

Business Plan Competition Application Guide

Headers :

Are you a start-up, established SME or large company in the off-grid solar sector? Participate in the ROGEAP business plan competition for innovative solar businesses

Join the **Regional Off-Grid Electricity Access Project (ROGEAP)** in delivering off-grid solutions and achieving universal access to sustainable electricity services by 2030.

About ROGEAPPFM

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is setting up a private sector Entrepreneurship Support Facility (ESF) and Financial Support Facility (FSF) under the Regional Off-Grid Electricity Access Project (ROGEAP). 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. The ROGEAP is implemented by ECOWAS and West African Development Bank (BOAD).

ROGEAP objective is to increase access to sustainable electricity services in the fifteen ECOWAS member countries¹ and four Sahelian countries (namely Cameroon, Chad, Mauritania and Central African Republic). ROGEAP will improve access to sustainable energy by building a regional market for off-grid solar products and supporting the various stakeholders across the value chain.

About the Competition:

Standalone solar SMEs promising and innovating business plans can through the business plan competition gain a one week bootcamp, participation and pitching in the ESEF regional forum and grants of up to \$10000. In the program, in component 1C and 1D stand alone solar SMEs with promising business plan can also gain access to a grant mechanisms with grants up to \$25 000 for start-ups and up to \$250 000 for expansion of existing SMEs.

Goals of the Business Plan Competition

The overall objective is to stimulate a sustainable off-grid market in the project countries by supporting unique and innovative solar business ideas

The objectives of the Business Plan Competition are:

- To stimulate the development of innovation within the Off-Grid Electrification Sector's Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

¹ECOWAS member countries are Republic of Benin, Republic of Cape Verde, Burkina Faso, Republic of Côte D'Ivoire, Islamic Republic of The Gambia, Republic of Ghana, Republic of Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Republic of Liberia, Republic of Mali, Republic of Niger, Nigeria, Republic of Senegal, Republic of Sierra Leone, and Republic of Togo.

- Facilitate access to further financial and technical support schemes from ROGEAP or follow-on investment.
- To promote and support sustainable, gender, social and environmental sensitive SMEs in the off grid solar sector.
- Encourage entrepreneurs, startups, and innovators to develop innovative solutions for off-grid electrification that can address the energy needs of remote or underserved communities.
- Identify and showcase promising business ideas and ventures that have the potential to make a significant impact in off-grid electrification, whether through technological innovation, business model innovation, or both.
- Provide participants with bootcamp opportunities for capacity building, mentorship, and networking to strengthen their entrepreneurial skills, refine their business models, and improve their chances of success
- Facilitate collaboration and partnerships between entrepreneurs, investors, policymakers, and other stakeholders in the off-grid electrification ecosystem.
- Attract investment and financing for off-grid electrification projects by showcasing viable investment opportunities and connecting entrepreneurs with potential investors, including venture capitalists, impact investors, and development finance institutions.

APPLICATION STEPS

- 🕒 Visit www.rokeappfm.org and Check out the process and eligibility conditions.
- 🕒 Register via the business plan competition application form on the website
- 🕒 Successful applicants are invited to submit a full proposal and pitch
- 🕒 Businesses that meet technical and equity requirements will be invited to a bootcamp
- 🕒 Successful participants will be supported to pitch at ECOWAS Sustainable Energy (ESEF) Regional Forum in Cote d'Ivoire

Features and format of the Business Plan Competition

Table: Implementation guidelines for ROGEAP Business Plan Competition

Eligibility criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🕒 Stage 1 or 2 Standalone solar SME (see annex 2 for stage criteria of SMEs). 🕒 Business owner that is a citizen of a ROGEAP country or that has a locally registered business². 🕒 Candidates must be entrepreneurs and/or SMEs from eligible ROGEAP countries. 🕒 Present a business plan to venture in off grid solar sector. 🕒 Locally registered company within the eligible ROGEAP countries. 🕒 No direct link to activities of the exclusion list of BOAD (see annex 1) 🕒 Must be willing to comply with environmental and social safeguards 🕒 Be willing to report performance during ROGEAP project phase period
Award	<p>Phase 1: a one-week regional bootcamp Phase 2: Package of technical assistance</p>

² Countries will be limited to the 13 countries eligible for support through DGIS and CFT: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. This group can be extended if additional donor MoU are realized.

	<p>Phase 3: Prizes</p> <p>Three prizes will be awarded during the Business Plan Competition :</p> <p>1st Prize: \$10,000</p> <p>2nd Prize: \$5,000</p> <p>3rd Prize: \$2,500</p> <p>Additional Equalisation Award to the best woman lead competitor: \$5,000</p>
Selection criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributing to national off grid solar and renewable energy policies, adopting regional quality standards and quality assurance frameworks for Standalone Solar Systems. • Demonstrate gender considerations, impact or mainstreaming. • Employment creation in challenging markets. • Innovative approach • Clear Market Opportunity • Feasible Business Model • Scalable with realistic Growth Potential • Have a team – not a solopreneur • Business is Financially Viable • Certification compliance • Other considerations such as the balance of the portfolio, geographic, technology, business models, etc. will be considered
Disbursement schedule	One single disbursement by bank transfer to a bank account of the grantee SME for phase 3 winners.
Are multiple awards possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⌚ Maximum one award per SMEs in ROGEAP ⌚ Non-rewarded SMEs can again participate in a next competition. ⌚ Winners can participate in other grant, finance and technical support schemes of ROGEAP and are even invited to do so.

ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES

Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Central African Republic

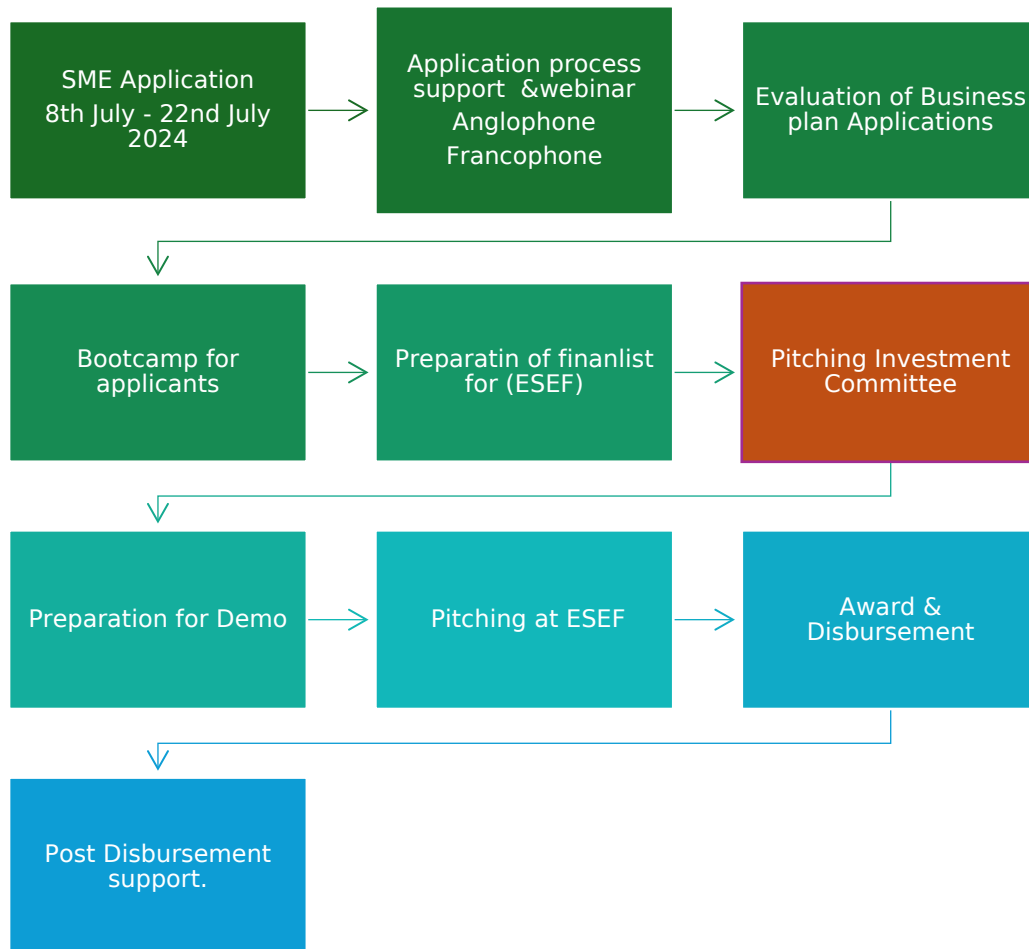
APPLICATION TIMELINE: 1st – 22nd July 2024

CONTACT

www.rogeappfm.org

info@rogeappfm.org

BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION ACTIVITY PROCESS FLOW for Applicants



ELIGIBLE USE OF FUNDS

No use conditions are tagged to the received grant, except that it has to be used within the purpose of extending off grid solar market offer. after disbursement, reporting for impact monitoring remains required.

- 💡 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

INELIGIBLE USE OF ROGEAP FUNDS



Items already financed through another grant, program, or institution



Bank and currency exchange expenses, losses, fees, and penalties



Cash payments



Other World Bank restrictions apply