GRANT APPLICATION GUIDE
Are you a start-up, established SME or large company in the off-grid solar sector? Join the Regional Off-Grid Electricity Access Project (ROGEAP) in delivering off-grid solutions and achieving universal access to sustainable electricity services by 2030.

OBJECTIVES

- Improve access to sustainable energy by building a regional market for off-grid solar products.
- Support stakeholders across the off-grid solar value chain.
- Promote quality off-grid solar products and environmental, social and gender risk management.

BENEFITS

- Customised training programmes for entrepreneurs, SMEs, large solar companies and financial institutions.
- Application support & milestone monitoring.
- B2B networking & annual business plan competition.
- Windows for eligible and qualified businesses between $15,000 and $250,000 for certified off-grid and standalone solar systems.
The main objectives of the grants are to:

1. Check out the process and eligibility conditions.
2. Register via the EOI application form.
3. Successful applicants are invited to attend training and submit a full proposal with proof of matching contributions.
4. Businesses that meet technical and equity requirements will be awarded a grant to invest and expand their solar off-grid operations.

Among 19 project countries, 13 are eligible for financial support and technical assistance: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone.

The Regional Off-Grid Electricity Access Project (ROGEAP) aims to increase access to stand-alone solar power services in the fifteen member countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Cameroon, Chad, Mauritania, and Central African Republic. The project contributes towards the region's aspiration to reach universal access to electricity by 2030.
ROGEAP is financed by the World Bank, the Clean Technology Fund (CTF) and the Directorate General for International Cooperation (DGIS) of the Government of the Netherlands.

ECOWAS in partnership with Banque Ouest Africaine de Développement (BOAD) implements ROGEAP. The Project and Fund Manager (PFM) with offices in Abuja and Lomé supports ECOWAS in implementing the project. ROGEAP specifically aims to improve access to sustainable energy by building a regional market for off-grid solar (OGS) products and supporting value chain stakeholders.

A Project Fund Manager (PFM) was recruited to assist ECOWAS in implementing the planned activities by providing financial, entrepreneurship as well as environmental, social, health and safety risk management support to stand-alone solar energy businesses to address the affordability in the target markets. ROGEAP will also implement activities related to the development of a pipeline of projects eligible for financing through its line of credit.
Eligibility of the SMEs Stage

**Start-up company**
- 3 full-time staff
- 300 solar home kits or <1,500 lanterns sold
- Annual revenue of <$100,000
- No need commercial funding yet

**Early-stage company**
- 3 – 25 full-time staff
- 300 – 30,000 solar home kits or 1,500 – 30,000 lanterns sold
- Annual revenue of <$3,000,000
- SME should have a Business account

**Growth-stage company**
- 25 full-time staff
- 30,000 solar home kits or > 50,000 lanterns sold
- Annual revenue of >$3,000,000
- Required Business account and Audited financial statements
ROGEAP Grant Type Eligibility

Matching grants (MG) are allocated to start-ups (stage 1) and some early-stage (stage 2) businesses for the launching and expansion of their operations. This funding would assist entrepreneurs in developing their ideas into viable businesses or developing, testing and marketing their products. Each business receiving a grant must provide a matching cash contribution to demonstrate commitment to the proposal.

Market-entry grants (MEG) support the entry of stage 2 and growth/maturity stage (stage 3) businesses into a new market deemed commercially viable but carrying first-mover risk. The companies must have already a clearly demonstrated track record of solar operations.

Performance-based grants (PBG) are based on verified results achieved for stage 2 and stage 3 businesses in challenging markets that are not deemed commercially viable. Potential customers have insufficient purchasing power to afford the products, and companies face higher costs due to a lack of infrastructure and the low population density of target areas. PBG allow companies to leverage the subsidies against pre-specified outcomes.

Grant Process

1. Register your company details during an open EOI call.
2. Pré-qualified Companies will be contacted and invited to attend the training on technical requirements, financial and business plan development.
3. Eligible EOI pre-qualified and training attended companies will be notified to submit a full proposal.
4. Submit a full proposal with business and financial plans, registration documents and proof of matching contributions.
5. Eligible solar products Approved companies will be contacted and verified for due diligence.
If the awardee terminates the financing agreement or abandons the project, they shall be obliged to refund the entire amount received.

The full proposal, the evaluation and due diligence reports will be the basis for the final financing decision.

Applicants may be invited for an online interview with the Investment Committee.

Approved businesses are invited to a pre-disbursement workshop on financing procedures.

Grantees submit quarterly reports on grant utilisation and progress made.

Grants will be disbursed based on results achieved.

At the end of the grant period, grantees submit a final report and remain available for impact evaluation.
APPLICANTS OF THE THREE ROGEAP GRANT WINDOWS

Under the ROGEAP, three (3) grant windows are made available to off-grid solar (OGS) entrepreneurs and SMEs to incentivise them in their start-up (stage 1), early-stage (stage 2) and growth/expansion-stage (stage 3):

1. **Matching grants (MG)** are allocated to start-up (stage 1) and some early-stage (stage 2) businesses for the launching and expansion of their operations. Some Stage 3 could apply a grant as equity to a credit facility. Each business receiving a grant would be required to provide a matching cash contribution (25%) to demonstrate commitment to the proposal.

2. **Market-entry grants (MEG)** support the entry of stage 2 and growth/maturity stage (stage 3) businesses into a new market deemed commercially viable but carrying first-mover risk. Each business receiving a grant would be required to provide equity (cash or in-kind relevant assets) as contribution (10%) to demonstrate commitment to the proposal.

3. **Performance-based grants (PBG)** are based on verified results achieved for stage 2 and stage 3 businesses in challenging markets, not deemed commercially viable. Potential customers have insufficient purchasing power to afford the products, and companies face higher costs due to a lack of infrastructure and the low population density of target areas. PBG allow companies to leverage the subsidies against pre-specified outcomes. Each business receiving a grant would be required to provide equity (cash or in-kind relevant assets) as contribution (15%) to demonstrate commitment to the proposal.
Grant Windows

For start-ups and early-stage companies to launch or expand operations
Locally registered business owned in majority by national, ECOWAS or project country citizen and operating in an eligible country

Grant amount: $10,000 - $25,000
10% equity contribution
Acceptable co-financing includes business investments (rent, equipment, labour), private investments and loans
Disbursement of up to 50% of the total amount per tranche based on agreed milestones within 24 or up to 30 months
Participation in project technical assistance programme or recognised capacity building

Matching Grant

Grant amount: $10,000 - $25,000
25% equity contribution
Acceptable co-financing includes business investments (rent, equipment, labour), private investments and loans
Disbursement of up to 50% of the total amount per tranche based on agreed milestones within 12 or up to 18 months
Participation in project technical assistance programme or recognised capacity building

For early-stage and growth-stage companies to deploy off-grid solutions in hard-to-reach markets and remote communities
Locally registered business owned in majority by national, ECOWAS or project country citizen and operating in an eligible country

Grant amount: $150,000 - $250,000
15% equity contribution
Acceptable co-financing includes business investments (rent, equipment, labour), private investments and loans
Disbursement of up to 50% of the total amount per tranche based on agreed milestones within 24 or up to 30 months
Participation in project technical assistance programme or recognised capacity building

Performance-Based Grant

Grant amount: $150,000 - $250,000
15% equity contribution
Acceptable co-financing includes business investments (rent, equipment, labour), private investments and loans
Disbursement of up to 50% of the total amount per tranche based on agreed milestones within 24 or up to 30 months
Participation in project technical assistance programme or recognised capacity building

For early-stage and growth-stage companies to increase operations across communities and countries
Locally registered business owned in majority by national, ECOWAS or project country citizen and operating in an eligible country
Locally registered business owned in majority by national, ECOWAS or project country citizen and operating in an eligible country
Inventory (stock to be sold out) or sample products: off-grid solar systems (lanterns & SHS) are products with a capacity of 350 Wp or less and approved VeraSol certification or IEC/TS 62257-9-8 standard adopted by ECOWAS.

Hardware and small equipment (computers, phones, pay-as-you-go, etc.)

Software (accounting, pay-as-you-go, etc.)

Project-related staff salaries and consultants’ fees (<30% of the budget)

Certification, copyright, patents, and other permits

Consumer awareness communication and marketing, sales, and distribution costs for promoting the technology, product, or service

Other expenses directly related to the execution of the Project and approved by the IC (<20% of the budget)

Market entry/feasibility studies, juridical advice on entry, fiscal support

**ELIGIBLE EXPENSES**

**INELIGIBLE EXPENSES**

- Non certified solar products by Verasol
- Interest or debt owed to any third party
- Expenditures and provisions for possible future losses or debt
- Items already financed through another grant, program, or institution
- Bank and currency exchange expenses, losses, fees, and penalties
- Purchase or rent of land or buildings, including any renovation
- Cash payments
- Other World Bank restrictions apply

Revenue & unit sales
Full-time staff
Increased skills
Certified installers

Other expenses directly related to the execution of the Project and approved by the IC (<20% of the budget)