

Subcomponent 1B: Entrepreneurship Technical Support

- 1. Entrepreneurship and business training.** Entrepreneurship and business training will be offered to startup-up and early-stage ('Stage 1' and 'Stage 2') stand-alone solar businesses across the ROGEP countries. This will build of the existing training programs that were provided by ECREEE to over 100 such businesses across the region from 2015 to 2018. The training program under ROGEP is expected to support already operational national service providers to enhance their portfolio by including the delivery of training programs on stand-alone solar businesses. Additionally, an annual regional business plan competition and workshop will be carried out.
2. The activities at the national level will begin with identification of a network of organizations with existing capacity to support entrepreneurs and deliver managerial training programs. This network will include existing business incubators, accelerators, and entrepreneurial support organizations, such as 2iE in Burkina Faso, CTIC Dakar in Senegal, and the Ghana Climate Innovation Center. ECREEE will oversee a focused TOT programs for the partner organizations to be able to deliver solar industry-specific content, the establishment of a regional network of organizations to promote continuous knowledge and experience exchange, development of training materials needed to deliver the courses, and ongoing TA and capacity-building support for the organizations throughout the ROGEP implementation period. An expert firm is likely to be hired to deliver this support. Given that capacity in the existing incubators and training providers is mixed, in some cases, financial support could be required to supplement the partners' own resources. The entrepreneurship and business training activities are as follows: (a) training courses, (b) incubation, and (c) annual regional business plan competition and workshop.
3. Each training partner will deliver trainings on a regular (for example, semiannual) basis over two to three days and will be open to the broad community of entrepreneurs and businesses in each country that are interested in the trainings. The training will cover topics such as doing business in the solar industry, technical aspects of household and productive use of solar products, marketing and financing of solar businesses, and legal and regulatory aspects of the solar industry.
4. In addition, the trainings may incorporate personal initiative training that focuses on the soft skills necessary for entrepreneurs to succeed in challenging frontier and developing markets. This type of training has shown success in a recently evaluated program in Togo.¹
5. Each training partner will maintain an ongoing outreach campaign to build the community of solar entrepreneurs and businesses that would make up the participants in the training programs. It is expected that each training partner would deliver training to approximately 25 businesses each year. The training partners will be selected from the ROGEP countries and will include businesses from all ROGEP countries following an application process. This will establish a regional network of stand-alone solar companies and will help entrepreneurs identify business opportunities within a regional market.
6. Further, the training partners will be encouraged to take on some of the most promising entrepreneurs and early-stage businesses as incubation clients. ROGEP would provide some partial financing to the training partners to provide incubation support that would be supplemented by the partner's own resources. Each training partner would work to grow these clients into viable businesses and assist the businesses in eventually accessing financing—from

¹ <https://blogs.worldbank.org/africacan/a-better-way-to-train-small-business-owners-using-psychology-to-teach-personal-initiative>.

ROGEP and/or other sources. It is expected that each training partner would incubate approximately 10 businesses each year providing legal, entrepreneurial, and business advice while the provision of support on technical issues will be coordinated with the ECOWAS certification scheme for PV installers/technicians.

7. ROGEP's approach of partnering with already operational training and incubation service providers to include solar industry-specific content in their portfolio should result in a cost-effective way to reach a significant number of firms while also promoting the sustainability of the intervention even after ROGEP's implementation phase.
8. The subcomponent will also support an annual regional stand-alone solar business plan competition and workshop. This will include the following elements: regional outreach and awareness campaign, call for applications and selection process, one-week regional workshop and boot camp for 60 selected businesses (broken up into three sub-regional workshops to facilitate the interaction and discussion), follow-up technical support for 20 of the top boot camp participating businesses, and a pitch event for the top 10 at the ESEF with small (less than US\$5,000) awards for the top 3 businesses. The eligibility criteria for the different entrepreneurship and business training activities are as follows:
 - Training courses: open to all, free for all, covered costs for some rural/poor participants
 - Incubation: registered companies, application/review process managed by the incubators with the support of the ROGEP PIU
 - Annual regional business plan competition and workshop: selection based on a business or project plan, and each entrepreneur/business owner must be a citizen of a ROGEP country or have a locally registered business
9. **Customized business acceleration support.** Early-stage ('Stage 2') businesses—those that have advanced beyond the startup stage but are still developing and iterating their business model, adapting technology, and finalizing product marketing strategies—will be offered customized business acceleration support under ROGEP. This will be highly specialized and customized support provided through a network of business incubators and accelerators in the ROGEP countries. Content will include 'high-touch' assistance to refine business strategies and business models, mentoring from seasoned entrepreneurs and investors, transaction advice and investment facilitation, and technology and product development support. Support is envisioned to last about 9–12 months for each participating business. Businesses will apply for this support on a rolling basis through an online application managed by ECREEE, which will then identify the partner organization capable of delivering the appropriate support.
10. Businesses that receive the acceleration support will be invited to an investment forum organized during the annual ESEF. This will include a B2B activity that introduces businesses from different countries to each other. The participating businesses will be invited to pitch their businesses to potential investors and make B2B connections. ROGEP will finance the costs of providing this customized business acceleration support.
11. **Facilitation of entry to the solar industry.** Successful local businesses that are operating in nonsolar industries represent important potential new entrants into the stand-alone solar industry. These businesses might be operating in industries such as agricultural supply, agribusiness, retailing, or other areas that require strong, local distribution chains and similar operational capabilities that might be transferred to the solar industry. In most cases, these will be larger existing businesses (Stage 2 or Stage 3) that can access financing but may not have the

know-how or awareness of the opportunity to expand into stand-alone solar products. ROGEP will undertake awareness raising and provision of specialized TA for such firms on how to undertake expansion into the solar industry. ECREEE will take a proactive approach to attracting such firms. A scout will be appointed to find and attract such Stage 2 and Stage 3 businesses in select cases where ROGEP can offer them some additionality (that is, not subsidization of what large businesses can do on their own).