

INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Project:	Beyond the Grid Fund for Africa (BGFA)
Project countries:	Burkina Faso, Liberia, Zambia, Mozambique, Uganda, and DR Congo (Project Countries)
Sector:	Off-grid renewable energy
Funding source:	BGFA via Nefco
Type of contract(s):	Consulting services: Review of gender inclusion approach and practices under the Beyond the Grid Fund for Africa Programme
Type of notice:	Invitation for expression of interest
Issue date:	8 March 2023
Closing date:	18 April 2023 at 12:00 hrs (noon) local time in Helsinki (EET)

Project/assignment description: Nefco as the facility manager of the Beyond the Grid Fund for Africa (BGFA) intends to contract a qualified service provider: a consultancy firm, international organisation, service provider or a consortium of organisations (“**Consultant**”) to undertake an independent assessment of the gender inclusion approach and related practices in the BGFA programme.

The BGFA Programme is an innovative financing programme managed by Nefco. The BGFA was established by Nefco in 2019 on Sida’s initiative and is now a EUR 126 million programme funded by Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Norway. The ultimate aim of the programme is the creation of long-term self-sustainable markets that can and will continue and expand beyond the expected four-year country programme implementation and access to BGFA financing. BGFA provides results-based financing complemented with technical assistance to incentivise the investee companies to establish themselves or scale-up their services in Sub-Saharan markets and enable them to sell more affordable and sustainable off-grid energy services to customers in remote areas. Further information on the BGFA is available at <https://beyondthegrid.africa>.

The approach towards gender inclusion in the BGFA is to actively promote, incentivise and transfer best practices regarding gender equality in BGFA’s target countries. Gender inclusion is promoted at all stages of the BGFA programme/project cycle from the procurement process to implementation monitoring. In addition, BGFA seeks to actively support women’s economic empowerment. As part of the technical assistance component, BGFA supports the investees in mainstreaming gender aspects in their operations and project implementation but also encourages initiatives promoting women’s more active role in the off-grid energy service value chain.

The purpose of this Assignment is:

1. to critically assess the approach for gender inclusion in the BGFA programme and in particular in the procurement cycle to determine its appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency and to identify where improvements can be made;
2. to assess the investee responses to BGFA requirements in terms of their gender policies, gender action plans and related practices;
3. to assess if the BGFA gender requirements are appropriate in terms of industry practices, and to the size and nature of the investee companies; and
4. to critically assess the technical assistance provision in support of investees’ gender mainstreaming practices to determine its appropriateness, effectiveness, and efficiency and to identify where improvements can be made.

In order to meet the objectives of the Assignment, the Consultant shall undertake the following main activities/tasks:

- undertake a desk review of key programme and project documents related to the design of the gender inclusion approach and practices in the BGFA programme;
- review investees' gender policies and related action plans;
- conduct interviews with representatives from Nefco and REEEP, selected BGFA investees and donor representatives; and
- provide recommendations in light of the above related to possible areas which could be simplified, refocused and/or improved; and to identify areas which should be revisited.

The results of the evaluation should be described in a report outlining the Consultant's assessment and responses to the above questions. It is intended that the report will be published as a BGFA knowledge product.

Assignment start date and duration: The Assignment is expected to start in June 2023 and be completed by the end of November 2023.

Maximum budget available for the Assignment: Up to EUR 60,000 (exclusive of VAT)

Eligibility: There are no eligibility restrictions on the nationality of the Consultant.

Consultant profile: The Consultant will be an organisation or a consortium of organisations with in-depth experience from carrying out thematic programme evaluations on gender inclusion in private sector operations in developing country contexts. The Consultant should demonstrate strong experience in gender mainstreaming, intersectionality and women's empowerment in the Project Countries that can ensure effective and efficient delivery of the Assignment objectives. Experience in and knowledge of donor-funded programmes/projects in the private sector and preferably also in the SDG7/off-grid energy access sector are seen as an asset.

Based on the fields of expertise and the tasks mentioned above, it is envisioned that the team of the Consultant should consist at least of the key experts listed below:

- Team Leader/Senior evaluation specialist with profound expertise in gender mainstreaming and gender evaluations in internationally financed private sector projects in Sub-Saharan Africa
- Gender mainstreaming and social inclusion specialist(s)
- Evaluation and stakeholder consultation specialist(s)

All experts proposed for the Assignment should have at least 5 years of experience in gender equality and inclusion, prior experience from evaluating projects/programmes funded by international financiers and reviewing gender policies and action plans. It is further expected that all proposed experts have excellent written and communication skills in English.

Submission requirements: Interested Consultants (including consortia) are hereby invited to submit their expression of interest to for the purposes of being shortlisted. To assess the qualifications and competence of the Consultants seeking to be shortlisted, the information submitted should include the following:

1. Company profile, organisation, and staffing for the Assignment, proposed experts for the Assignment;
2. Details of experience with similar assignments including their locations (especially assignments in the DRC, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Zambia, Mozambique, and Uganda), duration, funders, budget etc.; and

3. CVs of key experts available to work on the Assignment.

The above information shall not exceed 12 pages, excluding CVs.

Next steps: Based on the documentation received, Nefco will prepare a shortlist of interested consultants. Nefco will also be responsible for the possible procurement and contracting of the consulting services in question.

Notes:

1. A short list of up to 5 qualified consultants will be made from responses to this notification. The short-listed consultants will be invited to submit technical and financial proposals, from which the highest-ranked consultant will be selected.

2. The shortlist selection criteria are:

- Consultant's experience in carrying out evaluations related to gender inclusion in private sector operations in developing country contexts: 20%
- Consultant's experience in and knowledge of gender mainstreaming practices: 30%
- Qualifications and competence of the consultant's team as described in the Consultant Profile Section: 50%.

The preliminary timeline: NEFCO expects to distribute a Request for Proposals, including Terms of Reference with specific evaluation criteria among the shortlisted consultants by the end of April 2023. The expected submission deadline for consultants' proposals is late May 2023 and during June 2023 the assignment is expected to start.

Expressions of Interest shall be submitted in English in one pdf file by email to Nefco at procurement@nefco.fi with copy to emma.yrjola@nefco.int with subject: "BGFA Gender Review-Expression of Interest" to reach NEFCO no later than **18 April 2023 at 12:00 hrs (noon) local time in Helsinki (EET)**.

Questions and Answers

Any questions on this Invitation for Expression of Interest shall be provided in writing to Nefco by e-mail: at procurement@nefco.int with copy to emma.yrjola@nefco.int no later than **28 March 2023** after which all questions will be compiled by Nefco without any editing in the form they are sent to Nefco. Answers to the questions will be published at <https://www.nefco.int/procurements/>.

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Nefco reserves the right not to procure any services.