Question and Answer (Live Webinar)
RFA Name: Solar Electrification of Healthcare Facilities in Sub-Saharan Africa
Date: May 22, 2020

1. **Question:** We have a major challenge of forex in Ethiopia and if the grant is not given in USD it will be difficult to implement a project.
   **PAOP Response:** Budgets should be submitted in USD and grants will be awarded in USD.

2. **Question:** How does PAOP deal with the issue of site duplicates? Some developers might submit same health facilities without them knowing.
   **PAOP Response:** Each proposal will be evaluated separately against the evaluation criteria. Additionally, all proposals must have the relevant agreements or MOUs in place with the stakeholders.

3. **Question:** If it will be identified that 2 developers have submitted same facility to electrify, can they be given a chance to change to another location and implement the project there?
   **PAOP Response:** Yes, PAOP reserves the right to go back and ask questions or request that applicants make changes to their proposals after submission of application. We evaluate each proposal separately.

4. **Question:** Under U22 CFR 216 Agency Environmental Procedures it seems there is an exemption possible in case of emergency situations. Would Covid19 classify as emergency and how is this regarded by PAOP?
   **PAOP Response:** For the U22 CFR 216 applicants should not focus on this, only successful applicants we need to comply with the procedure and an environmental compliance meeting will be held with selected company.

5. **Question:** Healthcare equipment is necessary in some healthcare facilities that are very poorly equipped to take advantage of the solar power to be installed and provide the required services. Are healthcare equipment costs eligible for this grant?
   **PAOP Response:** Yes, provided the provision of the equipment around the health care facility is part of the health care electrification solution this will be accepted.

6. **Question:** Should the budget be in USD or in local currency?
   **PAOP Response:** It should be submitted in USD.

7. **Question:** Is it possible to make several appliances for different countries by one company?
   **PAOP Response:** Yes, a company may propose several appliances for different countries.

8. **Question:** Can a for profit company apply especially if the company is not intending to make profit but develop payment mechanism for sustainability
   **PAOP Response:** Yes, a for profit company can apply.
9. **Question:** Is a DUNS number required for all applicants?
   **PAOP Response:** Yes, it is required for all successful applicants.

10. **Question:** Does Power Africa subsidize the cost of the technology for the healthcare facility or must you find a buyer locally for your technology who can pay?
    **PAOP Response:** The applicant should propose the model to finance the solution, PAOP financing can be used to purchase technology.

11. **Question:** This is an off-grid project but in the scoping document you talk of Health facilities in rural, peri urban and urban locations. Presumably, this is urban off-grid only?
    **PAOP Response:** This RFA is open to both on-grid and off-grid projects. In this case PAOP is looking to include backup power or any areas that have unreliable electricity in urban areas. This exception is specific to this RFA only.

12. **Question:** Could you clarify if the grant funds can be used to purchase infrastructure equipment like solar modules or if it is mainly targeted for operating expenses? Section II-e. of the RFA states that funds can be used for “Materials development”, but we are not sure if that includes infrastructure equipment.
    **PAOP Response:** If the equipment is part of the proposed solution for electrification of health facilities it can be included in the cost.

13. **Question:** Can a company be associated / apply for multiple times. (i.e.: a company with subsidiaries in several countries) What documentation should we provide from our partnering health facility?
    **PAOP Response:** Individual companies may only apply once for up to $500k, however if a company is part of a consortium or a company has subsidiaries in different countries, the subsidiary may appear on multiple applications or the company may appear in multiple consortium applications. Regarding documentation from partnering health facilities, applicants may submit copies of MOUs and/or agreements. Evidence of ongoing discussions/business plans may be submitted however these have to be finalized by the time of the award.

14. **Question:** Can you confirm that the total available funding is 2 million USD?
    **PAOP Response:** PAOP confirms total available funding is USD 2 million for this RFA.

15. **Question:** Is there a standard proposal format for this grant?
    **PAOP Response:** Yes, the application annexures A to E are found online at https://www.rti.org/sites/default/files/annex_a_-_e_amendment_1.pdf. Fillable forms may be requested via email to paopgrants@powerafrica-offgrid.org.

16. **Question:** We are currently in the process of receiving funds for USADF all-on off grid challenge. Though we have not gotten the funds yet, but key indicators show we might get the funds. Are we qualified to also apply for this...will there be conflict?
    **PAOP Response:** You may apply for this funding if it is not for the same activity that is eligible for the USADF award. There is no conflict if the proposed activities are not a duplication.
17. **Question:** How will eligibility be considered if the proposal if for multiple countries  
**PAOP Response:** PAOP will use the merit review criteria in the RFA to evaluate all applications submitted.

18. **Question:** Can the submission deadline be extended please?  
**PAOP Response:** No, the closing date of this RFA will not be extended as this is in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and we are looking for rapid responses.

19. **Question:** Will you confirm receipt of submitted bid?  
**PAOP Response:** Yes.

20. **Question:** Can you please clarify "Period of Performance" -- does this mean the time within which funds will be spent on the designated project?  
**PAOP Response:** Yes, grant activities should be completed within twelve months from date of award.

21. **Question:** The impact section of the RFA does not seem to include indicators related to number of people with access to electricity or economic development which are required for sustainable demand of healthcare services. Would you please clarify how you evaluate these aspects?  
**PAOP Response:** PAOP added this requirement in the amended Annex B Grant Application Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Template where applicants will add in actual numbers that will be evaluated.

22. **Question:** Are business references as mentioned on the first page of Annex A and the business referrals for past performance the same documents but just called different things? And that they are not due on the 28th?  
**PAOP Response:** Yes, they are the same and are required prior to any award.

23. **Question:** Given the short period of the RFP: could you relax the requirement for necessary buy-in/agreements from authorities and stakeholders? We are trying to secure agreements with healthcare facilities, but time is too short to get MoU signed with the clinics. Could we provide letter of intents  
**PAOP Response:** PAOP is looking for projects which are implementation ready and expects these agreements to already be in place. Letter of intent and MOUs will be considered if both parties have signed them.

24. **Question:** If 2 companies are applying as partners, should business reference letters come from both parties?  
**PAOP Response:** They are only required for the prime/lead partner.

25. **Question:** What are immediate forms to be submitted by 28th May?
**PAOP Response:** The amended RFA indicates that Annexes A - D are required to be submitted by the submission deadlines and Annexes E - Certifications, legal registration documents, past performance letters and organizational diagram are not required on May 28th and will only be required prior to any award.

26. **Question:** Is it possible to include other operational activities in the project apart from off grid electrification? Like renovation of building infrastructure?
   **PAOP Response:** Unless the renovation is part of the actual implementation of the electrification project, renovation of buildings will not be allowable.

27. **Question:** Should the Exec Summary (1 page) be counted within the 10 pages of Annex A, or is it in addition to the allocated 10 pages?
   **PAOP Response:** The executive summary is not included in the 10 pages.

28. **Question:** What is the allowable indirect cost rate - can we apply NICRA rate?
   **PAOP Response:** If a company has an audited and approved NICRA rate, then the NICRA rate may be applied. A copy of the NICRA will be required prior to an award. Companies without a NICRA are expected to budget all proposed costs.

29. **Question:** Is the budget related to just the grant funds or to the total budget for the project including other funding?
   **PAOP Response:** It is only for activities to be funded by PAOP.

30. **Question:** What is a DUN Number and if you are not located in the US where one get it. Is it important to have this with initial submission?
   **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. It is not required with initial submission. DUNS numbers may be obtained online at [http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/pages/CCRSearch.jsp](http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/pages/CCRSearch.jsp).

31. **Question:** Where will the webinar documents be posted in USAID?
   **PAOP Response:** The webinar documents are available on the following website [www.rti.org/rfp](http://www.rti.org/rfp). They are listed under the opportunity titled “Power Africa Off-Grid – Solar Electrification of Healthcare Facilities in Sub-Saharan Africa”.

32. **Question:** What is the average time delay for funding commitment after taking in account project appraisal process?
   **PAOP Response:** PAOP anticipates issuing the award by 1 July 2020.

33. **Question:** Do we need to have the DUNS number already the 28th of May?
   **PAOP Response:** No, however a selected applicant is required to provide a DUNS number prior to an award.
34. **Question:** How will you determine those that are proposing to power same dispensaries in the same region from the same country  
**PAOP Response:** See response to question #2.

35. **Question:** We are partnering with a local firm, should the consortium be before May28th or can we have it done before grant award?  
**PAOP Response:** PAOP is looking for projects which are implementation ready and expects these agreements to already be in place. Letter of intent and MOUs will be considered if both parties have signed them.

36. **Question:** Can solutions be mobile clinics?  
**PAOP Response:** Solution can be mobile clinics and PAOP would prefer the proposal include a sustainability/end of life management plan associated with the mobile clinic after end of project.

37. **Question:** For a health facility in Malawi, where we have already selected our solar installation provider, can we opt out of the budget template provided? Reformating our budget might make it more difficult to understand.  
**PAOP Response:** No, applicants should use RFA budget template (Annex D).

38. **Question:** Can the intervention include solar electrification for the provision of clean water to these healthcare facilities?  
**PAOP Response:** Yes, it can. It should be part of an integrated solution.

39. **Question:** How will you regulate quality of equipment proposed by various companies so that we do not have companies with substandard products get awarded just because of their low price and others with high quality products are left out?  
**PAOP Response:** Quality of equipment is considered part of the sustainability criteria and PAOP’s technical evaluation committee will ensure that the applications are reviewed against the criteria as stipulated in the RFA.

40. **Question:** In your investments criteria you have spoken about at least one-year existence for the company requiring for grant...Should the company has revenue and opex track record mandatory of only legal existence?  
**PAOP Response:** If you are in existence your past performance must document that you have been in existence of one year. The technical evaluation committee will review past performance, but current revenue will not be considered when reviewing the applications.

41. **Question:** For an implementation plan that spans 2 -3 weeks (less than the required 1year period) for 3 separate projects (selected health care facilities) in rural and peri-urban areas, would the PAOP consider funding such projects?  
**PAOP Response:** We will look at funding short or long term (within 12months) but must be scalable to implement cross multiple sites bearing in mind the criteria needed to do this.
42. **Question:** Annex B: is there any way we can obtain a form to fill out for annex B or is the word document the only form (can the chart be filled out in an excel spreadsheet instead of a word document)?

**PAOP Response:** The Annexes are available in word and excel format. Please send an email to paopgrants@powerafrica-offgrid.org to request these fillable forms.

43. **Question:** If there are twenty applicants with same products from one supplier, does it matter?

**PAOP Response:** No.

44. **Question:** When applying as consortium, should each agency provide a budget across the 7 budget categories? or would you like subrecipients to be captured under contractor category? For example, the NGO is overseeing the facility will be lead applicant and the solar provider will be sub with most of the funding to go to the solar provider, though the NGO is ensuring the sustainability, etc. would you like detail on the solar provider detailed budget or just captured as a lumpsum single line under contracting budget category?

**PAOP Response:** Applications should have only one budget from the prime applicant.

45. **Question:** Should the Monitoring and Evaluation Activity Plan exceed the actual installation time, can associated costs for that activity be included in the budget costs?

**PAOP Response:** The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan should be for the 12-month period of performance of the grand fund. PAOP funds can only be used during the 12-month period of performance of the grant and will only cover costs that are approved in the initial award.

46. **Question:** What should be on the cover page in Annex A? The annex A starts with Applicant information. Is that what You mean with the cover page?

**PAOP Response:** Yes, the table with applicant information is considered the cover page.

47. **Question:** Can we leverage other sources of funding? loans, grants etc.

**PAOP Response:** Yes, other sources of funding can be leveraged but it is not a requirement.

48. **Question:** If 3 subsidiaries of a parent company make 3 individual applications for implementation in 3 countries, should the total budget for all 3 applications be limited to 500k or can each application apply for up to 500k

**PAOP Response:** Each subsidiary can apply for up to $500k.

49. **Question:** Are other organizations that provide healthcare, such as orphanages, residential care facilities for the elderly, those with disabilities, etc., eligible for this funding? How strict is the definition of health clinic?

**PAOP Response:** PAOP is only looking at health care facilities that provide primary healthcare services, we will not fund activities at other residential care facilities that provide secondary healthcare services.
50. **Question:** Can we include only a selection of pilot projects i.e. health centers that we will work on with an indication of the additional health centers that we will target during the program?
   **PAOP Response:** All healthcare facilities targeted with this funding must be included in the proposal.

51. **Question:** Does the country of origin of our Solar equipment’s matter? Is there a prohibited list of countries that potential grantees should not procure equipment from?
   **PAOP Response:** There are no prohibited source countries.

52. **Question:** Can we have all the participants contact info of this meeting?
   **PAOP Response:** PAOP is unable to share participants information due to privacy restrictions.

53. **Question:** Can health clinics extend the solar to surrounding households, to electrify homes, and the clinic earns money through PAYG meters (charging per kW per house)?
   **PAOP Response:** Yes, they can as part of the holistic sustainable solution.

54. **Question:** In order to meet the objective of the autonomy of the healthcare facilities, it is possible to include in the RFA a partnership proposal with the healthcare facilities? for example furnishing and managing medical Equipment as EAS (Equipment as services)?
   **PAOP Response:** As this is a broad RFA and will cover different types of applications and facilities, PAOP will not be prescriptive of what it should look like, each applicant should propose the services they will provide in the partnership agreement.

55. **Question:** Could medical equipment needed for Covid19 response be eligible for funding, together with the electrification equipment cost?
   **PAOP Response:** Yes if it is all one solution.

56. **Question:** So, if we do not have an existing relationship with health facilities or MOU's in place, we would not have time in the project timeline to source partnerships?
   **PAOP Response:** PAOP is requiring applicants have an agreement in place at the time of proposal.

57. **Question:** Can US company working under an MOU with a hospital in a Sub-Saharan country be the applicant, or should the hospital be the applicant?
   **PAOP Response:** The company should be the applicant.

58. **Question:** We will be supplying a 30-year battery - is this considered a technology innovation?
   **PAOP Response:** Yes. This will be eligible if this provides long term services for the health facility through a sustainable business model.

59. **Question:** is it possible to partner with NGO?
   **PAOP Response:** Yes.

60. **Question:** What does 'effort level' refer to in the budget excel sheet?
PAOP Response: The level of effort refers to the percentage of time a staff member will spend on the project.

61. Question: Would solar powered mobile phones with health-related apps for the clinicians qualify?
   PAOP Response: Yes if the solution includes the electrification of the health centers.

62. Question: Comment on FAA vs cost reimbursable grants, as a practical matter would a $500k grant always be cost reimbursable?
   PAOP Response: PAOP will determine the granting mechanism depending on the pre award assessment results.

63. Question: Can a company submit more than one application each application referring to a different County within the same country?
   PAOP Response: No, a company may only apply once for up to $500,000 unless they are applying with a consortium or as a subsidiary of the parent company.

64. Question: What’s the acceptable percentage of American content needed to be included, in terms of equipment and consultancy. Thanks
   PAOP Response: There is no limit or restriction to that.

65. Question: What operational costs should not be included in the proposal which are not eligible for funding?
   PAOP Response: In the RFA it does list what is not eligible such as surveillance cost – The RFA documents explain this in detail.

66. Question: If project is awarded Early July, when will the fund be disbursed? Will the commitment be allowed to be used as a guaranty to borrow the money from a bank until the money come in?
   PAOP Response: Disbursement dates will depend on the award mechanism. No, PAOP will not be able to reimburse any costs billed by third parties or incurred internally before the award date even if it could be considered within the scope of funding.

67. Question: Do we need reference letter at the time of the submission?
   PAOP Response: No, Annex E is not due at time of submission and will only be asked for if funding is awarded.

68. Question: Is there any clear definition of the eligible products?
   PAOP Response: The applicant should propose products for which they would like to receive funding. These products should be aimed at increasing access to electricity for healthcare facilities.

69. Question: Are Software licence for Medical Record collection, trend analysis and spike detection authorized spending in the project? Is the Computer hardware associated to implement also authorized?
PAOP Response: This would be eligible if there is component that also includes healthcare facility electrification through off-grid solutions.

70. **Question:** Does the applicant have to be based in, or have a presence in, a Sub-Saharan Africa country or can a US company working with a hospital in SSA be the applicant?

   **PAOP Response:** The company/ies must be eligible to work in the proposed country (i.e. legal registration).

71. **Question:** When an actual implementation ready project falls short of the required one year period but addresses the actual electrification need of the healthcare facilities, would it be considered?

   **PAOP Response:** An organization which meets the RFA eligibility criteria may apply. The company/ies must be eligible to work in the country (legal registration) and the company/ies should be in operation for at least one-year, even if not in the country of implementation.

72. **Question:** Must the solution be income generating or rather just be sustainable?

   **PAOP Response:** The solution does not have to be income generating, however the evaluation criteria does evaluate project sustainability after the grant period of performance ends.

73. **Question:** Is there any expected proportion of the cost expected to be paid from the Healthcare facility benefiting from the implementation of the project?

   **PAOP Response:** There is no set cost share, it is up to the applicant to determine if their business model will include external resources.

74. **Question:** The lead organization provides healthcare but wants to partner with the Solar Provider. But the requirements seem more inclined on the commercial aspect of the solar provision e.g. ensuring sales of the solutions which is not part of the organization. Yet the organization requires the solar solution for its health care delivery. Please comment on this situation.

   **PAOP Response:** PAOP will consider proposals that address electrification of healthcare facilities evaluated against the criteria set out in the RFA, regardless of who the lead organization is as long as the eligibility criteria is addressed.

75. **Question:** Can the electrification be extended to households and other public institutions that may be interested in the electricity solution

   **PAOP Response:** Yes, see response to question #53.

76. **Question:** How to define the ‘healthcare’? For clinic lighting or vaccine cooling or household lighting? Is product quantity one of your consideration?

   **PAOP Response:** Electrification of healthcare facilities can be in the form of many solutions, including vaccine cooling, lighting would be considered, however the solution should provide electricity for clinic operations/equipment as well. Product quantity is not an evaluation criteria, rather the number of healthcare facilities electrified will be evaluated.
77. **Question**: Separate subs (in relevant countries) of a parent company will be making separate applications - is this ok or should parent company apply on behalf of the 3 subs for all the countries?

   **PAOP Response**: Subsidiaries will be evaluated as individual applications and are eligible to apply for up to $500k, a parent company would only be eligible to submit one application for up to $500k.

78. **Question**: Some solutions may require installation of a distribution network for the Healthcare facility and surrounding households and institutions, is that an allowable cost?

   **PAOP Response**: Yes, see response to question #53.

79. **Question**: Can the Healthcare facility be linked with a partner to assist them in establishing Productive Uses for electricity for Income Generation purposes and sustainability of the action?

   **PAOP Response**: Yes as long as the solution includes electrification of healthcare facilities.

80. **Question**: Do you have limitation of total applicants’ number in one country?

   **PAOP Response**: There is no limit

81. **Question**: Would a letter of intent from the ministry of health to enter a strategic partnership with us for the project sufficient to show government buy-in?

   **PAOP Response**: Yes

82. **Question**: What was the reason for removing the mention of WHO in the proposal document?

   **PAOP Response**: The background section of the RFA was edited.