1. **Question:** Can you elaborate upon what you are looking for when you describe preference for projects offering the “greatest additionality”? How do you all define this term?

   **Answer:** Grant funding will be used for new or expansion activities, and not for already ongoing activities.

2. **Question:** Do we need to supply Lighting Global certified products?

   **Answer:** Yes, however alternative international standards could be presented e.g. component system.

3. **Question:** The RFA it mentions PAOP objectives and that 30% of the evaluation will be based on how it meets these objectives, but no objectives specific to PAOP are mentioned. Can these be provided?

   **Answer:**
   - Increased number of actual off-grid connections
   - Increased amount of private and commercial financing available for off-grid companies/projects
   - Improved national off-grid policies and regulations

4. **Question:** What does "PAYGO Integration" mean exactly? Our company is offering solar home systems on PAYGo and we would deploy a PAYGo agent network for our customers to pay for our systems. Are we eligible for this grant?

   **Answer:** The request for application provides guidance on PAYGO integration. The company is eligible as this market expansion (assuming the company meets the eligibility criteria outlined in the RFA).

5. **Question:** Is the number of connections supposed to be an estimate for only the 12-month period? Other places in the application materials we are asked for a 24-month or several year plan.

   **Answer:** The period of performance is for a maximum of 12 months, however PAOP is will count connections resulting from the project after grant period of performance.
6. **Question:** Can the financing object in PAYGO take into account, in addition to SHS (Solar Home System), pumping kits and refrigeration kits?

**Answer:** No, this request for applications is for solar home systems.

7. **Question:** Is the estimate of the number of new connections and the estimated sales only related to the duration of the project? (this question is justified by the low impact of the project on the part of the development and deployment that lasts only 12 months)

**Answer:** Applications should include an estimate of the number of new connections and estimated sales during the life of the award. An estimate of the connections and sales may be included post life of the award.

8. **Question:** Within the list of eligible countries, would you be willing to extend efforts to additional West African countries, such as Benin?

**Answer:** The grant activities are limited to the countries listed in the request for application.

9. **Question:** Is there a reason Nigeria has been excluded?

**Answer:** Nigeria is outside PAOP’s scope of work.

10. **Question:** For market entry activities, can we use funding to cover market research activities to further assess the eligible markets? Or must they solely be used for set-up and entry costs?

**Answer:** An application may include set-up costs, market entry costs, and costs associated market assessments.

11. **Question:** For PAYGO Integration, we would like to use part of the funding toward staff salaries. Must these staff sit within the eligible markets, or can we hire and use staff in one of our larger offices (e.g., in East Africa) but have them dedicated to the West and Central Africa region full- or part-time?

**Answer:** The budget should include costs which can be directly linked to implementation in the RFA focus countries only.

12. **Question:** (Related to the above). As our Software Systems are global, any work done is performed by the Global team sitting in our headquarters and affects all operating markets; is this an issue? If not, how do you recommend we budget for global staff?

**Answer:** Only level of effort costs specifically to support the award should be included.

13. **Question:** Similarly, our centralized systems are multi-functional applications with dedicated teams per application, this means that any engineer hired to a specific team has the responsibility to work across the entire application. While PAYGO integration activities are
core focus of our business, each application also consists of additional functionality such as; inventory management, call management, customer onboarding - how does this affect the grant application?

**Answer:** Proposed level of effort should reflect PAYGO integration activities only. However, please note that USAID/Power Africa is not responsible for any costs associated with the development of applications in response to this RFA.

14. **Question:** We would like to pilot a few initiatives within the grant-eligible markets but use the larger learnings for our other markets. Can we budget an amount for scaling activities, such as training, data modeling enhancement, or communications from a grant-eligible market to another market in say, East Africa?

**Answer:** Grant activities are limited to the countries listed in the request for application.

15. **Question:** Can we use grant funding to hire an external organization to provide technical assistance (e.g., consulting firm, research university, or software integration firm)? And if so, do we need to specify the external organization(s) in our application, or can we select the partner after notification of award?

**Answer:** The budget may include costs that will be incurred to support the grant objective.

16. Can we use grant funding to hire interns or other temporary staff?

**Answer:** The budget may include costs that will be incurred to support the grant objective.

17. **Question:** Can we use grant funding to cover project expenses such as: paying for external data sources, paying licensing fees for advanced data analysis software, SMS fees, or fees associated with Interactive Voice Response technology?

**Answer:** The budget may include costs that will be incurred to support the grant objective.

18. **Question:** You said that the market entry grant should not fund existing activities, but at the same time it needs to be an established legal entity and it sounds like some activities need to be under way. Can you speak a bit more about the additionality requirement, and how far advanced we can be in our preparations for the grant-funded component to still be considered market entry?

**Answer:** You need to be a company with an operating budget and activities in a different market than the market entry proposed for the grant. However, if existing operations are based in the market entry then scale up could be justified.

19. **Question:** In the evaluation of PAYGO integration projects, one of the criteria is in the number of new connections. However, many activities, such as improved credit scoring or use of machine learning, have less of an effect on sales and a more direct effect on improved repayment

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*Question and Answer*

*RFA Name: West and Central Africa Market Entry and PAYGO Integration*

*RFA No: PAOP-RFA-2019-001*

*Date: August 19, 2019*
behavior or upgrades. Will the evaluators be willing to take these additional factors into consideration, beyond pure sales?

**Answer:** Please refer to page 5 of Annex A: Application Template, were we provide an example of credit scoring.

20. **Question:** "Number of new connections anticipated..." In PAYGo will you fund systems/connections as part of the testing and evaluation within the project?

**Answer:** Yes as long as the company has track record; costs can be linked supporting the grant objective; and the systems are priced competitively to avoid market distortion.

21. **Question:** Not sure why the focus on PAY solutions? All (or almost all) Telco’s have PAYGO solutions, if the solution has an IoT connectivity need?

**Answer:** From all the business models in the off-grid market, the PAYGO model is the one that has proven a rapid growth in addition long term relationship with customers for service, upgrades, etc.

22. **Question:** On qualified usage, what percentage of a mini-grid output should be for household considering productive use business users make a mini-grid viable.

**Answer:** With respect to the ratio household vs businesses the number of households should be larger. With respect with electricity consumption the businesses ratio will be larger.

23. **Question:** Regarding eligibility for the market entry scenario: can it also apply to non SHS or micro grid solutions? (Such as single point energy for on-site productive activities or production hub) – not all applications should include household connections

**Answer:** Yes, mini-grids are eligible, main focus should be households. See answer to question 22.

24. **Question:** Is solar lights also ok? What tier level of electricity please?

**Answer:** No, solar lights or lanterns are not eligible, only multi light point systems with phone charging capabilities. It could still be tier 1, but multi-light point. All higher tiers are eligible.

25. **Question:** Are there any published policies specifically pertaining to US Disabled Veteran Owned Companies legally founded and established in Africa, in the context USAID/Power Africa Grants?

**Answer:** Specific to Power Africa Off-grid Project there are no published policies pertaining to US Disabled Veteran Owned Companies legally founded and established in Africa.
26. **Question:** Can crypto-currency solution such as FB Libra be used for PAYGO?

   **Answer:** This call for proposal is focused on proven business models that could be replicated and scaled up in West and Central Africa. Innovations proposed need to have a status beyond a pilot and be ready for a larger roll out.

27. **Question:** For companies based in multiple countries, PAYGO integration activities benefit all markets, including those listed for this grant and beyond. This is due to similar technology deployed across all markets and how our software teams work. How should we address this within our application?

   **Answer:** Yes, this should be addressed in the proposal. We understand that PAYGO integration will benefit other markets where the company operates; however, the company needs to prove the funds have been invested in the counties of PAOP focus.

28. **Question:** Is it necessary that the Pay-as-you-Go system be integrated with a Telecom Operator?

   **Answer:** No, however any other methods should clearly state the potential to scale.

29. **Question:** If a company is producing monitoring and control systems for micro grids and solar home systems but not installing the systems themselves can they apply?

   **Answer:** A company which meets the RFA eligibility criteria may apply describing how it proposes to achieve the RFA objectives.

30. **Question:** Regarding additionality, can the grant be used as part of another larger ongoing RE project funding?

    **Answer:** No, the grant has to exclusively be used for off-grid household connections only.

31. **Question:** Are you able to provide the grant to a company that is benefiting from a results-based finance subsidy?

    **Answer:** Yes, as long as the company can prove that both grants are being used for different purposes e.g. RBF could have been gotten for overall sales in the whole country whereas PAOP grant is to enter last mile specific areas.

32. **Question:** Can we focus on market entry without necessarily deploying PAYGO?

    **Answer:** Yes, as long as the potential to scale up can be demonstrated.
33. **Question:** We operate wireless micro-grids using battery rental model, renting batteries for household use. are we eligible to apply?

   **Answer:** Yes, as long as 1) the household is wired and 2) at least higher end of Tier one and beyond Tier 2 service levels are provided.

34. **Question:** Clarify more on inventory spending, can we procure products with grant fund or to expand off-grid franchises small scale retailers (hubs)?

   **Answer:** Grant funding will be used to defray costs associated with specific risks to the company’s business model, rather than subsidizing end user costs.

35. **Question:** We are looking to expand to a new country as part of this grant – does an organization need to have set up a company in new country in order to apply for the grant in that country?

   **Answer:** Legal registration is required for the companies its current country/ies of operation (at application stage) and for proposed new country/ies - the company must be eligible to work in the country at the time of grant award.

36. **Question:** Will Power Africa Off-grid Project established a formal website?

   **Answer:** At this point, there are no plans to establish a website for the project.

37. **Question:** There appears to be a conflict between the terms budget and grant. Within the RFA document it is noted that a grant amount of $100k-$250k will be provided. However within Annex A, the application form it states “The indicative budget for this RFA is up to USD 250,000 per grant”. Can you clarify whether the maximum budget for a proposal is $250k? Can the budget exceed $250k but the applicant request less than $250k? What is the level co-financing required, or is it a 100% grant?

   **Answer:** Individual grants awarded as a result of this RFA shall not exceed USD250,000. No co-financing is required for this request for application.

38. **Question:** If we have a local distribution company as potential partners to enter the market, do we have to include their financial data and details of our partnership?

   **Answer:** If the application is submitted as a consortium then yes, the details of all partners will need to be provided.
39. **Question**: What this grant is supposed to cover? Can we include the “set-up” costs in the grant budget, such as an office, warehousing? Does this grant cover the cost of solar home systems?

**Answer**: The budget may include costs that will be incurred to support the grant objective. Under this request for application solar home systems will not be funded.

40. **Question**: How would you prefer we structure a proposal that is for both funding opportunities? Should they be two separate proposals or combined? Would this increase our page limit if they are combined? Are they Annex documents included in the page limit?

**Answer**: A company may submit separate application for each opportunity or a combined however the page limit remains ten pages. The page limit excludes annex documents.

41. **Question**: Is there any additional documentation we would need to prepare for either the purchase, lease, or rental of such equipment?

**Answer**: At this stage of solicitation, applicants are required to only submit documents listed in the request for application.

42. **Question**: We understand that we may need prior authorization from USAID in order to use some of the money to acquire vehicles for last-mile distribution in the in deep villages as they are restricted goods. Is this the same for renting vehicles? Is there a difference between cars vs. trucks vs. ATVS vs. motorbikes vs. bicycles? These are critical to our ability to access people in the jungle.

**Answer**: Vehicle renting costs will not require prior approval by USAID/Power Africa. However please note that all awards/grants under this project are subject to USAID/Power Africa review and approval. Companies are required to refer to their internal policies on classification of automobiles.

43. **Question**: Can you elaborate upon what you are looking for in terms of “track record” (Section III, part C)?

**Answer**: This refers to the record of the performance of the company in the proposed activity.

44. **Question**: As there are a limited number of awards available for this RFA, will grant submissions be considered for any other funding opportunities in addition to the one at hand?

**Answer**: The anticipated number of awards intended to be within the range of 1 to 4
45. **Question:** Is the Host Country the parent company we are operating from or the country we’re expanding to?

**Answer:** Host countries refers to the country/ies the company will be conducting activities under this grant.

46. **Question:** Can the setting up of the company in the expansion country be included in the grant funding?

**Answer:** Yes, Grant activities should be directly related to risk mitigation measures identified in the risk analysis. Such activities may include, but are not limited to operational setup – establishing shops, onboarding sales agents.

47. **Question:** Should we fill content in that templated provided. or are we required to create similar excel and word template.

**Answer:** Applicants are required to use the templates provided.

48. **Question:** Our HQ is in Europe, but we have legal structure in 3 eligible countries can we apply as a group in those 3 countries or should we pick only one country?

**Answer:** A company may submit a combined application or separate applications for the country/ies they select to implement grant activities.

49. **Question:** Can the costs of further market research of the country we are expanding to be included in grant funding?

**Answer:** NO, this request for application will not fund market researches.

50. **Question:** Can you describe the disbursement plan for the grant?

**Answer:** The disbursement plan will be determined by the pre-award assessment results of the selected company.

51. **Question:** Can a start-up also apply?

**Answer:** Companies are expected to at least be in operation and prove their ability to achieve milestones. Please also refer to the eligibility criteria in the request for application.

52. **Question:** Will a current USAID recipient be eligible/excluded from this call?

**Answer:** Companies that meet the eligibility criteria in the request for application may apply.
53. **Question:** Do we need to produce a table to answer the risk analysis matrix section?

   **Answer:** Yes, the risk analysis should be a matrix format.

54. **Question:** A project may be proposed by a cloud ERP system provider, collaborating with a PAYGo hardware financier and distributor, for asset/customer management, streamlining onboarding and distribution network setup, scalability etc. in preparation for being an unbundled, tech agnostic company/aggregator. Will only the costs have incurred by the applicant be eligible and not those by the company.

   **Answer:** USAID/Power Africa 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.

55. **Question:** Could you clarify if an International NGO can apply as a lead in partnership with a for profit company or the for-profit company as to be the lead?

   **Answer:** Applications may be submitted as a consortium however all consortium partners should meet the eligibility criteria stipulated in the request for applications.

56. **Question:** Grant agreement to be signed in November 2019 (tentatively). What is the latest start of the 12 months project? Can it also start in e.g. in June 2020 until June 2021?

   **Answer:** The anticipated grant start date is November 1, 2019

57. **Question:** For PAYGo do you need to be registered in that country?

   **Answer:** Legal registration will be required for the country/ies grant activities will be implemented.

58. **Question:** PAYGo provider integrating with a distributor on the ground, will have the greater expenses and activities. Who should be the applicant?

   **Answer:** Applications may be submitted as a consortium however all consortium partners should meet the eligibility criteria stipulated in the request for applications.