between appliance or medical equipment providers and potential applicants. However, in relation to this RFA, we will not be providing a preferred list of equipment providers.

6. **Question:** We note that the RFA states “final funding levels will depend on the content and quality of applications received...” and “individual grants awarded...are intended to be for a maximum of USD500,000”. What is the total pool of grant funding available for grants awarded under this RFA?

**PAOP Response:** We expect to have multiple awards across the portfolio of eligible countries. However, the final award amounts and number of awardees will depend on the content and quality of applications received, needs, availability of funding, and competing priorities.

7. **Question:** We note that the RFA allows applications from joint ventures (JVs) with a maximum of 3 JV members. For the purposes of submission of an application under this RFA, what are the requirements, if any, pertaining to the nature of the JV agreement between JV members?

**PAOP Response:** Joint venture applications will be requested to provide any memoranda of understanding, partnership agreements or other documentation governing the relationship between the joint venture members prior to award. PAOP does not have specific requirements on the form or content of any such agreements though, simply that some form of agreements are in place prior to award and that they align with proposed activities.

8. **Question:** On one of the criteria stated that the proof of eligibility to undertake renewable energy installations in target country(ies), for example (as required by local regulations): Electrical installation permit. My question is that we develop and operate mini-grids in Nigeria but make use of contractors (for the construction) that possesses the license. Does it stand for us for the application?

**PAOP Response:** The use of licensed/permitted subcontractors in lieu of possessing any required licenses/permits is permissible. In this case, any licenses/permits held by the expected or indicative subcontractor should be included in the submission.

9. **Question:** Our company is a private renewable energy company located in Uganda; is it possible to operate as an independent company during project activities?

**PAOP Response:** Applications may be submitted by individual organizations or joint ventures including private companies, non-governmental organizations, etc. as long as they fulfil the eligibility requirements.

Coordination with local authorities for any public healthcare facilities is expected, but government authorities should not be included as JV members.

10. **Question:** Is it mandatory to partner with other local NGO?

**PAOP Response:** Applicants are not required to partner with a local non-governmental organization (NGO).
11. **Question:** What is the relevance of partnering with local authorities during project activities?  
   **PAOP Response:** Coordination with local authorities for any public healthcare facilities is expected, but government authorities should not be included as JV members.

12. **Question:** We are requesting for a highlight on the grant size in USD?  
   **PAOP Response:** Individual grants awarded as a result of this RFA, and submission of a final application are intended to be for a maximum of 500,000 USD. 500,000 USD is the maximum value of an individual grant award, not the maximum value of combined grant awards. Final funding levels and number of awards will depend on the content and quality of applications received, needs, availability of funding, and competing priorities.

13. **Question:** How is a zipped folder formed? Is there any difference from the “common ones?”  
   **PAOP Response:** ZIP is a common file format that is used to compress one or more files together into a single folder. This reduces file size and makes it easier to email faster. Applicants should look up ways of compressing files according to their laptop/desktop operating systems such as Windows or iOS.

14. **Question:** What could be the consequences of not having “the renewable energy importation license” as a requirement?  
   **PAOP Response:** Specific licensing requirements are dependent on the applicant’s focus country(ies). We expect the applicant to have a working knowledge of licensing requirements for their specific country and be in compliance of those licensing requirements.

15. **Question:** What happens if the company percentage revenue is less than 50%?  
   **PAOP Response:** Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria stated in the RFA will not be considered for award.

16. **Question:** What are DUNS number and its importance?  
   **PAOP Response:** A DUNS number, which stands for Data Universal Numbering System, is a free, unique nine-digit number issued by Dun & Bradstreet to a single business entity. Applicants are required to provide a DUNS number prior to an award.

17. **Question:** Please clarify on the “solicitation instructions of this application?”  
   **PAOP Response:** All solicitation instructions are across the RFA and annex documents. Similarly, any clarifications and responses to submitted questions will be published by the dates detailed in the RFA. These clarifications and responses are considered part of the solicitation instructions.

18. **Question:** Company/consortium awarded during last PAOP call and only recently project implementation started, are eligible for this competition also if the business model isn’t proved yet?  
   **PAOP Response:** All previous awardees are eligible, and we encourage them to apply. However, previous award does not guarantee future award. All applicants, regardless of previous award, will be scored based on the merit review criteria detailed in the RFA.

19. **Question:** Regarding remote monitoring what data/information should we be able to monitor remotely?
20. **Question:** Due to the proximity of the deadline with the Christmas/vacation period a week extension can be possible?

**PAOP Response:** Unfortunately, we cannot extend the RFA window.

21. **Question:** Is this applicable to all hospitals in urban or in rural centers?

**PAOP Response:** Any healthcare facility that is currently off-grid or has less than 8 hours of electricity access a day is eligible. We do not make a distinction between rural vs. urban. Please keep in mind, our intent is to focus on impact and sustainability as detailed in the merit review criteria in the RFA.

22. **Question:** Will a recording be provided to all after this session?

**PAOP Response:** Yes, as well as a copy of the webinar slides and a document of all the questions and answers provided will be posted on [https://www.rti.org/current-opportunities](https://www.rti.org/current-opportunities)

23. **Question:** What specific licenses or certificates would I need to show, where can I find what, in this case, in Senegal is required?

**PAOP Response:** As licensing requirements vary from country to country, applicants are expected to have working-knowledge of applicable licensing requirements in-country and must hold relevant licenses.

24. **Question:** How is the company's 50% annual turnover will be measured because my 50% could be another one's 70% according to annual sales.

**PAOP Response:** The line in the RFA states, "Have realized revenues of at least 50% of the grant funding sought within the calendar year 2019 or 2020" For example, if I am requesting $400,000 in grant funding then I must have realized revenues in calendar year 2019 or 2020 of at least $200,000.

25. **Question:** With respect to company registration in country - if the entity is a registered branch office of an international parent company, does that satisfy the requirement for this RFA?

**PAOP Response:** Yes, as long as the entity is registered and is legally able to conduct business within the country of application.

26. **Question:** What are the major points of failure of previous applications?

**PAOP Response:** We will provide a more detailed presentation of failures in the second webinar but just at a high-level here are a few key points to keep in mind:

1. All eligibility criteria, required forms, and submission due date are strict. We cannot provide any flexibility here.
2. We score based on the merit review criteria detailed in the RFA. Low scoring applications in the previous windows have not followed this scoring criteria closely and/or did not provide complete answers.
3. The burden is on the applicant to provide sufficient evidence in their application. The application is all we can review and use for final selection. For example, we have had
applicants in the past make overarching claims about potential impact and/or sustainability plans but not provide how they have reached those conclusions.

27. **Question:** Please clarify if a DUNS number required at award or RFP stage.
   **PAOP Response:** A DUNS number does not need to be included in initial application, but will need to be submitted later in the process if an application advances to negotiation or award.

28. **Question:** We are considering submitting our response as a consortium. Do all of the partners in the consortium need to provide proof of having a Renewable energy license, Electrical installation permit and Renewable energy importation license in the target countries? Or does only the organization in the consortium responsible for and tasked with actual installation of PV systems in that country have to have the appropriate licenses/permits?
   **PAOP Response:** At least one JV member must meet each of the eligibility requirements, not all JV members must meet every criteria, including the requirement for relevant licenses/permits. As such, as long as at least one JV member holds the required licenses/permits, then this is acceptable.

29. **Question:** Is Djibouti eligible for this project?
   **PAOP Response:** The eligible project countries are Kenya, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Uganda. Djibouti is not an eligible project country.

30. **Question:** If we apply for a new grant how do we pitch our upcoming model as “proven” (since we’re still in implementation)? Are there case studies in the industry literature that we can point to in order to say this is “proven” (albeit elsewhere)?
   **PAOP Response:** This funding opportunity is looking to support the scaling of an organization’s already piloted business model/s and/or technologies; therefore “upcoming” models will not be considered. In addition, we cannot refer applicants to any case studies.

31. **Question:** How many companies are expected to win in a country?
   **PAOP Response:** There is currently no predetermined number of awardees per country or for the window as a whole. Final award amounts and number of awardees will depend on the content and quality of applications received, needs, availability of funding, and competing priorities.

32. **Question:** Can it be private health center too?
   **PAOP Response:** Any healthcare facility that is currently off-grid or has less than 8 hours of electricity access a day is eligible. We do not make a distinction between public versus private.

33. **Question:** In case of a Consortium or group between a local company and an international company, is it compulsory to form a special legal company in the targeted country?
   **PAOP Response:** We do not have specific requirements on the form or content of any such agreements though, simply that some form of agreements are in place prior to award and that they align with proposed activities.

34. **Question:** In the case of a grouping, do both companies have to have a seat in the designated country?
**PAOP Response**: Each eligibility criteria must be satisfied by at least one member of the joint venture. No single member of the joint venture has to satisfy all criteria on their own, so long as at least one member satisfies for each criteria.

35. **Question**: Any other grants for Zambian youths?
   **PAOP Response**: Unfortunately, only applicants from the seven countries (Kenya, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Uganda) listed in the RFA are eligible.

36. **Question**: Where can I find the information on how to get a DUNS number?
   **PAOP Response**: [https://www.dnb.com](https://www.dnb.com)

37. **Question**: Do we count the project period from January or March 22 which is the anticipated award date?
   **PAOP Response**: The project start date will be the date that the grant agreement is fully executed, signed by both parties so now our award date is tentative. It will be dependent on the number of applications received and how quickly we can move through the review process and then most importantly the negotiation process.

38. **Question**: Related to your criteria of implementation experience in renewable electrification, are you taking in account that in some countries, very few projects have been already financed and implemented? Some local companies have little experience.
   **PAOP Response**: Yes, we do understand markets differ in terms of maturity and we will be accounting for country context.

39. **Question**: The RFA mentions that the maximum award per grantee is USD500k. Is there an aggregate or total grant amount which has been ear-marked for this round? If so, can you share that figure?
   **PAOP Response**: PAOP is unable at this stage to disclose the total grant amount earmarked for this round. We do hope to have awards across most, if not all, of the seven countries, but this will be highly dependent on the quality of the applications we receive.

40. **Question**: Will you look at the criteria that the applicants use to map the health facilities to include in the project?
   **PAOP Response**: There is no explicit mention of this in the review criteria. This would be suitable for the impact criteria. As part of the impact criteria, applicants are expected to list the facilities they have chosen and include justification of why they have chosen those particular facilities.

41. **Question**: Do you expect the applicants to find alternative source of funding, in addition to the funding of what under this project?
   **PAOP Response**: Alternate sources of funding are not explicitly required; however, the most competitive applications are expected to have some additional sources of funding. We also expect the level of additional funding and ability to secure additional funding to vary by country. This will be taken into consideration during the merit review.