ECOWAS Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE)

Regional Off-Grid Electrification Project (ROGEP)

Terms of Reference

IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF A NETWORK OF ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING ENTREPRENEURS AND DELIVERING MANAGERIAL TRAINING PROGRAMMES

REPUBLIC OF BENIN, REPUBLIC OF CABO VERDE, BURKINA FASO, CAMEROON, CENTRAL AFRICA REPUBLIC, REPUBLIC OF CHAD, REPUBLIC OF CÔTE D'IVOIRE, ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA, REPUBLIC OF GHANA, REPUBLIC OF GUINEA, GUINEA-BISSAU, REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA, REPUBLIC OF MALI, ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF MAURITANIA, REPUBLIC OF NIGER, NIGERIA, REPUBLIC OF SENEGAL, REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND REPUBLIC OF TOGO

CONTEXT

Around 50 percent of the population in the broader West African region including the Sahel still lives on less than US$2/day[1]. Although there is some contrast between countries such as Liberia, Guinea- Bissau and Central African Republic where over 65 percent of population lives below US$1.90/day compared to Mauritania with 11 percent – the general trend is grim with over 70 percent of this region's population living below US$3.10/day. This region is also home to around 33 percent of the continent's population with around 17 percent of the land area. The region accounted for 28 percent of Africa's GDP in 2015.

Less than 40 percent of the population in this region has access to electricity. Electricity shortages in urban areas and lack of access to modern, affordable and reliable energy services in rural areas are interrelated with a variety of economic, social, environmental and political problems. The electrification rate of public institutions like schools and health centers in rural areas is also very low. Significant energy access inequalities exist between urban and rural areas. The electricity systems in the region face challenges due to the growing gap between predicted demand, existing supply capacities and limited capital to invest.

Paradoxically, the ECOWAS and the broader West African region are endowed with considerable renewable energy potential, which remains largely untapped due to various market barriers. To remedy this situation, ECREEE designed the Regional Off-grid Electrification Project (ROGEP) with the overall objective to increase access to sustainable electricity services in the ECOWAS

and broader West African region for household, commercial enterprises and public health and education facilities using solar PV standalone systems. The project, funded by the World Bank in the framework of the ECOWAS Program on Access to Sustainable Electricity Services (EPASES), directly contributes to the goals of the ECOWAS Regional Renewable Energy Policy (EREP) with a target to provide universal access to electricity to the region by 2030 as well as the SE4All action agenda.

ROGEP aims to:

- Complement the multiple existing initiatives on access to electricity using Standalone solar PV systems.
- Promote the uptake of pico-solar (lanterns, chargers, solar home systems, etc.) and larger standalone solar systems for households and productive use of energy through provision of energy services to public facilities such as health centers, schools, police offices, etc. including small business and solar water pumps.
- The project covers 19 countries, organized in 4 areas as follow:
    - Area 1: Senegal, Cote D'Ivoire, Mauritania, Guinee, Mali and Burkina Faso
    - Area 2: Sierra Leone, Liberia, the Gambia Ghana, Nigeria
    - Area 3: Niger, Togo and Benin, Chad, Central Africa Republic and Cameroon
    - Area 4: Cabo Verde and Guinea-Bissau

Framing the Issue

Access to sustainable energy services is essential to meeting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and standalone solar solutions have the potential to drastically improve the lives of rural populations.

When it comes to access to sustainable energy a range of technologies and business models exist today, which have proven efficient in unlocking socio-economic development for vulnerable communities. Though smaller than in other regions, the market for off-grid solar technologies is growing rapidly in West Africa. However, entrepreneurs face a myriad of barriers hindering the large-scale promotion and uptake of these products in rural communities. These barriers vary depending on the enterprise development lifecycle (startup, early stage, growth, and maturity). Considering the startup and early stage enterprises, the challenges can be grouped in three categories, namely: 1) entrepreneurs need capacity-building in order to properly set-up, manage and grow their companies to become viable in the provision of off-grid solar technologies; 2) lack

of financial capacity preventing them from growing their businesses into viable endeavors; 3) lack of appropriate know-how on reaching challenging markets including peri-urban, rural, "bad grid", and base of the pyramid customers.

Starting and managing an enterprise in the region is not an easy task; it takes more than having an innovative idea or a great product. For entrepreneurs interested in starting an off-grid solar business or already operating a start-up in this sector, there are several layers of challenges facing them in addition to those common to all SMEs. Some of the key challenges specific to entrepreneurs in the off-grid sector are access to finance, weak infrastructure, understanding the technologies, procurement/sourcing, distribution chain and customer related issues. Therefore, without proper support from specialized organizations such as incubators and business accelerators, these entrepreneurs face a higher likelihood of failure or are unlikely to achieve tremendous success.[1] Business incubation is an important vehicle for supporting entrepreneurs at different stages of the business growth cycle. Consequently, entrepreneurship support organizations globally are delivering an array of targeted services and resources to solar off-grid entrepreneurs at different stages of the development lifecycle.

ROGEP within the framework of sub-component 1B has set-out to address the needs of local entrepreneurs through provision of technical assistance and seed funding.

More information on the sub-component 1B and the other components can be found at: http://www.ecreee.org/node/87265

The technical assistance interventions supported under Component 1B aim to enhance the capacity, skills and expertise of the businesses while the financing interventions have the objective to contribute to the businesses' growth and facilitate the creation of their track record of access to financing services thus increasing their bankability and eventually sustainability.

Startups and companies at early stages of growth will receive technical assistance in the form of entrepreneurship and business training delivered by already operational national service providers that will be supported by ROGEP to enhance their portfolio by including the delivery of training programs on standalone solar businesses.

The entrepreneurship and business training activities are as follows:

[1] For further description of the specific challenges of green entrepreneurs see Innovations for Scaling Green Sectors (World Bank, 2017) at https://www.infodev.org/sites/default/files/innovations_for_scaling_green_sectors_-_infodev_-_climate_technology_program_-_2017_-_web.pdf

- Training courses
- National level incubation
- Annual regional business plan competition and workshop

Early stage businesses, those that have advanced beyond startup stage but are still developing and iterating their business model, adapting technology, and finalizing product marketing strategies, will be offered customized business acceleration support under ROGEP. This will be highly specialized and customized support provided through a network of business incubators and accelerators in the ROGEP countries.

Therefore, under the Private Sector Support Facility, framed in the sub-component 1B of ROGEP, ECREEE seeks the services of a consultancy firm to identify entrepreneurship support organizations, such as incubators, business accelerators, specialized training institutions, and other organizations capable of providing the necessary business support to entrepreneurs throughout the business growth cycle to constitute a regional network of incubators.

Further, the consultant will also define the technical assistance interventions that this network may require in order to be able to effectively deliver these entrepreneurship support throughout the ROGEP implementation period. The definition of the technical assistance intervention includes but is not limited to capacity-building and other incentives the identified organizations might need in order to be successful.

This assignment will ensure the identified network of entrepreneurship support organization covers all19 countries in the target region.

OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF WORK

The overall objective of the assignment is threefold to 1) identify organizations supporting entrepreneurs; 2) assess their capacity and willingness to deliver managerial, business and technical training services to entrepreneurs in the renewable energy field and in particular in off-grid solar PV and 3) define the required technical assistance intervention based on a regional network. This will be accomplished through the completion of 4 tasks:

1. Take stock of various organizations providing diverse business support (technical and financial) to entrepreneurs.
2. Assess the capacity of these organizations to provide services to their existing client portfolio as well as to an enhanced market in the standalone solar PV sector.

3. Assess the interest and capability of these organizations to deliver capacity-building and technical assistance to entrepreneurs in the renewable energy market and specifically in the off-grid solar PV standalone systems.
4. Define the technical assistance intervention based on a regional network of the identified organizations and make recommendations on internal capacity reinforcement and other incentives these organizations may need in order to be effective in supporting off-grid solar entrepreneurs.

The **Output** will be a written report and a PowerPoint Presentation in English according to a standard template to be provided by the Consultant and approved by the Client. Firms will also be expected to deliver a presentation at the inception meeting and debriefing session (closing) in PowerPoint format at the ECREEE headquarters in Cabo Verde.

Detailed Scope

The assessments will draw upon existing data and materials wherever possible, but original research is expected to complement this information. The analysis will also take gender aspects in consideration both from supply and demand perspective.

Lastly, this assignment is looking at various type of organizations providing targeted support to entrepreneurs; whether they are strictly private sector is not relevant at this stage.

The following tasks are to be completed to complete this assignment.

Task 1: Take stock of various organizations providing diverse business support (technical and financial) to entrepreneurs

The consulting firm will map-out organizations currently providing business support and targeted trainings to entrepreneurs in the 19 target countries of ROGEP. The profiles of each organization will be built with the following information: business model, countries of operation, type of support provided, type of entrepreneurs served, specific sectors, enrollment process, eligibility criteria, cost of services, duration of the support, specific experience in the off-grid standalone solar PV sector, etc.

An overall qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the past experience and results achieved should be developed for each organization under this task.

For the identification to be relevant, the mapped organizations should have collectively the capacity to deliver the expected support in all the 19 countries. While there is no ceiling to the

number of organizations, at least one per country should be identified.

Task 2: Assess the capacity of identified organizations to provide services to their existing client portfolio as well as to an enhanced market in the standalone solar PV sector

The Consultant will take an in-depth look at the organizations' capacity in serving its current customers who may or may not be from the off-grid solar sector. This should SWOT or another type of analytical framework analysis, including a simple to understand summary chart, covering the below items among others.

i. *Human Resource:*

Characterize the human resources, especially the trainers and mentors, to determine if in line with the appropriate market standards.

ii. *Curriculum and training methods*:

Assess relevance of curriculum, training methods and duration to determine if entrepreneurs are actually benefiting from engagement with incubator.

iii. *Financial Viability*:

Provide insight on organizations' financial viability. What are the revenues streams of the organization (e.g. office and space rental) And how sustainable they are.

iv. *Business Model:*

Evaluate the business model including the outreach and marketing strategy.

v. *Geographic Coverage:*

Describe the geographic reach of the organizations' services, countries where they operate; countries where entrepreneurs they serve are from and plans for expansion and timeline.

vi. *Success rate*

Assess the status of the entrepreneurs that have completed the program or the support cycle.

Assess the retention and return for extra service rates.

vii. *existing demographic/client base*

Describe the customer base of these organizations including gender segregated

information, whenever possible.

Identify the type of entrepreneurs currently being served by the organizations, by average age, gender, type of business, etc.

Determine the decision-making factors contributing to their involvement with these organizations, when possible.

Assess the level of satisfaction of entrepreneurs in relationship to the support services offered by the organizations (relevance, affordability, timing/frequency, quality of infrastructures, etc.), when possible.

Task 3: Assess the interest and capacity of these organizations to deliver entrepreneurship training and business development support to entrepreneurs in the renewable energy market and specifically to solar PV standalone systems in the off Grid.

i. Assess the capacity and the experience of the identified organizations in delivering business support services to entrepreneurs in the renewable energy market specifically to off grid standalone solar PV systems.

ii. Assess the capacity of the identified organizations in delivering business support services to entrepreneurs in the renewable energy market specifically to off grid standalone solar PV systems.

iii. In case the above points are inexistent or limited, determine the organizations interest and suitability to provide business support and technical assistance services to entrepreneurs in the renewable energy market specifically to off grid standalone solar PV systems.

Task 4: define the technical assistance intervention based on a regional network of the identified organizations and make recommendations on internal capacity reinforcement and other incentives these organizations may need in order to be effective in supporting off-grid solar entrepreneurs.

i. Make recommendations on the organizations/incubators, that have the capacity to successfully provide business support and technical assistance to entrepreneurs in off grid standalone solar PV systems value-chain including list of contacts and countries of operation, etc. and should therefore be considered for the regional network.

ii. Make recommendations on internal capacity-building and other incentives these

organizations may need in order to be more effective supporting or to expand services to entrepreneurs in the off-grid solar sector.

iii. Propose how the technical assistance intervention based on a regional network of the identified organizations should be structured to deliver the services expected under ROGEP. This will also include the definition of the tasks of the team that will coordinate the facility, the identification of the implementation methodology to support entrepreneurs through the network and the development of a rigorous monitoring system to keep track and follow the performance of incubators and entrepreneurs

iv. Identify available training materials and methodologies that could be utilized when delivering the training to the entrepreneurs and the adaptations that would be necessary to utilize such materials for the standalone off grid sector.

METHODOLOGY

The specific methodology for this assignment will be developed and included in the technical proposal submitted by the consultant. It is expected that the assignment will include a range of methods including document review, field survey, interviews and consultative meetings with stakeholders. Gender considerations should be taken into account in the methodology and the stakeholders consultations.

DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINE

The assignment will be carried out over a 3-month period (12 weeks). The table below shows expected deliverables, suggested timeline, and payment schedule.

Deliverables	Timeline from contract effectiveness	Payment
Inception report (including report template)	Week 3	20%
First report (task 1-2-3)	Week 9	40%
Final version of the report (including all necessary annexes and a final PPT presentation)	Week 12	40%

The reports as well as the presentation should be submitted in English.

QUALIFICATIONS

The assignment requires an experienced consulting firm capable of deploying the appropriate teams in multiple countries simultaneously. The Consultant's team must be able to interact and communicate effectively in French, English and/or Portuguese as necessary. Interested consultant firms should clearly demonstrate their experience in:

- Engaging face-to-face with incubators and entrepreneurs from countries with similar profiles as those targeted by ROGEP.
- Business mentorship, entrepreneurship training and/or business plan development in similar markets and in the off-grid solar PV sector.
- Vocational training, adult learning such as soft skills training in leadership and business development.
- Previous experience in assignments with a similar scope working simultaneously in several countries and languages.
- Existing relationships with entrepreneurship support organizations in the region and globally is highly sought.

The specific experiences in the ROGEP countries will be particularly valued.

While the consultancy firm has the responsibility of proposing the team, the tasks of the assignment will require the involvement of at least:

- Seasoned Team Leader with significant experience in capacity-building, technical assistance, training and/or running an incubator;
- Expert with significant experience in capacity building and technical assistance to entrepreneurs in off-grid solar PV including productive use of energy.
- Gender Expert with experience in energy-related assignments or training.

Consulting firms are strongly encouraged to tap into locally-based expertise, as appropriate, to contribute to enhancing local capacities and to facilitate the implementation of follow-up activities.