

# **ECREEE COVID-19 Response and Recovery Support Fund (RECOviD)**

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## ***Request for Proposals for Sierra Leone***

### *Guidelines and Background*

**Deadline for Proposal Submissions:  
16 November 2021, 23:59 UTC-1**

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## 1 Introduction

Within the framework of the ECOWAS Renewable Energy Facility (EREF), ECREEE has set up the ECREEE Covid-19 Response and Recovery Support Fund (RECOVID)

The following guidelines provide interested applicants with all information on Request for Proposals (RFP) for the ECREEE Covid-19 Intervention and Support (RECOVID).

## 2 Background

The Covid-19 pandemic continues to impose negative social, economic, financial and human security impacts on ECOWAS Member States. The pandemic, as global public health challenge, has not only posed a serious threat to the regional integration process and regional peace and security agenda, but to the sustainable development of member states

Providing a commensurate level of response and recovery to address the compounding effects of the pandemic is now the greatest challenge facing nations. This has brought about a deal of national, regional and global efforts to subsidize the multi-faceted consequences of the pandemic on vulnerable communities/countries.

In that perspective, the ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE), as the lead agency in the region with the mandate to promote sustainable energy, has identified ways to respond appropriately to the COVID-19 crisis, including the promotion of sustainable energy solutions to ensure the functioning of critical services such as health, and social infrastructures.

Clean Energy technologies can support the health sector in the region by contributing to the Member States' response to the current challenges imposed by the pandemic.

### 2. ECREEE Covid-19 Response and Recovery Support Fund (RECOVID)

The RECOVID is a fund which is managed by the ECREEE Secretariat. The Fund will provide non-reimbursable grants through a request for proposals

## 2.1 Objectives, Results and Beneficiaries of RECOVID

The **overall objective** of RECOVID is to support, in a coordinated manner, response and recovery efforts to the COVID-19 of ECOWAS Member States through increased deployment and usage of reliable and affordable sustainable energy technologies and services. The **specific objectives** of RECOVID are:

- To increase the resilience of the health and social beneficial sectors while supporting local private sector companies involved in the sustainable energy market.
- To strengthen the socio-economic resilience of vulnerable communities by supporting initiatives in the productive use of energy (PUE) in high impact value chains (water and food).

RECOVID activities will facilitate the acquisition of clean energy solutions, **mitigating existing financial barriers** for the development and execution of small-sized RE&EE investments targeting vulnerable communities. The capacities, knowledge base and market access ability of local clean energy technology technologies and service companies will be enhanced. Networking, knowledge exchange and awareness raising on sustainable energy business opportunities will be facilitated.

The **Direct Beneficiaries** of RECOVID are project developers directly involved in the implementation of clean energy RECOVID projects. The **Final Beneficiaries** are the energy end-users particularly in the health sector and other essential services benefitting from modern, reliable and affordable energy services and the ECOWAS Member States as they respond to the Covid-19 pandemic.

## 2.2 RECOVID Governance Structure

RECOVID is managed by the ECREEE Secretariat.

The **Project Management team** (of ECREEE approves the grant funding to the individual RECOVID projects on the basis of the recommendations of the RECOVID Evaluation Committee

The specialized **RECOVID project management team** is based at the ECREEE Secretariat in Praia,

Cabo Verde and is responsible for the day-to-day management and administration of the RECOVID Fund.

## RECOVID

### 3 Specific Eligibility Criteria for the RECOVID Request for Proposals for Sierra Leone

The following sections describe the RECOVID funding policy. Project proposals submitted to this RFP shall be in line with the eligibility criteria regarding geographic and technical focus as well as type of activity. Projects outside the scope will be rejected.

#### 3.1 Eligible Geographic Focus:

Project proposals with the following geographical focus are eligible:

#### 3.2 Eligible Applicants

**Private sector companies and organisations legally registered in Sierra Leone, are eligible to submit project proposals.**

**Proposals can be submitted by one applicant or a group of partners led by a lead applicant.** ECREEE will sign the Grant Contract for co-funded projects only with the lead applicant (contracting party), providing that the lead applicant fulfils all the eligibility criteria indicated in these guidelines.

**Applicants shall meet the minimum requirements** described below. The documents demonstrating the fulfilment of these requirements must be uploaded when submitting the project proposal. These criteria can be considered as knock-out criteria:

- The (lead) applicant should have a minimum of 2 years of existence and relevant experiences in the successful acquisition, promotion, and installation of clean energy technologies in the ECOWAS region. The experience of the organisation as well as the strength of the CVs of experts who will work on the project will be considered. The applicant should provide CVs

- ECOWAS Member State: Sierra Leone;
- The focus of RECOVID is primarily on projects in peri-urban and rural areas.
- A maximum of one (1) project will be selected, pending replenishment of the fund

of the proposed project team and a profile of the company.

- The applicant shall be registered as a legal entity authorized to enter into contracts for provision of services and goods. As a proof, the applicant should provide a certified copy of the Certificate of Incorporation or other documents setting forth the legal basis.
- Applicants should provide a copy of relevant licenses, authorizations and quality standards, where applicable, enabling the applicant to perform the required services/work required;
- Copy of the latest financial statement shall be provided.
- Companies shall meet the following financial criteria:
  - Profit Margin ratio or Return on Assets Ratio should be in excess of 1%
  - A solvency ratio (ratio of current assets to current liabilities) of more than 1 is required.
  - The average annual turnover for the past 3 years should be at least two times more than the anticipated value of the contract.

- The impact of any pending claims, arbitration and other pending legal action should not exceed 50% of total of the bid.
- Other organisations shall provide:
  - audited activity reports for the past 3 years
  - If grants have been utilised, a final project report endorsed by the respective donor shall be attached.
  - The impact of any pending claims, arbitration and other pending legal action should not exceed 50% of total of the bid

All the submitted documents and information will be handled confidentially.

### 3.3 Eligible Projects and Technologies

This call provides non-reimbursable co-funding grant for the capital expenditure in clean energy solutions in rural and peri-urban areas, addressing the needs of vulnerable communities. The following technologies projects are eligible for the Sierra Leone request for proposals:

1. Solar home systems
2. Improved cook stoves

An eligible project will have to demonstrate that is it responding to an existing need exacerbated by the covid-19 pandemic. It should quantify the number of beneficiaries. Proposals including more than one of the solutions listed above are eligible.

The applicant shall explain how the equipment will be disposed of after being replaced.

Ideally, systems should be modular and allow for further expansion in the future, if that is possible for the type of project selected.

All projects must include the establishment of a sustainable management, operation and maintenance system that guarantees the sustainable functioning of project covering all the associated costs (finance, management, operation, maintenance and equipment's replacement).

The economic viability of the management, operation and maintenance of the system must be demonstrated.

The proposals have to demonstrate that the projects are developed in full respect of the local, national and regional legislation, policies and regulations. The applicant must demonstrate that it has all the required permits and licenses, if applicable, to install and exploit the systems.

The proposal has to demonstrate that the equipment can be acquired locally or that the deadlines for acquiring the equipment by external order cannot influence the project commissioning deadlines as indicated in the schedule in chapter 5.

The equipment to be acquired must be certified according to international standards and performance guarantees have to be set up. The installations must be done following the relevant local, national and regional regulations.

The payment of running costs for management, operation and maintenance is not eligible.

The projects addressing gender-related issues, promoting energy efficiency and capacity building of local users, and positively impacting on local development by actively encouraging productive uses of energy are better rated in the appraisal process.

## 4 RECOVID Application Conditions

### 4.1 *Application Languages:*

Proposals shall be submitted in English.

### 4.2 *Maximum number of proposals:*

It is admissible to submit a maximum of two proposals as lead applicant and to participate in two proposals as implementing partner per call of the RECOVID

### 4.3 *Maximum duration of projects:*

RECOVID projects shall be implemented over a maximum duration of 6months.

#### 4.4 RECOVID Grant Amount, co-funding, disbursement and eligible costs:

- Applicants and their partners shall note that RECOVID grant donations are of non-commercial nature. The **grants can under no circumstances result in a profit for applicants and partners during implementation** and it must be limited to the amount required to balance income and expenditure for the project activities. Profit in the case of grant is defined as a surplus of receipts over the costs incurred by the Beneficiary when the request is made for the final payment.
- **Co-funding contributions from applicants and partners are positively evaluated** since that is an indicator for the commitment, ownership and sustainability of the project. The RECOVID makes available non-reimbursable grants to supplement the available co-funding to help projects implementation.
- **Project proposals indicating co-funding by making use of instruments other than grants/donations or in-kind contributions are preferable and will be better rated.** The need for additional grants as co-funding shall be adequately justified by the applicant.
- **RECOVID Request for Proposals for Sierra Leone provides a maximum Grant Amount of 45,000 USD and a minimum of 15,000 USD per project.**
- The eligible **RECOVID Grant Amount is determined individually, project by project but shall not exceed 75% of the investment cost.** Applicants shall justify why the grant amount is needed and why it brings added value to the project. Projects which mobilize higher share of co-funding from other sources are better rated in the appraisal process. The determination of the final level of subsidy will be based on the evaluation of the project proposal.
- The RECOVID project management team may decide to provide a grant amount which is lower than requested. All grants are subject to the availability of funds.

- The grant will be disbursed in, at least, two (2) instalments: 1) after the competitive procurement procedures, according to the ECOWAS Procurement Code, for the necessary equipment are finalised and the procurement report is approved by ECREEE; 2) after a successful evaluation from ECREEE upon submission of the final project report demonstrating that the project has been completed.

##### 4.4.1 Eligible costs

The applicant has to **provide a realistic and cost-effective budget on the overall investment costs to which RECOVID contributes** (total eligible costs of the project). The applicant suggests specific activities to be co-funded by RECOVID which can be easily separated and identified.

**Only investment costs (CAPEX) are eligible** and can be taken into account for the calculation of the RECOVID Grant and the overall project cost. The proposed eligible costs to be covered by the RECOVID grant amount shall be included in the budget breakdown.

As a general indication, assets such as renewable energy generation equipment (electricity and/or heat), clean cooking equipment and other associated equipment and works directly related to the completion of the installation could be subsidized by making use of RECOVID contribution.

Special circumstances where RECOVID contribution to the CAPEX is requested to cover other costs than those indicated above, if necessary for the viability of the project, might be considered if adequately justified by the applicant.

##### 4.4.2 Ineligible costs:

The following costs are **not** eligible and will not be covered by the RECOVID grant:

- Indirect costs and overhead;
- Salaries and staff costs;
- Payment of running costs;
- Workshops, study tours, seminars and conferences;
- Scholarships for studies or trainings;

- Debts and provisions for losses or debts; interest owed; currency exchange losses;
- Items already financed in another framework;
- Purchases of land or buildings
- Taxes, including VAT, unless the Beneficiary (or the Beneficiary's partners) cannot reclaim them and the applicable regulations do not forbid coverage of taxes;
- Expenditures associated to the procurement of fossil-fuel power generators.

The ineligible costs mentioned above, if indicated as part of the overall project budget, must be financed by the lead applicant and/or its partners own co-funding or mobilised co-funding from other sources. Any invoice submitted to ECREEE must clearly indicate the items to be financed by the grant, in line with the detailed budget breakdown.

## 5 Application and Selection Process

The RECOVID Request for Proposals has the following milestones:

Milestones of the RECOVID Request for Proposals	From	To
Publication of RECOVID Proposal (4 weeks)	19/10/20	16/11/20
Appraisal and administrative check of proposals by ECREEE	17/11/20	27/11/20
Approval by the RECOVID Project Management Team	30/11/20	04/12/20
Notification of award and signature of ECREEE grant contract	07/12/20	11/12/20
Implementation	14/12/20	14/05/20
Monitoring and evaluation	14/12/20	14/05/22

### 5.1 The Application Process

Applications are submitted by email to [recovery@ecreee.org](mailto:recovery@ecreee.org). The relevant forms can be download on the ECREEE website: <http://www.ecreee.org/covid-19>.

The following documents must be uploaded when filling the online application form:

1. Applicant and partner(s) information,
2. Filled technical project proposal
3. CVs of project team
4. Project Logical framework (Use the template at Page 8 of this document)
5. Time and deployment schedule
6. Detailed budget breakdown
7. Signed partner agreement(s), letters of commitment and/or co-funding letters
8. Copy of Certificate of Incorporation or official registration document of the applicant
9. Copy of relevant licenses, authorizations and quality standards of the applicant
10. Copy of latest audited financial statement of applicant
11. Letter of Endorsement or No-objection from the National Focal Institution of Sierra Leone

**Full application must be submitted latest by 15/11/ 2021 at 23:59 UTC-1.**

Clarifications can be requested at [recovery@ecreee.org](mailto:recovery@ecreee.org)

## 5.2 Project Appraisal and Approval

ECREEE evaluates the full proposals according to established criteria. The technical appraisal may suggest modifications for the project idea, work plan, management or budget. The RECOVID appraisal team maintains a balance between countries and technologies based on proposals received.

The first step of the appraisal process will check the eligibility of the proposed project and the **following proposals will be rejected outright:**

- Incomplete applications or those submitted after the application deadline;
- Applications by individuals;
- Applications which request higher resources than the maximum ceiling; and
- Applications which do not meet the eligibility criteria established in the Section 3 of the present guidelines “General Eligibility Criteria for the RECOVID Request for Proposals”

The proposals which are considered to be eligible will then enter the second step of the appraisal process and will be ranked according to their scores and **submitted to the RECOVID Project Management Team for approval.**

The proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria in the second step of the appraisal process:

- Pertinence / Justification
- Potential impact (max. 30 points)
- Additionality/value-added (max. 15 points)
- Feasibility and Efficiency (max. 30 points)
- Sustainability (max. 25 points)

The following detailed criteria will be used:

- **Impact of project** (max. 30 points): the project

- Is project relevant in the context of Covid-19 pandemic and addresses an urgent need to respond to the crisis and/or likely to spur the economic recovery of the affected area/country (15)
  - Address the needs of the target groups during implementation and in the long-term (10)
  - Positively impact on local development by actively encouraging productive uses of energy and/or promoting access to basic services in the. Health and education sectors (5)
- **Additionality/value-added** (max. 15 points) : the project
  - Demonstrates that the RECOVID project would not have been implemented without the ECSIS grant. The program/project cannot be economically viable without the RECOVID contribution. The size of the RECOVID subsidy element (grant) has been well determined according to available resources of the project partners and/or other co-financiers and the project is not over subsidized.(10)
  - Is cost effective with regards to the number of beneficiaries to be addressed and the promotion of sustainable energy (5)
- **Feasibility and Efficiency of Project** (max. 25 points): the project
  - Shows the applicant and its partners have sufficient management capacity and stable financial sources of finance to implement the project: adequacy of staff (number, qualifications, and expertise), adequacy of the management information system and controlling. The applicant and partners have experience with projects of similar scope in West Africa (at least three (03) similar projects having at least the same cost as the proposed project.) The role of the various actors and stakeholders (applicant, (local) partner(s), target groups, local authorities, etc.), their added value and the justification

- for which these roles have been assigned to them are clearly defined and described (10)
- Is technically feasible and efficient: (10)
  - The project builds on a reliable technology, or replicates a proven energy service delivery model and/or technology. The solution is adapted to the local requirements
  - The most promising, cost-effective and feasible alternative was selected. The proposed solution is the best alternative in relation to others. The technical, economic and financial analyses have shown that the best technology alternative was chosen.
  - The energy resources/feedstock have been assessed, are available locally in a long-term view and at affordable costs.
  - Makes use of local capacities during the project implementation
  - For the technology the import component is as small as possible
  - The solution is taking into account the individual situation and characteristics of the energy system of the specific country and/or region rather than replicating prepared concepts.
  - The selected technology will be accepted by the population and can be adapted to the specific country context. The project foresees adequate set up for operation (technical, management, financial).
  - Technical risks are clearly defined and proper mitigation measures are proposed.
  - The project promotes energy saving and efficiency
- Is economically and financially viable (10)
  - The structure of the project ensures efficient and cost-effective implementation.
  - The investment and running costs estimations are reasonable.
  - The economic and finance viability of the project is demonstrated, adequate sources of revenue for covering all the future costs (finance, management, operation, maintenance and equipment's replacement) are identified with a balance between profitability and affordability.
  - Co-funding is secured, at least with a high probability. Signed partner agreement(s), letters of commitment and/or co-funding letters confirming the contributions of each partner to the project have been sent

- **Sustainability** (max. 25 points) :

- There is adequate ownership of the project by the target group(s) and project partners. The project is demand/need driven and not technology or donor driven. Most of the potential users have access to benefits and services during and after the project. Enough attention was given to affordability issues, in particular the willingness and ability to pay received sufficient attention (10)
- An adequate arrangement for the ownership, management, operation and maintenance of the system that guarantees the sustainable functioning of the is foreseen, in full respect of the local, national and regional regulations (5)
- The project successfully integrates the gender component (5)
- Environmental and social risks are adequately considered.
- Includes a monitoring and evaluation scheme based, if possible, on internationally recognized M&E practices. The major implementation risks are defined and propose mitigation measures. Key lessons from other comparable earlier or ongoing activities are explicitly analysed and incorporated. (5)

The project proposals with a good evaluation score which will not be funded by this RECOVID request for proposals will have the chance to be included by ECREEE into a pipeline of projects to be supported in the future.

## 6 RECOVID Project Cycle Management

### 6.1 Contracting

After the approval by the RECOVID Project Management team the successful applicants will be notified and the **ECREEE Grant Contract for Co-Funded Projects** will be signed by ECREEE and the lead applicant (the Grant Beneficiary).

Before the signing of the contract the following information shall be provided:

- The Grant Beneficiary must open a **separate bank account** and communicate the details to ECREEE before the conclusion of the contract.
- Before project execution can start the Beneficiary shall **provide all required**

**documentation to ECREEE** (e.g. partner agreement(s), co-funding letters) that the total financing amount has been mobilized.

## 6.2 Execution, Monitoring and Evaluation

- **Project implementation shall start immediately after the signing of the contract** according to the activity schedule in the project document. If an extension of the project duration or budget modifications are required, a written request for the same must be sent by the Beneficiary to ECREEE stating the reasons thereof. Approved RECOVID Grant Amounts to projects cannot be increased during implementation.
- ECREEE and its **RECOVID project team monitors the project progress and ensures effective project cycle management for the provided grants, in tandem with the National Focal Institutions**
- The **progress reports and the final report are provided by the grantee** according to the reporting schedule in the annex of the contract. The final report shall not be submitted later than 60 days after termination of the project activities. Payments can be only done on the basis of positively evaluated progress reports.
- For the written progress reports (either in English, French or Portuguese) the Beneficiary must use the available ECREEE template. The reports shall have a section on the general project progress and a separate financial section. The financial section shall include (as attachments) copies of invoices/receipts and a bank statement of the account. The copies must be legible, particularly regarding such information as delivery date, recipient, reference to the Project, due amount and currency used. In addition to the electronic version of the financial documentation, the original invoices shall be sent to the ECREEE Secretariat by post.
- ECREEE shall have the right to supervise the progress of the project throughout the entire

contractual duration and reserves the right to carry out monitoring visits at any time agreed with the Beneficiary upon reasonable notice being given. The visits will be done either by the ECREEE Secretariat, the respective National Focal Institution (NFIs) or monitoring consultants. The Beneficiary shall keep records and documentation necessary for verifying whether the funds have been used according to the requirements of the Contract and its annexes.

- ECREEE reserves the right to request an external evaluation or audit for some of the RECOVID projects. The costs will be covered by a separate evaluation and audit budget of ECREEE and do not have to be included into the project budget. The selection of evaluators and auditors is subject to approval by ECREEE. Usually the evaluation will occur immediately after completion of project outputs. Project Impact Assessments and Audits will be undertaken at a time communicated to the Beneficiary two weeks in advance.
- During implementation, the Grantee shall procure the necessary goods and services guided by cost efficiency and economy according to the ECOWAS Procurement Code.
- To ensure synergy, consistency and acknowledgement of ECREEE support among all RECOVID-supported projects, any project documentation such as reports, publications or other related media created in a distributable format must be produced in conjunction with and following the templates as laid out in the ECREEE Branding Manual. Drafts of such material shall be approved by ECREEE before dissemination. In case of demonstration projects a signboard with the ECREEE logo will be installed. Unless there are exceptional reasons ECREEE has the unlimited right to publish all project materials and results through the ECOWAS Renewable Energy Observatory (ECOWREX).

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**16 November 2021, 23:59 UTC-1**

*Further questions can be directed in written form in English, French and Portuguese to:*

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