

SEforALL Terms of Reference

Verification Agent – Madagascar and Sierra Leone

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Context

Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL) is an International Organization that works in partnership with the United Nations and leaders in government, the private sector, financial institutions, civil society and philanthropies to drive faster action towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG7) – access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all by 2030 – in line with the Paris Agreement on climate change. Launched as a UN initiative in 2011 by then Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-Moon, SEforALL is widely acknowledged for its achievement in raising global awareness of the world's sustainable energy challenges, ensuring they were included in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Now an independent international organization, SEforALL is directed by its CEO as it works toward the achievement of SDG7. The organization also supports the work of the CEO in her additional roles of Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General (SRSG) for Sustainable Energy for All and as co-chair of UN-Energy. These roles include advising the UN Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General and their staff on issues relating to sustainable energy and the implementation of SDG7 and supporting the coordination of sustainable energy issues in the United Nations system.

The ambitions of SDG7 on ensuring universal access to affordable, clean energy services by 2030 are extraordinary. Aiming to achieve them in the context of the Paris Agreement involves transformation at a scale never undertaken by humanity before. Swift action needs to be taken by leaders in governments, companies, institutions, financiers, development banks, unions and communities, entrepreneurs, and civil society. As a global team, SEforALL crafts interventions that support these leaders in accelerating the delivery of actions. All interventions comprise one or more of SEforALL's competencies: (i) to marshal the evidence, (ii) to benchmark progress towards SEforALL objectives, (iii) to amplify the voices of the energy poor; (iv) to tell stories of success, and (v) to connect stakeholders to each other and to solutions. All interventions systematically draw on strategic insight, build on compelling communications, and are delivered through and include action-oriented partnerships. <http://www.seforall.org/>

Results Based Financing

2020 marked the start of the final decade to achieve SDG7 – access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all – by 2030. The world is not on track and a renewed sense of urgency and new approaches are required.

Providing finance at the speed and scale needed to achieve SDG7 requires a paradigm shift towards results-based financing (RBF). RBF allows governments and donors to shift risk of delivery to the private sector, aggregates financing and scales support across multiple countries.

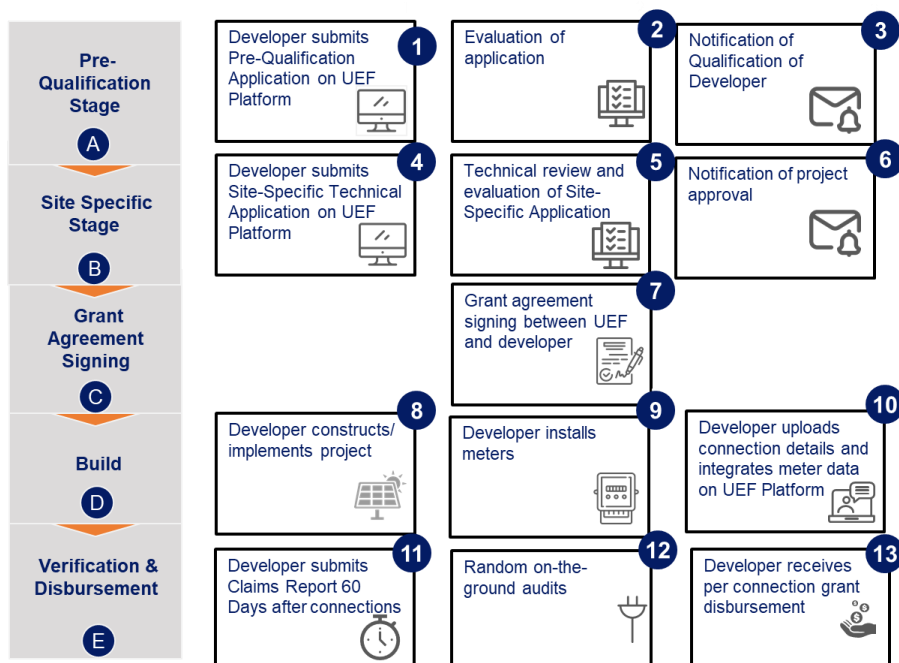
Understanding the benefits of RBF, SEforALL launched and operationalized the Universal Energy Facility (UEF), a multi-donor Results-Based Financing (RBF) facility, to speed and scale up new energy connections in Sub-Saharan Africa. The UEF provides incentive payments (i.e., grants) on a 'results-based' approach to selected eligible organizations that develop and operate systems and provide verified electricity connections. In 2020, the UEF was opened to mini-grid developers in Sierra Leone and Madagascar and in January 2021, the UEF opened in Benin.

Objective

In support of the UEF, SEforALL is implementing a robust verification process, which includes remote and on-ground verification to ensure the sites and connections comply with UEF technical specification, and a multi-faceted Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework as part of this process.

The objective of this Procurement is to hire independent Verification Agent(s) to conduct the on-ground verification for completed UEF mini-grid sites and electricity connections in Sierra Leone and/or Madagascar as a key step before final grant disbursement.

The figure below provides an overview of the UEF process. The Verification Agent(s) shall be involved in Step 12 of this process.



Remote verification and random physical inspections of new electricity connections will take place after construction of the mini-grids and completion of electricity connections and once Claims Reports are submitted by the UEF Grantees (Steps 8 through 11). The Claim Reports can only be submitted by the grantee for completed connections that have had at least 60 days of stable power supply. The Verification Process includes two phases:

- 1) **Remote verification** - As part of the grantee's Claims Report, the UEF performs remote connection verification through the online UEF Platform through smart meters

built in as part of each connection. The remote verification allows the UEF to verify the existence and consumption of every connection reported over a 60-day period before the claims report is submitted. **The Verification Agent(s) is not involved in the remote verification process. This information is included for informational purposes as all connections will be remotely verified prior to ground verification.**

- 2) **On-ground verification** – The Verification Agent(s) will conduct on-ground verification for all UEF mini-grid sites and conduct verification on a sample size of connections at those sites during the 30-day period after the Claims Report is submitted. Sites will be shared by the UEF after procurement is finalized. During the on-ground verification, the Verification Agent(s) will confirm that the relevant installed mini-grid systems and connections meet UEF technical specifications. Further, while on-ground, the Verification Agent(s) will collect qualitative data on the impacts of electricity access on the communities and households, businesses, etc. connected to the UEF funded mini-grids through a survey and/or interviews.

Scope of work

SEforALL seeks to engage a consultant(s) to conduct on-ground verifications in Madagascar and/or Sierra Leone after Claims Reports are submitted and as directed by the UEF team. For this work, mini-grid sites will be spread across Madagascar and Sierra Leone as follows:

- Lot 1 Madagascar: **8 mini-grid sites** spread across Madagascar.
- Lot 2 Sierra Leone: **7 mini-grid sites** spread across in Sierra Leone.

The exact locations of the sites to be verified will be provided once the consultant(s) is shortlisted. The number of electricity connections at each site will be confirmed after grantees submit Claims Reports.

The verifications will be conducted on 20% of the connections submitted in each Claims Report by the UEF grantees. Once the Claims Report is submitted by the grantee, on-ground verification of the sampled connections, selected by the UEF, must be completed within 30 days. The selected consultant will work with SEforALL to agree on a standard workplan for the on-ground verification.

The consultant will be responsible for the following tasks:

1. For all mini-grid sites, verify that the mini-grid meets the UEF technical specifications. These include but are not limited to those outlined in the UEF Operating Manual in Annex 1.
2. For each randomly selected electricity connection (identified by the UEF team prior to the site visit by the consultant), verify the following customer data: customer name, gender of account holder, customer category & type, location, and meter number. The Verification Agent(s) will also verify if the customer has access to electricity via the new connection, that the customer is the user of the service, when and how long the user has had the electricity connection, the stability of the electricity provided and total monthly cost of energy to the user.
3. Collect qualitative and quantitative information in addition to the information above through customer surveys and interviews of a sample of households and businesses who are connected in each location.

4. Take photos or videos, of the necessary components of the mini-grids and the customer connections. The consultant will also be required to obtain written permissions and release forms from any individuals included in the photographs or videos obtained during the verification process.
5. Provide an on-ground verification report on each mini-grid site to SEforALL on the Grantee's compliance with required technical standards and other Grant Agreement terms. This report will also include the additional customer information as detailed in item 2 above. SEforALL will work with the selected consultant(s) to develop the appropriate data collection tool and the scope of the report.

The consultant will be required to collaborate with SEforALL and mini-grid developers, i.e. UEF grantees, to identify customers, coordinate visits and logistics.

Approach, Timeline, and Deliverables

Approach: The selected consultant(s) will maintain close contact with a designated SEforALL contact throughout the assignment to ensure the proper UEF framework is followed. All draft written deliverables will be reviewed by SEforALL, which will provide comments within one week of receipt unless agreed otherwise.

The selected consultant(s) will participate in periodic review/steering committee calls as required by SEforALL and present status reports on approach, findings, challenges, and next steps.

Timeline

1 October 2021 to 31 December 2022.

Deliverables for On-Ground Verification

The selected consultant should adhere to the following schedule of deliverables:

Activities	Deliverables	Indicative Timeline
With final contracting and start of the project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with SEforALL to develop template customer surveys and interviews to be used at all sites to collect qualitative and quantitative data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer surveys or interview questions 	Within 2 weeks after contract start.
Once Claim Report(s) is submitted by a UEF Grantee to SEforALL, SEforALL on behalf of the UEF will notify the Verification Agent(s) who will carry out the following activities for the eight (8) mini-grid sites in Madagascar:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed list of random connections • Completed on-ground verification, data 	Site visit completed within 21 days of receiving notification from SEforALL on behalf of the

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with SEforALL in selecting sample connections (20%). • Conduct site visits to verify compliance with UEF technical requirements. • Conduct surveys or interviews with at least 15 sample customers, per site, from connected households, in a language understood by the customer. • Collect data including the number of households connected, number of businesses connected, number of households led by women, and will work with SEforALL to determine other data outputs. • Upload all relevant data to the UEF's online platform. 	<p>gathering and uploading</p>	<p>UEF that connections are ready for verification</p>
<p>Once claim report(s) is submitted by a UEF Grantee to SEforALL, SEforALL on behalf of the UEF will notify the Verification Agent(s) who will carry out the following activities for seven (7) mini-grid sites in Sierra Leone:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with SEforALL in selecting sample connections (20%). • Verify compliance with UEF technical requirements. • Conduct qualitative surveys or interviews with at least 15 sample customers, per site, from connected households, in a language understood by the customer. • Collect data including the number of households connected, number of businesses connected, number of households led by women, and will work with SEforALL to determine other data outputs. • Upload all relevant data to the UEF's online platform. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed list of random connections • Completed on-ground verification, data gathering and uploading 	<p>Site visit completed within 21 days of receiving notification from SEforALL on behalf of the UEF that connections are ready for verification</p>
<p>After on-ground verification, the Verification Agent(s) will provide a written report that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An on-ground verification report for each mini-grid site in Madagascar and/or Sierra Leone. This will combine the technical compliance of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-ground verification report for each mini-grid site. 	<p>Written report submitted within 24 working days of receiving notification from SEforALL that connections are ready for verification</p>

<p>the mini-grid and the verification of the selected connections.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compiled findings from other customer data collection • An assessment of the likelihood of fraud which may require further investigations. • Photos of systems, customer connections and any other evidence as agreed on with SEforALL. • Propose percentages for thresholds for deferring/suspending a claim, based on the risk. 		
<p>The Verification Agent(s) will provide the following to SEforALL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raw data of customer responses to surveys and interviews. The raw data shall be translated and delivered in English. • Copies of all photos and videos taken of systems, customer connections and any other evidence as agreed on with SEforALL. • Written permissions and release forms from individuals photographed or videotaped. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data provided in excel • Photo and video files as agreed with SEforALL • All written permissions and release forms from individuals photographed or videotaped. 	<p>Within 1 week of the site visit</p>

Qualification and Expertise

The following qualifications are preferred for the Verification Agent(s):

- The Verification Agent(s) will be a consulting, engineering, or audit firm with a minimum of five (5) years operational existence as an organization.
- Firm must have undertaken at least two (2) similar assignments in the last five (5) years.
- Firm must have familiarity and experience with mini-grid development and off-grid electricity verification.
- Prior experience in Madagascar and/or Sierra Leone is highly preferred.
- A presence in Sub-Saharan Africa is highly preferred. Due to COVID-19's impact on travel, preference will be made for applicants that are already present in Sierra Leone and or Madagascar.
- Firm must have resources and ability to deploy staff and resources in multiple rural locations if and as necessary.
- Demonstrated experience in technical verification exercises, socio-economic studies, and field /on-site studies.
- Experience in organizational and project assessments, past roles in project transaction verification will be an advantage.

- Familiarity with rural energy interventions will be advantageous including engagement with energy product or service providers.
- Proposed staff must be fluent in English and in local languages.
- Firm must have ability to deploy a robust data collection and management system with capacity to track GIS coordinates for the field visits; evidence of similar deployment in the past will be essential.

Travel

- Duty travel is defined as travel which is requested as part of the performance of services under the Contract. Duty travel is usually from the duty station to the place of the mission and return to the duty station.
- The financial proposal should include costs related to the professional services, and travel as a separate line item.

Reporting

The selected firm(s) shall report to the identified SEforALL UEF Program Manager for this Assignment.

Bidding process

Bidders are allowed to bid for either Madagascar (Lot 1), Sierra Leone (Lot 2), or both.

Proposals must include the following (in either PDF or PPT format):

- Organization's profile including organization's name, address, contact information and a brief background.
- Your organization's understanding of the assignment, including any proposed changes to the scope of work.
- Relevant experience and examples of work.
- Key personnel profiles and roles of subcontractors (where applicable).
- Proposed budget.
- An explanation of conflicts of interest (if any).
- References (at least 3).
- Methodology/Plan of action to carry out the services required and meet criteria outlined above.

All bids are to be submitted to procurement@seforall.org by 1st October 2021 by 23:59 PM Central European Summer Time (CEST)

Gender Mainstreaming

The selected firm(s) should make a concerted effort to mainstream gender considerations throughout this assignment. This includes, for example, the team deployed for this purpose implement a 40:60 female to male ratio (if applicable), provide a copy of gender policies followed by the organization and follow a gender balanced approach in the assignment. The selected Organization/Consortium shall also work to ensure all stakeholder engagements are gender balanced.