

USAID'S PARTNERSHIP FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF EASTERN CONGO (P-DEC)

Request for Expressions of Interest

NUMBER: MC AMI/TUJENGE/IR3/002/MARCH/23

Sectors: Solar Home Systems (SHS) and Improved Cookstoves (ICS)

Date of issuance: March 17, 2023

Due date for questions: April 9, 2023

Closing date: April 17, 2023

Application Instructions: Applications (including technical proposal and budget) must be submitted by Friday, April 17 at 5:00 p.m. CAT (Central Africa Time) only by e-mail to cd-p-dec-tujenge-ami@mercy Corps.org . Emailed submissions should contain the subject line "**P-DEC RBF Facility SHS-ICS EOI**".

Estimated date of award: May 2023: May 2023



1. Background

Mercy Corps has been operating in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) since August 2007, with a staff of around 500 people and programs focused on Eastern Congo in North and South Kivu, with the overall country goal to support vulnerable communities through crises, while fostering programs that build resilience and promote long-term change.

Despite their economic potential, extensive arable land, and decades of international aid, eastern DRC continues to face complex crises rooted in conflicts around power, governance, identity, and access to natural resources including minerals, land, and forestry. Long-standing disputes over the ownership, use, and extraction of natural resources are marked by corruption, manipulation by political elites, and weak governance. Often illegal overuse of natural resources to respond to energy needs is one of the drivers of conflict in Ituri and Nord Kivu. Additionally, the lack of energy access limits the potential outputs in the target areas. Durable peace requires inclusive and effective systems for the government, citizens, civil society, and the private sector to collaborate and advance common goals.

In August 2021, Mercy Corps began the USAID-funded, Partnership for the Development of Eastern Congo (P-DEC) which adopts bottom-up peacebuilding approaches to reduce conflict and bridge social divisions. It leverages the unique capabilities of eastern Congo's protected areas (PAs), especially the Okapi Wildlife Reserve (OWR) and the Virunga National Park (VNP), as anchors of economic growth and security. Through close partnerships with private energy sector actors, P-DEC will support the strengthening of the energy market, both as a sector (e.g. cooking, lighting, powering productive uses) and as a catalyst that underpins the development of selected agricultural value chains.

2. Purpose Statement

P-DEC is pleased to announce the release of this expression of interest (EOI) for a result-based financing (RBF) mechanism for solar home systems (SHS) and improved cookstoves (ICS) aimed at enabling private sector energy companies to expand the distribution of solar off-grid energy products and offering of energy services to communities within the P-DEC target region (see section 3.3) by reducing the risk of market entry and development. P-DEC seeks applicants to provide off-grid energy equipment for lighting and powering small devices (Tier 1 and Tier 2) and clean cooking technology (Tier 4 or Tier 5).

This request for application (RFA) is issued as a public notice to invite all interested, qualified, and eligible private sector companies to submit applications to partner with Mercy Corps to deploy the specified energy products and services.



3. Program Description

The P-DEC RBF facility will enable the expansion of energy product sales and service offerings in the target region of Beni territory/ville in North Kivu province and Mambasa territory in Ituri province by providing financing to Applicants who have proven capabilities related to one of the following use cases:

- 1) Distribute high-quality (see <https://verasol.org/publications/shs-kits-quality-standards>) ISO/Tier 1 or Tier 2 off-grid solar products either on cash payment or pay-as-you-go (PAYGo) basis.
- 2) Distribute high-quality (see [Clean Cooking Catalog](#)) ISO/Tier 4 or Tier 5 charcoal or wood cookstoves on a cash payment or installment basis.

Note: All references to “Tiers” of electricity services are as set forth in the Multi-Tier Framework (MTF), which defines, and measures electricity access based on a range of service levels that cover energy for household use, productive engagements, and community facilities. It focuses on the quality of energy being accessed. Ranging from Tier 1—the lowest level of service to Tier 5, the highest level of service. The MTF considers “the ability to obtain energy that is adequate, available when needed, reliable, of good quality, affordable, legal, convenient, healthy, and safe for all required energy applications across households, productive engagements, and community facilities” from a range of energy service technologies. The MTF was developed by the World Bank and supported by SEforALL. Please see this link for further details. <https://mtfenergyaccess.esmap.org/>

3.1. Program Activities

The call is divided into 2 sub components which will be evaluated separately and whose objectives may potentially evolve depending on the possibilities of extending the funding:

Project Subcomponent I: Standalone Solar Home Systems for Households and Small Businesses

This subcomponent will support the electrification of households and small businesses using solar home systems (SHS) in the target project locations where sufficient load clusters do not exist, and SHS provides the best technical and financial solution. This subcomponent will seek to catalyze a private sector-led, market-based approach to delivering off-grid access in the project sites. It will provide incentives for solar off-grid companies to expand to these underserved project sites and provide services to the off-grid households in these areas. Initial analysis shows that portable and installed solar home systems are well-suited to the population in the project sites. In addition, affordability is increased by allowing households to pay for systems over time, primarily through pay-as-you-go models.

This subcomponent will be accomplished via an RBF instrument. The overarching objectives of the RBF are:

- to support access to Verasol-approved solar home systems across the territories of Beni and Mambasa;

- to encourage the growth of earlier-stage and/or local solar companies where possible;
- to set a foundation for high-potential operators to access other investments to scale operations in these territories further.

The Results-based financing (RBF) facility will competitively award incentives to compensate solar service providers (SSPs) for initial, ongoing incremental, and opportunity costs associated with the expansion of operations in the project sites. This amount may increase with future co-funding from other development partners. Subsidy levels (percentage) or caps will be set within each province so that multiple service providers will have the opportunity to operate within the space.

The Results-based financing will specify installment payments based on the achievement of pre-agreed milestones and satisfactory after-sales service support. The target is to deploy/install at least 4,000 solar home systems – 3,000 Tier 1 SHS and 1,000 Tier 2 SHS – to households and small businesses. Grant funding would cover up to 30% of the retail price, with the end user paying the balance either upfront or over an agreed-upon pay-as-you-go schedule.

The implementation of this sub-component will be under the direct oversight of P-DEC. P-DEC will competitively select the energy companies (which will be a firm or association of firms with demonstrated experience in the distribution of energy products and services in similar geographies) in addition to leading the monitoring, evaluation, and verification of payments. Selected companies will be required to share relevant sales and payment data with Mercy Corps (for verification and reporting purposes) and data on consumer repayment (for impact analysis purposes).

Project Sub component 2 : Clean Cooking Solutions for Households and Small Businesses

This subcomponent will support a transition from low-efficiency baseline stoves to cleaner, higher-efficiency improved stoves. To accomplish this objective, cleaner household cooking appliances will be promoted. Activities will begin by focusing on the project sites of North Kivu and Ituri provinces. This subcomponent will operate a small window of the results-based financing facility to support sales of eligible charcoal and wood cookstoves in targeted counties. The facility will provide the selected distributors with financial support via a package of incentives to enable them to market their stoves locally within the target sites, increase their inventories of the selected higher-quality stoves, purchase and transport them to the target communities in numbers, and to sell them in the communities.

This subcomponent will aim to provide at least 8,000 ICS (at least ISO Tier 4 or Tier 5) to households and small businesses. Grant funding would cover up to 30% of the retail cost of the cookstove, with the end user paying the balance either upfront or over an agreed-upon installment schedule.

This subcomponent will be accomplished via an RBF instrument to which eligible **clean cookstove providers (CCPs)** will have access.

Results-based financing (RBF) facility competitively awarded incentives to compensate clean cookstoves providers (CCPs) for initial, ongoing incremental, and opportunity costs associated with an expansion of operations in the project sites. A percentage cap will be set within each province so that multiple service

providers will have the opportunity to operate within the space. Results-based financing will specify installment payments based on the achievement of pre-agreed connection milestones and satisfactory after-sales service support.

3.2. Overview of the P-DEC RBF Facility

RBF structure. Individual award sizes to private sector operators will be determined by P-DEC based on a competitive selection process. The facility is structured in three parts, as described below.

- **Market entry grant:** Grant funding up to US\$ 5,000 disbursed upon funding award and completion of due diligence for setting up structures and market awareness in the project sites.
- **Results-based component:** Funding disbursed based on pre-agreed product sales milestones to cover up to 30% of the retail prices of agreed products.
- **Sustainability component:** Grant funding up to US\$ 5,000 disbursed upon verification of ongoing after sales support, expansion of the partner’s business in the target areas, and honouring of warranties. This will be verified by the P-DEC team from the start of the deployment of the products and up to one year after the end of the results-based component.

3.3. Geographic area

The project will be implemented in the P-DEC target region within the North Kivu and Ituri Provinces in the Mambasa and Beni territories, respectively. According to the following split, the project intends to target the distribution of at least 4,000 SHS and 8,000 ICS in the two territories.

Province	Ville/ Territory	Commune/ groupement	Villages	Population of the group (Data 2021)	No. of households	Target population for RBF
North Kivu	Ville de Beni	Mulekera	10	395,841	65,974	4,699
		Ruwenzori	6	158,652	26,442	1,883
	Beni	Buliki	5	60,818	10,136	722
Ituri	Mambasa	Bafwahiyo	7	103,203	17,201	1,225
		Bafwakoia	5	2,926	488	35
		Bapongomo	14	16,205	2,701	192
		Nyangwe	9	95,004	15,834	1,128
		Andibuta	6	9,775	1,629	116
		Total	62	842,424	140,404	10,000
		Beni	21	615,311	102,552	7,304
		Mambasa	41	227,113	37,852	2,696

Eligibility

The RBF Facility will support businesses or subsidiaries of international businesses registered and operational in DRC, with the capacity and desire to perform the following activities:

- Deploy a last-mile distribution network to sell Verosol-approved Tier 1 and Tier 2 SHS and Clean Cooking Alliance-approved at least Tier 4 or Tier 5 charcoal and wood ICS to households and small businesses in the P-DEC regions including associated after-sales services.
- Commit to a sustainable market presence and model, with a clear plan for expanding their

operations in the target locations, including the ability and demonstration to commit additional resources for expansion

- Demonstrate how awarded funds have translated to sales by tracking and sharing basic customer data through adequate CRM (Customer Relationship Management) systems.

Additional criteria may be proposed by the P-DEC team; however, the RBF Facility will include a variety of businesses and business models that meet these minimum criteria. This includes pay-as-you-go businesses, over-the-counter businesses, wholesale distributors, MFIs, and other financial institutions, as well as partnerships consisting of any combination of the above.

Individual businesses will submit both financial and technical proposals to P-DEC. The technical proposal will present in detail:

- the amount of funding sought
- how funding will be used
- how many households and small businesses in the P-DEC regions will be reached and over what time period as a result
- how the after-sales services will be provided, and the applicant's capacity to deliver on the proposed plan
- the company's plan to expand activities in the target areas
- the quality of the product(s) proposed.

P-DEC will assess financial proposals on a per unit cost basis (total proposed award divided by total sales projected), including an adjustment for higher service-level devices (as defined by the SE4ALL multi-tier framework). Technical evaluation will be determined in detail based on the evaluation criteria presented below (Section 6), including whether applicants have the operational and financial capacity to execute their proposal and to what extent proposals will lead to sustainable energy access in the P-DEC regions.

3.4. Intended impact

Overall, the intended impact is to improve access to energy and the means to use energy productively. Specifically, the Awardee is expected to achieve one or more of the following intended outcomes:

- 1) Number of Households with improved access to energy
- 2) Number of People with improved ability to use energy productively
- 3) Number of small businesses with access to modern energy

The scale of intended impact will be a key determinant in selecting an awardee for the RBF (see section 6 below). Applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to maximize impact through cost share, partnerships, and efficiency.

4. Application Submission

4.1. Recipient eligibility

This RBF is open to any private entity that is either a non-profit, not-for-profit, or for-profit entity that is not established in the United States. To be minimally eligible for funding, applicants must provide full, accurate, and complete information and comply with the following conditions. Organizations must:

- Be legally registered or otherwise authorized to conduct business in DRC.
- Have a DUNS/UEI¹ number (a nine-digit identification number required for all procurement-related activities). A DUNS/UEI number is not required for application but will be required for receipt of the RBF.
- Be able to complete implementation within the stated time frame of May 2023 to May 2025
- Have previous experience of no less than 1 year working on an off-grid energy challenge in DRC. Working in the North Kivu and Ituri Province is desired but not mandatory.
- Justify financial and technical capacity to execute the proposed project.
- Explain their plan to ensure a sustainable operation of systems provided under the proposed project.
- The application should state how they will include gender best practice and uphold the humanitarian principle of ‘do no harm’.

4.2. Application submission deadline

Applications must be submitted by Friday, April 17 at 5:00 PM CAT

4.3. Late submissions, modifications, and withdrawals of application

At P-DEC’s discretion, any application received after the exact date and time specified for receipt may be considered ineligible for consideration. Applications may be withdrawn by written notice via email or in person by an organization or authorized representative.

4.4. Conflict of interest clause

Applicants must provide disclosure of any past, present, or future relationships with any parties associated with the issuance, review, or management of this solicitation and anticipated award. Failure to provide full and open disclosure may result in P-DEC having to re-evaluate the selection of a potential applicant.

4.5. Submission method for questions

Submit questions electronically to cd-p-dec-tujenge-ami@mercycorps.org.

The deadline for questions is April 09, 2023 at 5:00 PM CAT.

The email subject line should read “**Questions – P-DEC RBF Facility, SHS-ICS**”

All questions and answers will be shared with all interested applicants.

¹ You can obtain a DUNS/UEI number by applying at <https://sam.gov/content/home>

4.6. Submission method for the final application

Submit applications electronically to cd-p-dec-tujenge-ami@mercycorps.org.

The email subject line should read “***P-DEC RBF Facility, SHS-ICS EOI***” Technical applications and attachments must be submitted in PDF format. Budgets must be submitted in Microsoft Excel format.

4.7. Selection process

The table below indicates the processing time for this Call for Expressions of Interest:

Date	Activities	Details
Friday 17-03-2023	Publication of the EOI for SHS and ICS	Formalize the call for expressions of interest
Friday 24-03-2023	Online : 1st Information sharing session on the AMI to the energy sector actors	Stakeholders are invited to learn more about the opportunity and ask questions about the Call for Expressions of Interest. Interested stakeholders can send an email to: cd-p-dec-tujenge-ami@mercycorps.org to request and receive the link to access the first session.
Friday 7-04-2023	Online : 2nd Information sharing session on the AMI to the actors of the energy sector	Stakeholders are invited to learn more about the opportunity and ask questions about the Call for Expressions of Interest. Interested stakeholders can send an email to: cd-p-dec-tujenge-ami@mercycorps.org to request and receive the link to access the second session.
Monday 17-04-2023	Closing of the AMI for SHS and ICS	Interested actors should submit their applications no later than this date
Week of 17 to 21-04-2023	Evaluation of bids and pre-selection of actors in the energy sector through a competitive process and announcement to applicants	The evaluation process may include an interview with the Bidder. Before final selection or rejection, each actor goes before a Jury team to present their business model according to the MSD approach. The other bidders will be contacted by official means of the status of their bid.
Weeks from 24 to 05-05-2023	Due diligence (verification of documents and compliance)	The Tujenge (Program and Partnership) team will review other necessary information by visiting the pre-selected companies.

Monday 08-05-2023 _	Final selection of private sector energy actors	Following the due diligence report, the application review committee will make a final selection of players
May 2023	Estimated month of award to selected candidates	Public announcement of the actors selected to participate in the Tujenge program

5. Application Format

5.1. Overall requirements

Applicants will develop their applications based on their understanding of needs, their prior institutional experience, and their determination of the approaches that would be feasible and successful. In all cases, applicants shall clearly explain the rationale for the proposed approaches chosen. To facilitate the competitive review of the applications, P-DEC only will consider applications conforming to the following.

- The application narrative should be clear, concise, and properly organized.
- Applications should not exceed 14 pages in length.
- Applications should be written in English or French.
- Paper copies of the applications will not be accepted.
- Please note that technical and cost applications should be separate files.

All applications received by the deadline will be reviewed for adherence to the specifications outlined in these guidelines and the application format. Applications should consider the evaluation criteria.

5.2. Technical application

Limit of fourteen (14) pages, including:

I. Technical Approach and Feasibility of Program Design (five pages)

- The applicant's technical approach should include:
 - A description of the activities to be undertaken, organized by thematic area
 - Plan for establishing a last-mile network including logistics, sales agency, customer acquisition and management, payment approach and processes
 - Plan for expansion of operations in the target locations including ability and demonstration to commit additional resources for expansion
 - Anticipated results
- The application should discuss the applicant's approach for engaging with local actors, building partnerships with key stakeholders, and creating linkages with other relevant development

activities/programs.

II. Management and Staffing Plan (one page)

- The management and staffing plan should show the roles and responsibilities of key staff who will participate in the program.
- Applicants should provide the CV of the Program Manager.

III. Past Performance (one page)

- Describe the organization's previous experience with off-grid and renewable energy projects.
- Demonstrate experience in building the capacity of local organizations, local government institutions, research, networks, and initiatives.

IV. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (one page)

- Describe how the project will collect data and ensure data quality of the relevant indicators from Section 3.4 of this RFA.
- The applicant should provide additional indicators and targets.

6. Evaluation of Applications

6.1. Review process

The RBF Facility will establish a technical review committee. All technical reviewers will be subjected to a screening process to eliminate any conflict of interest. Evaluation will be based on the criteria set forth in section 6.2. The process will be completed within approximately 30 business days. Using the criteria detailed below, the review panel will rate applications and make funding recommendations to the program's grants management unit.

P-DEC reserves the right to make any number of awards or none. P-DEC is not responsible for any costs associated with the development of applications.

To facilitate the review of applications, Applicants must organize the narrative sections of their applications with the same headings and in the same order as the selection criteria.

6.2. Evaluation criteria for the application

Evaluation Criteria	Points
<p>I. Technical Approach and Feasibility of Program Design</p> <p>The review team considers a strong technical design to be one that is informed by local circumstances and needs. It should demonstrate coordination with other efforts or ongoing processes, including the efforts of other peace actors and/or programs.</p> <p>Proposals must be in line with the technical areas outlined in section 3. This should include a commitment to a sustainable market presence, with a clear plan for expanding their operations in the target locations, including the ability and demonstration to commit additional resources for expansion</p>	30
<p>II. Management and Staffing Plan</p> <p>The review team will evaluate the extent to which the management and staffing plans demonstrate the applicant’s ability to effectively implement proposed activities responsive to this RFA. Reviewers will assess whether the organization has proposed a sufficient level of effort to achieve stated results and their strategy to ensure sustainable operation of the proposed project</p>	20
<p>III. Past Performance</p> <p>Reviewers will evaluate whether the organization has managed successful projects of similar size and scope.</p>	20
<p>IV. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan</p> <p>Reviewers will assess how the applicant intends to collect data, ensure data quality, and measure progress using the relevant indicators in section 3.4 and any additional custom indicators proposed by the applicant. Reviewers also will assess the feasibility of proposed indicator targets and consider the extent to which the application includes a plan to use the data for reflection and learning.</p>	10
<p>V. Cost Evaluation</p> <p>The cost application will be evaluated for reasonableness, allocability, allowability, cost-effectiveness, realism, financial feasibility, and willingness to co-invest in the expansion.</p> <p>P-DEC reserves the right to determine the resulting level of funding for the grants being selected for this RFA, regardless of what the applicant specifies in the cost application.</p>	20
Total	100

6.3. Supporting documentation for Pre-Award Assessment/site visits

After the application evaluation process, any selected firm will be required to complete a Financial Pre-Award Assessment in order for P-DEC to determine if the organization has the capacity to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of the proposed grant. As part of the Pre-Award Assessment process, Applicants may be asked to submit additional documentation to illustrate that the organization has the capability to implement the grant. Site visits may be conducted by P-DEC staff to evaluate the organization in these areas.

7. Terms and Conditions

7.1. Standard provisions

The Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-Governmental Organizations, as applicable, will apply to the RBF. Applicants can find the provisions at <https://www.usaid.gov/about-us/agency-policy/series-300/references-chapter/303mab>. Printed versions of these provisions are available upon request.

7.2. Permission for use and disclosure

By submitting an application under this RFA, the applicant consents to the disclosure of the documents submitted by the applicant to the reviewers involved in the selection process. Please note that all reviewers are bound by non-disclosure agreements.

7.3. Disclaimers

- P-DEC may cancel the solicitation and not award any funds.
- P-DEC may reject any or all applications received.
- Issuance of solicitation does not constitute award commitment by P-DEC.
- P-DEC reserves the right to disqualify any application based on the applicant's failure to follow solicitation instructions.
- P-DEC will not compensate applicants for their response to the solicitation.
- P-DEC reserves the right to issue an award based on the initial evaluation of applications without further discussion.
- P-DEC may choose to award only part of the activities in the solicitation or to issue multiple awards based on the solicitation activities.
- P-DEC reserves the right to waive minor application deficiencies that can be corrected prior to award determination to promote competition.
- P-DEC may contact applicants to confirm the contact person, address, and that the application was submitted for this solicitation.
- P-DEC may contact listed past performance references without notice to the applicant. P-DEC also reserves the right to contact other past performance information sources that the applicant did not list in the application.
- By applying, the applicants confirm they understand the terms and conditions.

Annex I: P-DEC RBF Facility Draft

General SHS and ICS RBF Facility parameters and structure	
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support sustainable energy access to the P-DEC regions • Encourage growth of earlier-stage, local solar companies where possible • Set a foundation for high-potential private sector operators to access investments in these geographies
Currency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USD only
Length of project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to two years
Length of contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipate that the contract will cover length of project (three years) • Within duration of the contract, P-DEC will ensure satisfactory completion of (i) bidding and RBF application evaluation; (ii) RBF award and mobilization of funds; (iii) execution of awarded proposals; and (iv) verification of ongoing performance
Eligible uses of RBF funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of funds will be limited by a negative list, to be determined by P-DEC; the list will likely include infrastructure/sales costs outside P-DEC areas • Guidance will be given to applicants regarding the intended purpose of funds • P-DEC can request a forensic audit of the use of funds if ineligible use of funds is suspected; barring that, no audit of the use of funds (however, sales/installation and service will be audited, to justify performance-based disbursement)
RBF structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal template to ask for the full budget for the lifetime of RBF, accompanied by an indication of the planned number of units sold/installed (if relevant) and timeline. Funding is awarded to individual businesses in three parts, jointly constituting “RBF” funding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Part 1: Market entry: Grant funding up to US\$ 5,000 disbursed upon funding award and completion of due diligence for setting up structures and market awareness in the project sites ○ Part 2: Results-based milestones: Funding disbursed based on pre-agreed product sales milestones to cover up to 30% of the retail prices of agreed products. The final percentage would be confirmed at the co-design/contracting stage. ○ Part 3: Sustainability: Grant funding up to US\$ 5,000 disbursed upon verification of ongoing after sales support, expansion of the partner’s business in the target areas functioning of systems and honoring of warranties. This will be verified by the P-DEC team from the start of the deployment of the products and up to one year after the end of the results-based component. • Total funding amount (subject to performance) decided upon the award

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P-DEC to undertake independent verification of milestones.
Funding window	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal is to award all funds within year 1 of the project (or until funds are exhausted), with the potential disbursement period varying by date of award (see next row) • Facility may remain open, to be topped up by additional funds (e.g., from another development partner)
Duration of awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funds must be fully disbursed 12 months prior to the close of the project
RBF award size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total award to any one operator limited to 50% of total RBF funding dedicated to each territory. • P-DEC will determine the appropriate minimum award size based on (i) the objective of promoting competition in the market; and (ii) knowledge of per-award transaction costs
“Skin in the game”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operators are expected to contribute, in cash or in kind, an additional 25% of the total award amount over the lifetime of the award • Operators will report to P-DEC on operators’ contribution (e.g., through team timesheets)
Disbursement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disburse upfront (market entry) grant component up to US\$ 5,000 in a single tranche • Disburse results-based funding (100% of total award) in tranches against increasing sale/installation targets per quarter – every 3 months • Disburse sustainability award (grant funding up to US\$5,000) upon verification of honoring of warranties (i.e., when customers are contacted, they confirm the purchase of the unit, current operational status, and adequate service response on part of the operator) within the contract period of the project • P-DEC to define clawback provision in the Operating Manual to allow for reallocation of funds in the event of excessive delays on the part of an awardee in achieving sales/installation milestones
Business selection	

<p>Business selection criteria</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sell or provide services with Lighting Global-approved at least Tier 1 or Tier 2 solar home systems and Clean Cooking Alliance-approved at least Tier 4 or Tier 5 cookstoves to households and small businesses in the P-DEC regions. ● Demonstrated track record of providing energy access products in SSA markets, including proof of ability to sell, distribute, and provide after-sales support ● Credible business plan to sustainably serve the P-DEC region beyond the lifetime of the project ● Ability and willingness to track and share basic customer data (including how awarded funds have translated to sales in the territories) in database form that is acceptable to P-DEC (e.g. through an adequate CRM platform) ● Facility will be open to any DRC registered business that credibly demonstrates the ability to meet these criteria; this could include OTC and PayGo businesses, as well as financial institutions², or combinations of these ● P-DEC can propose additional criteria ● A company can apply to both components of the RBF, i.e., solar home systems and improved cookstoves, however it must prove its logistical management and market integration capacity for both packages
<p>Application</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Documents required by P-DEC at a minimum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Financial statements ○ Information regarding any previously awarded grant or RBF awards ○ Operational records (# customers served; maintenance standards met) ○ Description of existing assets & team, including detailed leadership bios ○ Business plan, with timeline, for serving the P-DEC areas, incl. proposed # units to sell (during the award period as well as in 1-3 years after), approach to building sales, distribution, and maintenance networks ○ Detailed budget, with timelines, that includes market entry costs and estimated ongoing operating costs ○ Details on the CRM platform
<p>Application review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Businesses awarded a score of 0-100 on the technical proposal, based, inter alia, on the below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Suitability of business model and business plan for proposed scale in P-DEC context ○ Sustainability of business model and business plan in the P-DEC context

² As an example, there are several recent examples of partnerships between retail banks or MFIs and solar/cookstove operators to distribute solar home systems or improved cookstoves. Typically, the financial institution will assume responsibility for some combination of consumer finance, distribution, and marketing. P-DEC will consider on equal terms applications from financial institutions active in solar distribution, from consortia of financial institutions and solar/cookstove operators, and from independent solar/cookstove operators.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Capacity to deliver on the plan (track record, financial position, operational capacity) ○ Ability to adequately track customer data for verification purposes ● Cost assessed on a per-unit basis: total budget ÷ total sales projected – note that this will include an adjustment for higher service products (e.g., an ‘equivalent SHS’ unit for larger, more service-intensive devices), though there may be a cap to this (i.e., a maximum adjustment) to avoid rewarding proposals that are high-price, low-volume. Weighting will likely take into account SE4ALL Service Tier to account for the higher intensity of sales and customer service processes of the products. ● Weight technical proposal at 80% and financial proposal at 20% ● Awards made in order of scores until funds are exhausted; awards whose technical proposals fall below a certain score, TBD by P-DEC, will be deemed ineligible
Governance	
RBF approval process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● RBF applications reviewed by P-DEC with guidance from USAID