



SUBJECT/NOTICE TYPE: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)
RFI TITLE: Power Africa West Africa Program
ISSUANCE DATE: 29 June 2023
COMMENTS DUE DATE: 28 July 2023
RESPOND TO: proposals@usaid.gov and copy ahorugavye@usaid.gov

TO: ALL INTERESTED PARTIES

The United States Government, represented by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), is issuing this RFI for any interested parties to provide comments, opinions, questions and recommendations on Power Africa future activities in West Africa. USAID intends to use the information received as a result of this RFI for planning purposes and to help make strategic decisions.

This RFI is issued solely for information and planning purposes. This is not a Request for Applications or Proposals (RFA/P) and is not a commitment by the U.S. Government. Issuance of this notice does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government, nor does it commit the Government to pay for any costs incurred in the preparation of responses to this RFI. Responders are solely responsible for all expenses associated with responding to this RFI.

Submissions will not be acknowledged nor will responses be returned. Information provided in response to this RFI must be received in writing via email; telephone calls will not be accepted.

The RFI is released on www.sam.gov and www.grants.gov in both English and French.

USAID reserves the right in its sole discretion, without liability to utilize any, all, or none of the RFI response(s) in its planning efforts. USAID appreciates any questions and comments on the RFI and welcomes feedback on any or all of the following questions in English or French.

Please include the following subject line for email responses: "Power Africa Request For Information No. 720-674-23-RFI-00005".

List of attachments:

Attachment 1 - Program Information and Questions for Interested Parties
Attachment 2 - Future Power Africa Key Priorities in Sub-Saharan Africa

Attachment 1 - Program Information and Questions for Interested Parties

A. Program Information

1. **Purpose of Activities:** The purpose of the Empower West Africa (EWA) program is to increase the availability of and access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern electricity in West Africa. This program will connect more African homes, businesses, and institutions to electricity on the grid and beyond the grid; reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the energy sector by supporting cleaner electricity generation delivered by the grid and accelerating distributed renewable energy (DRE); and, working in partnership with the Power Africa Coordinators Office, USAID Missions in West Africa, West African governments, and regional institutions to improve the enabling environment for energy sector investment (including climate finance), energy trade, and innovations in the energy sector.
2. **How the program will advance Power Africa's strategic vision and/or project-level results:** In alignment with the Power Africa Results Framework, EWA will support efforts to end energy poverty, accelerate a carbon-free future and bolster private sector investments and innovations in the energy sector. This support will be delivered through targeted advisory services, technical assistance, capacity strengthening, catalytic grants, and investment mobilization to a range of energy sector institutions including government ministries, utilities, regulators, private sector energy companies and their trade groups, investors, multilateral organizations and initiatives, academic institutions and/or civil society organizations to achieve their purposes.
3. **Preliminary budget:** \$65-\$80 million over five years. This amount could be distributed over multiple awards.
4. **Mechanism type(s):** USAID is considering awarding multiple mechanisms, to include contracts and assistance awards. USAID is considering restricting a portion of the program to local entities, in support of [USAID's localization priorities](#). Award type and number are still under discussion within USAID.
5. **Planned performance period:** 2024 - 2029
6. **Describe the expected results (at the output, outcome and impact levels) to be achieved.** The overall EWA program, which could be implemented through multiple awards, will focus on three Development Objectives (DOs) contributing to Power Africa's Results Framework:

DO1: Ending Energy Poverty

- Increased number of people with access to reliable, affordable, sustainable and modern electricity services;
- Strengthened utilities to increase grid connections and improved electricity reliability;
- Increased productive use of energy (PUE) connections;

- Increased energy access for marginalized populations;
- Increased employment opportunities by improving business access to energy; and
- Enhanced coordination with Interagency, Development and Private Sector partners.

DO2: Accelerate a Carbon Free Future

- Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduced or avoided;
- Increased power generation from clean sources, as a percentage of total power generation;
- Reduced electricity losses on the grid;
- Increased transmission lines and cross-border power trade; and
- Enhanced coordination with Interagency, Development and Private Sector partners.

DO3: Bolster private sector investment and innovation in the energy sector

- Strengthened enabling environments;
- Mobilized public or private sector finance for energy projects and businesses;
- Improved policies and regulations that codify best practices and increase transparency for energy sector investment;
- Strengthened energy institutions implementing gender equity policies; and
- Enhanced coordination with Interagency, Development and Private Sector partners.

- 7. Geographic Focus:** The EWA program will support the West Africa region, defined as: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

8. Proposed Top-Line Indicators and Targets for the Empower West Africa program:

Indicators	Targets
Number of new grid and off-grid actual direct connections ● A minimum of 1.5 million beyond-the-grid connections	3,000,000
Number of productive-use off-grid devices or systems sold as a result of USG/Power Africa assistance	33,300
Increased energy generation capacity (MWs) supported by USG assistance	2,500 MW
Total length of Power Africa supported transmission lines	1,500 km
Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, estimated in metric tons of CO ₂ e, reduced, sequestered, or avoided through clean	9,500,500 tons CO ₂ e reduced

energy as supported by USG assistance	
Public and private sector funds leveraged for energy sector projects (both on-grid and beyond-the-grid)	To be determined, feedback welcomed
Number of institutions adopting policies or procedures to promote gender equity in the clean energy sector workforce as a result of Power Africa support	To be determined, feedback welcomed
Aggregate technical, commercial and collection electricity losses reduced and/or avoided among Power Africa supported utilities	To be determined, feedback welcomed
Total new electricity capacity (MWh) committed for regional trade through bilateral agreements	To be determined, feedback welcomed

B. Questions for Interested Parties

1. How can we improve the [Power Africa partnership](#) model and enhance coordination with Power Africa partners to meet the targets listed above in West Africa?
2. We welcome suggestions on how to allocate funding across multiple awards and geographic areas. We are open to suggestions regarding award types and geographic focus.
3. We anticipate awarding one or multiple awards to local organizations as part of the Empower West Africa program. What type of work aligned with the stated Development Objectives, results and targets would best be suited for local organizations based in West Africa (for example: capacity building, job training, job placement, women's empowerment, research/studies/assessments, consultancy/technical assistance, enabling environment support, legal support, data modeling, power planning, access to climate finance, communications)?
4. Which local organizations and companies based in West African countries would be well suited to work directly with Power Africa? (Feel free to include a Statement of Interest if your company or organization might be interested)
5. Is there anything else you would like to share or you feel Power Africa should consider when developing designs for West Africa activities?

Attachment 2 - Future Power Africa Key Priorities in Sub-Saharan Africa

Power Africa Background: The goal of Power Africa is to advance sub-Saharan Africa's development through universal access to clean energy by 2030. Launched in 2013, Power Africa is a U.S. Government-led partnership managed by USAID that brings together the collective resources of 12 U.S. Government agencies, 20 development partners, key African counterparts, and over 170 private sector partners to address mutual development objectives through a vibrant and sustainable energy sector. For information about Power Africa, please refer to the Power Africa [web page](#).

Planned Future Priorities and Expected Results

Objective 1 - Ending Energy Poverty

Ending energy poverty for households, businesses, public institutions and marginalized communities requires the legal connection of new end-users to a source of electricity, for example through grid densification, grid extension, customer regularization, and off-grid solutions. As access to electricity becomes increasingly available, it provides the opportunity to promote increased productive use applications, such as improved agricultural, health, economic growth, educational, and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) outcomes.

For on-grid solutions, it is critical to strengthen utility performance to ensure that new grid connections supply sustained quality power to customers that does not compound financial losses, erode customer confidence or fail to align with a government's efforts to strengthen the power sector. Countries' capacities to achieve lasting financially viable power sectors for on-grid connections requires significant improvement in the technical and commercial performance of distribution utilities. It is therefore necessary to consider innovative management and technology-driven solutions to help improve utilities' performance.

Beyond the grid solutions are a critical approach for connecting customers to electricity where it is not yet, or may never be, cost-effective to extend the grid. Off-grid solutions run the gamut from mini-grids to standalone solar home systems (or a combination of these), and mid-sized solutions that could be viable for weak-grid customers. The sector must continue to better integrate productive uses, demand stimulation and bundled projects into mini-grid models to ensure financial sustainability.

Illustrative Results:

- Increased access to electricity
- Increased consumer electricity usage/demand (both household and productive use)
- Increased number of public facilities and private businesses using modern energy services
- Increased number of productive users with access to electricity

Objective 2 - Accelerating a Carbon Free Future

Reducing the carbon emissions from the power sector requires a combination of increasing utility scale renewable energy generation and delivering that cleaner power to more homes and businesses, ideally displacing reliance on fossil fuel generators. Due to limited grid availability in

more rural areas, distributed renewable energy and other innovative power service delivery options can complement power delivered from a central grid.

To increase renewable energy capacity, system planners should engage in long term strategic planning for increased renewables integration into their grids (including Just Energy Transitions), including target setting, more favorable regulations, and support to run competitive procurements. Independent power producers need support to bring new generation projects to financial close and construction. Transmission and distribution systems, and the utilities and people that manage them, need to be expanded and strengthened to handle the increased variability of renewable energy, reduce technical and financial losses, and trade power across countries and borders.

Illustrative Results:

- Increased number of MW of clean energy generation reaching financial close
- Increased number of KM of transmission or distribution lines constructed or rehabilitated
- Reduced Aggregate Technical, Commercial and Collection (ATC&C) distribution losses
- Increased MWh of regional power trade
- Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduced or avoided

Objective 3 - Bolstering Private Sector Investment & Innovation in the Energy Sector

Increased investment in the energy sector can flourish with a supportive enabling environment that offers transparent, consistent and aligned policies and regulations. Though power sector challenges abound, it has given rise to opportunities for increased private sector investment. These opportunities include investment for on- and off-grid companies, local manufacturing of energy equipment, private finance for transmission, deployment of new technologies (smart meters, smart grids, battery energy storage systems, etc), and novel payment schemes.

Illustrative Results:

- Public and private sector funds leveraged for energy sector projects (both on-grid and beyond-the-grid)
- Number of energy sector laws, policies, strategies, plans adopted or advanced
- New technologies and business models deployed
- Number of institutions adopting policies or procedures to promote gender equity in the clean energy sector workforce as a result of Power Africa support