1.0 Background

The AECF (Africa Enterprise Challenge Fund) is a non-profit institution supporting early and growth-stage businesses – through the provision of patient capital – to innovate, create jobs, leverage investments and markets to create resilience and sustainable incomes for rural poor and marginalised communities in Africa.

AECF’s strategy is focused on agribusiness/agriculture and renewable energy sectors with increased support to climate technologies, deepened focus on gender, youth, and employment, aimed at attaining the institution’s vision of ‘A Prosperous and Enterprising Rural Africa’.

Since 2008, AECF has invested in 268 businesses across sub-Saharan Africa focusing on Agribusiness, Renewable Energy and Climate Technologies. As of 2018, we have impacted more than 17 million lives, created over 12,000 jobs and leveraged over US$ 750 million in matching funds from the private sector.

AECF is headquartered in Kenya with offices in Cote d’ Ivoire and Tanzania.

2.0 The REACT window

The Renewable Energy and Adaptation to Climate Technologies (REACT) window supports the private sector in bringing clean energy technologies to Africa’s rural communities. Through its investees, it has contributed to providing over 6.5 million people with access to low cost, clean energy from solar home systems, mini-grids and clean cooking solutions. The support focuses on reducing risk, stimulating advances in technology, testing alternative business models and financial services, and addressing other constraints that inhibit market development with products and services that specifically target the rural poor. Initial investments from the AECF have been concentrated in East Africa but subsequent funding has expanded this geographical reach to cover West and Southern Africa. REACT is currently implementing two flagship programmes:

REACT HS Programme

The REACT Household Solar programme, funded by the by UK Department for International Development (DFID), delivers financial and technical support to companies offering Solar Household System (SHS) products and services in the form of grants, repayable grants and technical assistance to accelerate access to modern electricity for 450,000 households. The first round of the programme is being implemented in Malawi, Sierra Leone, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The second round of the programme will be implemented in Somalia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Senegal and Nigeria.

REACT SSA Programme

REACT sub-Saharan Africa (REACT SSA) programme, funded by the Swedish International Development Authority (Sida), provides financing and technical assistance to transformative business models that accelerate access to low cost, clean energy i.e. cleaner fuels, cook stoves, alternatives to grid power including stand-alone solar home-systems, solar lanterns for lighting and charging mobile phones, and decentralized mini and micro grids. The programme is being implemented in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Mali,
Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Somalia together with a regional component to support technical assistance, advocacy and learning activities.

3.0 Tracking Development Impact

The AECF principally measures the benefit – or development impact – that its partner off-grid solar investees provide as improvements in net financial welfare from increases in income or generation of cost savings. Various costs and benefits from taking part in the project are modelled from a pre-project household scenario and verified using information from the company, from secondary sources or specifically designed surveys.

It has not been straightforward, however, to quantify the development impact that arises from welfare impacts of Off-Grid Solar such as improved health and education; financial inclusion; personal safety and security; reduced drudgery and more time available for productive activity; or better access to communications, information and entertainment. Even though these impacts are apparent, they are difficult to measure and may take a while to fully materialise. It has also been complex for The AECF to accurately verify the income level, location (rural vs. urban) and disability profiles of the beneficiaries its partner investees are reaching.

As part of its commitment to impact and learning, the AECF, supported by its donors, is commissioning impact studies to:

a) Better understand and quantify the welfare impacts and consumer experience of clean energy products;

b) Support its partner investees to improve their impact performance by unlocking insights about their customers.

The initial focus is of this study is on Solar Home Systems in Southern Africa funded under the REACT HS and SSA programmes. The scope is however set to expand to other regions, business models and technologies.

4.0 Purpose and objectives of the assignment

The purpose of this study is to collect impact data that is useful to both development funders and Off-grid solar firms operating in Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The study not only seeks to quantify and compare the socio-economic impacts arising from off-grid solar in these countries but understand consumer profiles, how customers perceive their products and what challenges they face when accessing, paying or using them.

The assignment consists of four objectives:

1. Gain a deeper understanding of the welfare impacts of AECF’s partner investees’ off-grid solar products on low-income consumers in Southern Africa. More specifically, impacts on health, education, safety, financial inclusion, productive use and other quality of life improvements. Other metrics on income levels, gender, location (rural vs. urban) and disability profiles will be expected. Furthermore, AECF would also like to understand the impacts that COVID-19 has had on off-grid solar consumers, and to what extent this has affected their livelihoods and ability to access off-grid solar.

2. Provide individually packaged insights to up to four Off-grid solar firms working in target countries, highlighting their performance to customer experience, operations and impact. These should include insights on customer satisfaction, ability to pay, challenges experienced, barriers to access (for non-users), value for money and environmental impact.

4. Disseminate aggregate findings of this research to complement the current body of evidence on the impact of Off-grid solar in Eastern and Western Africa.

5.0 Invitation
Through this request for proposals (“RFP”), the AECF intends to support its partner investees to manage their impact performance as well as understand the overall impact and use of Off-grid solar in target countries. We are looking for a consultant to who can provide expert support in data collection, analysis, independent verification and communication of impact to both AECF and its partner investees.

6.0 Outputs and Reporting Requirements
The following are deliverables expected by AECF from the consultant:

1. A detailed PowerPoint presentation format summarising the overall study. To be presented at a workshop and/or webinar.
2. A supplementary report on aggregate findings (max. 40 pages).
3. Four individual PowerPoint presentations and/or reports summarising firm-level insights and recommendations. To be presented to AECF partner investees who have taken part in the study.
4. Handover of raw data in an organized database format that can be queried and analysed.
5. Use of charts, excel, graphics, infographics and photos are required.

7.0 Inputs to be provided by AECF
- Introductions to selected off-grid solar investees working in the target countries.
- Confidential access to selected investee customer databases and waiting lists.
- Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDA)
- Investee progress reports available on request.

8.0 Qualifications
Applicants must be able to illustrate the minimum competencies of:

- At least five (5) year’s team experience in data collection and analysis, impact reporting and verification, report writing and presentations to stakeholders in the off-grid energy space.
- Experience in undertaking these types of assignments, with strong references.
- Have a developed a credible and cost-effective methodology for measuring impact, a set of standardised indicators that can be used to compare impact performance and customer insights is an added advantage.
- Knowledge of the off-grid energy sector and experience working with Solar Home System firms in Africa.

9.0 Management
The Consultant will report to the Impact officer for REACT, with overall oversight from the REACT HS Senior programme officer and the REACT Sector Team lead.
### 10.0 Evaluation Criteria
The following criteria will be used for the evaluation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key areas for Evaluation / Assessment</th>
<th>Weighted Award</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technical Proposal</strong></td>
<td>70</td>
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<tr>
<td>a) Understanding of the work to be undertaken. The proposal must meet the scope and needs included herein and be presented in a clear and organized manner; (5 points)</td>
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<td>b) 5 years of team experience in conducting impact studies, with strong references (5 points)</td>
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<tr>
<td>c) Ability and experience of the consultant in cost-effective and timely methods of conducting data collection and impact analysis targeted at Off-grid solar products. This includes a sound methodology and workplan, with proposed samples, questionnaires and duration of work. (20 points)</td>
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<tr>
<td>d) Ability to adopt standardized metrics that can be used to compare impact performance and customer experiences across regions, countries and firms (10 points)</td>
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<tr>
<td>e) Experience in working with early-stage Off-grid solar companies to improve their business and impact performance (10 points)</td>
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<tr>
<td>f) Geographical Reach: Demonstrate relevant geographical experience, knowledge and reach to effectively carry out the assignment. Our preference is a consultant based in Southern Africa with extensive reach in the countries of study. (5 Points)</td>
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<tr>
<td>g) Qualifications and competence of the key staff related to the study Bidders must provide descriptions and Documentation of staff/teams’ technical expertise and experience. (15 points)</td>
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Only candidates obtaining a minimum of 49 points (70% of the total technical points) would be considered for the Financial Evaluation (30%).

Companies should also submit their Registration and other relevant statutory documents.

| Financial Proposal | Reality to market/value for money based on the assignment (inclusive of any applicable tax). | 30 |

### 11.0 Proposal Submission
Interested consultancy firms and individuals are requested to submit their technical and financial proposals to procurement@aecfafrica.org by **5:00 PM E.A.T on 10 August 2020**. For enquiries, please email fbisleti@aecfafrica.org with a copy to procurement@aecfafrica.org. The Subject of the email should read...
CONSULTANCY SERVICES - UNDERSTANDING THE WELFARE IMPACTS AND CONSUMER EXPERIENCE OF OFF-GRID SOLAR HOME SYSTEMS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.

- Technical and Financial proposals will need to be submitted as separate documents.
- Financial proposals will not be opened until the conclusion of the technical evaluation and then only for those proposals that are deemed qualified and responsive.
- The Financial proposals shall include all applicable taxes quoted separately. If taxes are not mentioned in the financial proposal, The AECF shall consider that they are included in the prices provided.

11.0 Disclaimer
The AECF reserves the right to determine the structure of the process, number of short-listed participants, the right to withdraw from the proposal process, the right to change this timetable at any time without notice and reserves the right to withdraw this tender at any time, without prior notice and without liability to compensate and/or reimburse any party.