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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>RFA Title:</strong></th>
<th>West and Central Africa Market Entry and PAYGO Integration</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RFA No:</strong></td>
<td>PAOP- RFA-2019-001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date of Issuance:</strong></td>
<td>July 25, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Closing date for questions:</strong></td>
<td>August 12, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Questions should be sent via email to</td>
<td><a href="mailto:paopgrants@powerafrica-offgrid.org">paopgrants@powerafrica-offgrid.org</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RFA Live Q&amp;A and Webinar</strong></td>
<td>August 15, 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Responses to be published:</strong></td>
<td>August 19, 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Closing date for this RFA:</strong></td>
<td>August 31, 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Anticipated award date:</strong></td>
<td>November 01, 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Duration of funding/ period of performance:</strong></td>
<td>Maximum 12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anticipated number of awards</strong></td>
<td>1-4</td>
</tr>
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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 rapid growth of off-grid energy access solutions in West and Central 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 any of the following sub-Saharan Africa (West and Central Africa) countries: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. PAOP will partner directly with organizations based in these countries.

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 August 12, 2019 at 17h00 South African time. PAOP will not respond to telephone inquiries. Answers will be posted on the RTI website (www.rti.org/rfp) on August 19, 2019. The table below shows the RFA timelines:

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Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of 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 to support Power Africa’s Beyond the Grid initiative which contributes to the goal of facilitating 60 million new 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 household solar household systems (SHS) and micro-grids, with the goal of facilitating 6 million new electricity connections by 2022.

PAOP’s first grant funding call is geographically focused in West and Central Africa only (does not include Nigeria). There are two opportunities companies may choose to apply for:

I. Market Entry - where companies can target new countries and/or new areas within existing country presence that are underserved e.g. Last Mile; and

II. Pay-As-You-Go (PAYGO) integration into off-grid solutions.

A company may apply for either one or both funding opportunities. Companies will not be required to provide matching funds, but they should at least be in operation and prove their ability to achieve milestones. We expect the Market Entry and PAYGO grant opportunities to be focused on funding scalability.

b. Program Description

I. Market Entry

This grant theme will support SHS and micro-grid companies to enter underserved geographic markets or approach market segments that present particular risks to their business model, such as high operational expense, customer willingness or ability to pay, or uncertainty of grid extension. Grant funding will be used to defray costs associated with those specific risks, rather than subsidizing end user costs.

Applicants will identify the new geography they propose to target under the grant – either a sub-national jurisdiction (e.g. department, county), or an underserved country. They will describe their current areas of operation, their expansion plans over the next several years, and how the target geography fits into these efforts.

Applicants will demonstrate the additionality of the proposed grant activities by providing a risk analysis of their target geography or market segment, and a narrative comparing those risks to other areas or customers targeted for expansion. Grant activities should be directly related to risk mitigation measures identified in this analysis. Such activities may

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1 List of countries: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo
include, but are not limited to:

- Operational setup – establishing shops, onboarding sales agents;
- Development of last-mile supply chain;
- Specialized sales agent training;
- Call center staffing for local languages;
- Tailored or intensified promotional campaigns;
- Tailored payment plans;
- Partnership facilitation – legal or due diligence costs associated with a key local partnership;
- Identification of initial target communities;
- Address security risks;
- Accommodations for specific disabilities.

Proposed grant activities will be assessed based on the following evaluation criteria:

- Extent to which activities directly and realistically address specific risks, as demonstrated through a risk assessment and narrative
- Additionality to wider expansion efforts
- Number of new connections anticipated from target geography, customer segment, or overall expansion effort

II. PAYGO Integration Initiatives

This grant window will support off-grid companies including: SHS, micro-grid, Micro Finance Institution (MFI), productive-use companies to develop, integrate, or improve their capacity to use PAYGO technology, such as establishing partnerships with mobile network operators, integrating PAYGO platforms, improving customer management and customer data analysis systems through Advanced Programming Interface (API) integration. Grants will cover specific activities in the applicant’s overall PAYGO technology roadmap.

Applicants that will improve existing systems will characterize their current use of PAYGO technology, and their plans to implement or improve PAYGO systems over the next several years. Proposed grant activities shall be framed in terms of this overall PAYGO plan, with preference shown to those proposals that offer greatest additionality to internal and partner resources.

Proposals will feature a PAYGO roadmap which outlines the objectives, activities and timelines associated with the applicant’s PAYGO initiative. The roadmap will demonstrate how activities will contribute to profitability and market reach. Such activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Facilitation of Mobile Network Operator (MNO) or Mobile Money Operator (MMO) partnerships – legal or due diligence costs associated with partnership
- Integration of a PAYGO platform into an off-grid solution;
- Development or adoption of credit scoring technology;
- Development or adoption of after-sales or customer management platforms;
• Use of machine learning – e.g. predicting churn; predicting leads; understanding payment behavior;

Proposed grant activities will be assessed based on the following evaluation criteria:
• Extent to which activities optimally contribute the applicant’s use of PAYGO technology
• Number of new connections anticipated from adoption or improvements to PAYGO initiatives
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
PAOP will be hosting a webinar regarding this opportunity on Thursday August 15, 2019 at 15h00 South African time [Webinar link: https://bluejeans.com/9195418889].

Questions concerning this RFA must be submitted in writing via email to paopgrants@powerafrica-offgrid.org (with RFA number PAOP-RFA-2019-001 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 August 19, 2019. 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 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). The Technical application and other supporting documents shall be submitted in electronic copy to paopgrants@powerafrica-offgrid.org (with RFA number PAOP-RFA-2019-001 in email subject line as a reference). Late applications will not be considered.

PAOP Submission email: paopgrants@powerafrica-offgrid.org (with RFA number PAOP-RFA-2019-001 in email subject line as a reference). Only applications submitted to this email will be counted as official submission. The submission deadline is August 31, 2019 at 17h00 South Africa time. All interested applicants are encouraged to submit their application as early as possible.

In addition to the application, applicants should submit the following to PAOP:
- A copy of the Applicant’s valid legal registration in all countries proposed to work in the application,
- A copy of tax compliance certificate or equivalent; and
- Signed and dated Required Certifications listed under Annex E.
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

Submit a detailed budget (in Microsoft Excel) with budget justification notes (in Word) detailing how you 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 equipment, supplies, 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 compliant with 2 CFR 200 Subpart E, Cost Principles (https://ecfr.io/Title02/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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Merit Review and Category</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feasibility of design and technical approach</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent of contribution to PAOP objectives including gender and environmental considerations</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management and operational capacity</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Sustainability/Financial self-reliance</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost efficiency</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Rating (out of 100 points)</td>
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</table>
These merit review criteria elements are described more fully below.

A. **Feasibility of design and technical approach.** The quality and feasibility of the proposal in terms of the viability of the proposed technical approach, (i.e., the ability to produce intended outcomes), appropriateness of the proposed methodology, innovativeness, and the work plan for achieving project objectives to offer significant impact in the market systems. Evaluation may either include approaches proven to be effective or new untried approaches with promise. (40 points)

B. **Extent of contribution to PAOP objectives.** The extent to which the proposed activity contributes to the stated PAOP objectives and desired outcomes. (30 points)

C. **Management and operational capacity.** Evidence of the capability to undertake and accomplish the proposed activities. The application should demonstrate the enterprise’ effectiveness in terms of internal structure, technical capacity, and personnel. In addition, 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. (10 points)

D. **Commercial Sustainability/Financial Self-Reliance.** The extent to which the funded activity will result in building and strengthening the selected energy access solution and whether the activity itself is sustainable or will promote sustainability of the enterprise (10 points).

E. **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](https://www.govonomy.com/22-cfr-216-agency-environmental-procedures).

**SECTION IV. AWARD AND ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

a. **Catalyzing Off-grid Investment (COIN) Fund**

The overall purpose of 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. Thus successful applicants are thus 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 USD250,000.

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\(^2\).

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

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\(^2\) The grant may be terminated at a date earlier than the grant activity completion date under the following conditions but not limited to:

1) Significant change in the scope of work: If the requirements of the USAID or the program change such that the work to be completed varies significantly from the proposed activities.

2) Reduction or termination of donor funding: In the event USAID reduces funding or terminates funding earlier than the Grant Activity Completion Date.

3) As a requirement of the donor: In the event the donor requests early termination of the Grant.

4) Significant delays or external or internal challenges which have a material impact on the ability of the Grantee to implement the activities.
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. 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**

POAP 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 this solicitation and not award.
   • PAOP reserves 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