

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

RFA Title:	Distributed Electricity Services and Modern Cooking Fuel Delivery
RFA No:	PAOP- RFA-2019-002
Date of Issuance:	October 16, 2019
Closing date for questions:	October 23, 2019 (Questions should be sent via email to paopgrants@powerafrica-offgrid.org)
RFA Live Q&A and Webinar	October 28, 2019
Responses to be published:	November 04, 2019
Closing date for this RFA:	November 16, 2019
Anticipated award date:	December 15, 2019
Duration of funding/ period of performance:	Maximum 12 months
Anticipated number of awards	1-4

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 PAOP focus countries. 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 PAOP focus countries: Cameroon, DRC, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda. 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, clarification questions should be submitted by email to paopgrants@powerafrica-offgrid.org before October 23, 2019 at 17h00 SAST (GMT+2). PAOP will not respond to telephone inquiries. Responses to the questions will be posted on the RTI website (www.rti.org/rfp) on November 04, 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/Power Africa 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 household solar household systems (SHS) and micro-grids, with the goal of facilitating 6 million new electricity connections by 2022.

Through this RFA, PAOP seeks to support accelerated provision of full energy access to off-grid communities in PAOP focus countries by promoting coordinated delivery of distributed electricity services and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cooking solutions through a market-based approach. PAOP's funding opportunity is geographically focused in Cameroon, DRC, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda. Below is the opportunity, companies may choose to apply for:

- i. Innovative solutions for co-delivery of SHS and LPG

Applicants are not required to provide matching funds, but they should have been operating for at least for one year and have a proven ability to achieve milestones proposed by them in their application. We expect the grant opportunity to provide a roadmap to demonstrate business model scalability even after one year of grant funding.

b. Program Description:

I. Grant Theme: Innovative solutions for co-delivery of SHS and LPG systems:

This grant theme will support an applicant who undertakes at least one of the following activities:

- a. Technology innovation in billing and payment methods for co-delivery of SHS and LPG.
- b. Innovative solutions to improve and integrate supply chain for co-delivery of SHS and LPG.
- c. Innovative integrated control systems for providing safety mechanisms for co-delivery of SHS and LPG systems.
- d. Innovative business model development and/or piloting to enable an increase in access, adoption, and affordability of SHS and LPG systems through combined delivery.
- e. Benchmarking against existing safety standards, customizing, and sharing recommendations on integrated standards for co-delivery of LPG/SHS. Safety

standards should be applicable to the country of implementation, where available, else international.

Please note that preference will be given to applicants who have already developed either LPG or SHS solutions and would like to customize the solution to suit both the offerings (SHS and LPG). No funding shall be provided for research and development of solutions. All the applications need to provide a roadmap for technology validation (through pilot study) and demonstration of scalability.

For individual grant theme mentioned above, the applicant needs to elaborate a response that addresses the following four topics:

- I. Defining the problem: Explain the gap in the market being targeted, current solutions available, and the current barriers with existing solutions.
- II. Proposed solutions: Detail out the proposed solution and how it will address current gaps and barriers in the market.
- III. Experience: Showcase capability of undertaking/implementing the proposed solutions.
 - a. Examples of past projects or technology offerings
 - b. Proof of operation for at least one year
- IV. Market research to inform the activities

Further details for the grant theme are covered in Annex A.

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 **Monday October 28, 2019 at 15h00 South African time (GMT+2)**. Below are details to join the meeting

- i. Meeting URL: <https://rtiorg.zoom.us/j/498756528>
- ii. Phone one-tap: US: +16699006833,,498756528# or +19292056099,,498756528#
- iii. Skype for Business (Lync): <https://rtiorg.zoom.us/skype/498756528>

Questions concerning this RFA must be submitted in writing via email to paopgrants@powerafrica-offgrid.org (with RFA number PAOP-RFA-2019-002 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 Wednesday October 23, 2019. 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 November 04, 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). If the technical application exceeds ten pages, information beyond page ten will be disregarded. The Technical application and other supporting documents shall be submitted in electronic copy to paopgrants@powerafrica-offgrid.org (with RFA number **PAOP-RFA-2019-002** 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-2019-002** in email subject line as a reference). Only applications submitted to this email will be counted as official submission. **The submission deadline is November 16, 2019 at 17h00 South Africa time (GMT +2)**. 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 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
Feasibility of technical approach	40
Extent of contribution to PAOP objectives including gender and environmental considerations	20
Management and operational capacity	10
Commercial Sustainability/Financial self-reliance	15
Cost efficiency	15
Overall Rating (out of 100 points)	

These merit review criteria elements are described more fully below.

- A. Feasibility of technical approach. The quality and feasibility of the application in terms of the viability of the proposed models (i.e., the likelihood of achieving the stated objective of the program). The extent to which the application demonstrates a strong alignment to the theme of the grants program. (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. (20 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 (15 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. (15 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 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 circumstances¹.

¹ 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.

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. 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.

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

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