

SEforALL Terms of Reference

Independent Verification Agent – Sierra Leone

23 | 07 | 2024

1. Context

Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL) is an International Organization that works in partnership with the United Nations and leaders in government, the private sector, financial institutions, civil society, and philanthropies to drive faster action towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG7) – access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all by 2030 – in line with the Paris Agreement on climate change. Launched as a UN initiative in 2011 by then Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-Moon, SEforALL is widely acknowledged for its achievement in raising global awareness of the world's sustainable energy challenges, ensuring they were included in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Now an independent international organization, SEforALL is directed by its CEO as it works toward the achievement of SDG7. The organization also supports the work of the CEO in her additional role of Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General (SRSG) for Sustainable Energy for All and as co-chair of UN-Energy. These roles include advising the UN Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General and their staff on issues relating to sustainable energy and the implementation of SDG7 and supporting the coordination of sustainable energy issues in the United Nations system.

The ambitions of SDG7 on ensuring universal access to affordable, clean energy services by 2030 are extraordinary. Aiming to achieve them in the context of the Paris Agreement involves transformation on a scale never undertaken by humanity before. Swift action needs to be taken by leaders in governments, companies, institutions, financiers, development banks, unions and communities, entrepreneurs, and civil society. As a global team, SEforALL crafts interventions that support these leaders in accelerating the delivery of actions. All interventions comprise one or more of SEforALL's competencies: (i) to marshal the evidence, (ii) to benchmark progress towards SEforALL objectives, (iii) to amplify the voices of the energy poor; (iv) to tell stories of success, and (v) to connect stakeholders to each other and to solutions. All interventions systematically draw on strategic insight, build on compelling communications, and are delivered through and include action-oriented partnerships http://www.seforall.org/.

2. Results Based Financing

2020 marked the start of the final decade to achieve SDG7 – access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all – by 2030. The world is not on track and a renewed sense of urgency, and new approaches are required. Providing finance at the speed and scale needed to achieve SDG7 requires a paradigm shift towards Results-Based Financing (RBF). RBF allows governments and donors to shift risk of delivery to the private sector, aggregates financing and scales support across multiple countries.



Understanding the benefits of RBF, SEforALL launched and operationalized the Universal Energy Facility (UEF), a multi-donor Results-Based Financing (RBF) facility, to speed and scale up new energy connections in Sub-Saharan Africa. The UEF provides incentive payments (i.e., grants) on a 'Results-Based' approach to selected eligible organizations that develop and operate systems and provide verified electricity connections. In 2020, the UEF was opened to mini-grid developers in Sierra Leone and Madagascar and in January 2021, the UEF opened in Benin. The latest window of the UEF programme was launched in October 2022 in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

In support of the UEF, SEforALL is implementing a robust verification process, which includes remote and on-ground verification to ensure the mini-grid sites and connections comply with UEF technical specification.

3. Objective

The objective of this Procurement is to hire an Independent Verification Agent(s) to carry out on-ground verification of UEF mini-grid sites and electricity connections for UEF mini grid window in Sierra Leone. This is a key step that precedes the grant disbursements to UEF grantees.

The direct grant payments will be disbursed by the UEF to the Grantee based on a "Results-Based" reimbursement method. This is done after grantees have satisfied the Primary Project Milestones highlighted below and adhered to the timelines contained in the Project Implementation Schedule. The Grantee submits this schedule, which the UEF approves and forms a part of the Grant Agreement.

The details of the Primary Project Milestones are provided below:

Item	MG Results Trigger	Type of Result	Percentage of grant amount payable
Milestone 1	Proof of Delivery of major project equipment (PV panels, Batteries, Inverters, Meters) to the approved MG project site	Activity	40%
Milestone 2	Commissioning of the mini-grid	Output	40%
Milestone 3	30 days of supply of electricity through installed mini-grid connections	Outcome	20%

Please refer to Annex I for more information on Primary Project Milestones.

Remote verification and random physical inspections of new electricity connections will occur at three stages: (1) once the Major Project Equipment is delivered to the mini-grid site, (2) after the construction and commissioning of the mini-grids, and (3) upon the completion of electricity connections and the submission of Claims Reports by UEF Grantees after 30 days supply of electricity. The Claims Reports can only be submitted by the Grantee after the completion of each milestone. The Verification Process includes three phases:



1) **On-ground verification** – The Verification Agent(s) will carry out one or two on-ground verifications for each of the seven (7) UEF mini-grid sites and conduct verification¹ on a sample size of 30 – 40% connections at those sites, in line with the submitted Claims Report.

During the on-ground verification, the Verification Agent(s) will confirm that the Major Project Equipment has been delivered to the mini-grid site (under verification of Milestone 1), and that the installed mini-grid system and connections comply with the Claims Report (verification of Milestones 2 and 3). Additionally, the Verification Agent(s) will collect qualitative data on the impacts of electricity access on communities, households, and businesses connected to the UEF-funded mini-grids. This will be done through a survey and/or interviews in consultation with the UEF team.

- 2) Desk review Additionally, the Verification Agent(s) will confirm that the relevant installed minigrid system meets UEF technical specifications² as stated in the commissioning reports via a desk review. The commissioning reports will be made available to the Verification Agents by the UEF team. The review of these reports will encompass all mini-grid sites within the UEF window, totalling 7 sites.
- 3) Remote verification As part of the grantee's Claims Report, the UEF performs remote connection verification through the online UEF Platform through smart meters built in as part of each connection. The remote verification allows the UEF to verify the existence and electricity consumption levels of every connection reported over a 30-day period before the Claims Report is submitted. The Verification Agent(s) will not be involved in the remote verification process. This information is included for informational purposes as all connections will be remotely verified prior to on-ground verification.

4. Scope of Work

SEforALL seeks to engage a consultant(s) to conduct on-ground verifications for UEF mini-grid sites in Sierra Leone. The UEF mini-grid programme in Sierra Leone qualified seven (7) sites for funding and construction and a further portfolio of sites at advanced stages towards UEF qualification. The seven (7) funded mini-grid sites³ are located at **Borup**, **Pepel**, **Njala Mosongo**, **Kalangba**, **Kasiri**, **Njala Mokonde and Mokanji**.

The number of electricity connections at each site will be confirmed after grantees submit Claims Reports.

The selected consultant will work with SEforALL to agree on a standard workplan and verification of the Primary Project Milestones.

The consultant will be responsible for the following tasks:



TERMS OF REFERENCE

¹ Three of the on-ground verifications will either be at Milestones 1 or 2, and the other 2 will be at Milestone 3.

² UEF Technical Specifications are specified in the deliverables table in Annex II, and a detailed description of these specifications are present in the operating manual.

³ The remainder of mini-grid sites are a work in progress (may not be from the same grantee) and expected to be shared with the IVA upon finalization of qualification processes.

- 1. For the mini-grid sites, verify that the solar equipment has been delivered to the site and that the mini-grid project meets the UEF technical specifications⁴. *This verification shall be conducted both on-site and through a desk review of the commissioning reports.* The Verification Agents will have access to these reports from the UEF team.
- 2. For each randomly selected electricity connection(s), the UEF team will provide the consultant with customer data to verify on the ground. The verification shall include the following information using a template agreed with SEforALL: customer name, gender of the account holder, customer category and type, location /GPS coordinates, meter serial number and date of connection. The Verification Agent(s) shall also confirm that the customer has access to electricity via the new connection, that the customer is the user of the electricity service, when and how long the user has had the electricity connection, the stability of the electricity provided, and the total monthly cost of energy to the user.
- 3. Collect qualitative and quantitative information on the socio-economic impacts of connections on the electrified sites, encompassing cost benefits compared to previous energy sources, quality of life or welfare improvements, gender considerations, customer satisfaction, affordability aspects, energy consumption patterns, and other relevant factors. The consultant will work with SEforALL to determine other data outputs and collect qualitative data using prepared questionnaires in collaboration with the UEF team. The survey will also require the consultant to take photos or videos of the mini-grid equipment/components and customer connections. Written permission and release forms must be obtained from any individuals included in the photographs or videos. SEforALL will assist the selected consultant(s) in developing these survey questionnaires. The UEF uses the Kobo Toolbox software for data collection and expects the bidder's team to be familiar with Kobo Toolbox's functionality.
- 4. Provide an aggregate verification report on each mini-grid site or per developer to SEforALL, assessing the Grantee's compliance with the required technical standards and other Grant Agreement terms. The report will also include the additional customer information collected on the ground, as detailed in item 2 above. SEforALL will collaborate with the selected consultant(s) to develop the appropriate data collection tool and the scope of the report.

Please refer to Annex II for a detailed schedule of activities, deliverables, and indicative timelines.

The consultant will be required to collaborate with SEforALL and the mini-grid developers, i.e., UEF grantees, to identify customers, coordinate site visits and firm up logistics.

5. Approach

The selected firm will maintain close contact with a designated SEforALL contact(s) throughout the assignment to facilitate access to documentation, relevant SEforALL staff members, and other partners if required. All draft reports will be reviewed by UEF/SEforALL team.

The selected firm should make a concerted effort to mainstream gender considerations throughout this assignment. This includes following gender parity when engaging its personnel for this assignment.



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⁴ Depending on if Milestones 1 or 2 are selected for on-site verification.

Furthermore, the firm is encouraged to implement at least a 40:60 female to male ratio in their team and submit a copy of the gender policies followed by the organization.

Project timeline

The assignment is expected to last at least eighteen (18) months, and the tentative timeline is August 2024 to February 2026. The first batch of 7 mini-grids are expected to be constructed and commissioned within this timeframe. However, additional mini-grid project(s) could be constructed within the 18-month period which would require an addendum to this procurement contract.

The Contracting for the selected Independent Verification Agent is expected to be in place by August 2024.

As the mini-grid sites are expected to be constructed over the 18-month period, the Verification Agent shall conduct verification each time a mini-grid site is selected by the UEF team and project commissioning is completed (i.e., when a claims report has been submitted by the Grantee(s)). It is important to note that, all the mini-grid sites will not be completed at the same time, therefore, the Verification Agent will be able to submit invoice for payment only after the successful completion of at least two (2) verification visits.

Travel

- Duty travel is defined as travel which is requested as part of the performance of services under the Contract. Duty travel is usually from the duty station to the place of the assignment and return to the duty station.
- The financial proposal should include costs related to the professional services, including travel.

6. Qualification and Experience requirements

Eligibility Criteria:

- A registered company/legal entity in Sierra Leone or a firm with physical registered office and
 operations in Sierra Leone having a minimum of 5 years' experience in the subject area (scanned
 copy of the Certificate of Incorporation or physical office presence in Sierra Leone to be submitted).
- Statement of Confirmation.
- Completed and signed Bank Details Form.

Firms submitting a proposal should meet the following requirements:

- The Verification Agent should be either a consulting, engineering, or audit firm with a minimum of five (5) years operational existence as an organization with a registered legal entity <u>in Sierra Leone</u> or a firm with physical registered office and operations in Sierra Leone.
- Firm must have undertaken at least two (2) similar assignments in the last five (5) years.
- Firm must have familiarity and experience with mini-grid development and off-grid electricity verification.
- Prior experience in Sierra Leone is strongly preferred.
- Firm must have adequate resources and ability to deploy staff and resources in multiple rural locations if necessary.



- Demonstrated experience in technical verification exercises, socio-economic studies, and field /on-site studies.
- Experience in organizational and project assessments, past roles in project transaction verification will be an advantage.
- Familiarity with rural energy projects and interventions will be advantageous including engagement with energy product or service providers is advantageous.
- Team lead(s) and experts proposed should be fluent in English language, and preferably in Krio as well as other local languages across the specified project locations in Sierra Leone.
- Firm must have ability to deploy a robust data collection and management system with capacity to track GIS coordinates for the field visits; evidence of similar deployment in the past will be essential.
- Demonstrate capability to deploy experienced professional staff to address the scope of work outlined and address potential staffing/team member contingencies that may arise during the implementation of the project.

Team Requirements

To implement all the deliverables, an indicative roster of experts as proposed below would be required: a Project Team Leader, Experts in Socio-economic assessment and field data collection, an Energy technician, and an Energy Engineer with a successful track record in mini-grid projects. These roles are indicative, however, and bidders are encouraged to propose their own teams that would be able to meet the overall requirements of achievement of the work. In a similar vein, the experts' roles can be combined if they have demonstrated experience in multiple fields of work mentioned above. This applies to both the Project Team Leader and sectoral experts.

All experts must have a high-level command of English and fluency in Krio is advantageous. A knowledge of other local languages is considered an asset. All experts engaged are expected to be of good conduct as per ethics, standards and values of UN agencies and International Organizations.

Qualification and Experience requirements for the team

i. Team Leader

The Team Leader will be responsible for managing all the activities envisaged under this contract, assessing the quality of the submitted reports and drafts, and communicating progress achieved during the implementation of the activities on a regular basis.

- At least 10 years professional experience in leading consulting assignments for developing countries on energy access / transition, and mini grid projects.
- Advanced University degree in management, energy/environmental, economic, engineering or in any other field relevant for this assignment.
- Working experience in project management and coordination in the energy sector
- Team leader should have the ability to deploy a robust data collection and management system with capacity to track GIS coordinates for the field visits; evidence of similar deployment in the past will be essential.
- Demonstrated experience in technical verification exercises, socio-economic studies, and field /on-site studies will be preferrable.



ii. Socio economic assessment expert

- At least 7 years professional experience in the field of socio-economic assessment and sustainability.
- Advanced university degree in Engineering, Economics, Social Sciences, or related field.
- Track record of undertaking techno-economic and contextual understanding of energy access issues, particularly on electrification.
- Proven experience of working with data collection tools such as Kobo Toolbox or similar.
- Demonstrated experience in socio-economic studies, and field /on-site studies.
- Experience in organizational and project assessments, past roles in project transaction verification will be an advantage.
- Familiarity with rural energy interventions will be advantageous, including engagement with energy product or service providers.

iii. Energy Engineer

- At least 7 years of experience in the field of energy with a focus on renewable energy
- Advanced university degree in Energy Engineering,
- Showcase experience in technical verification of energy infrastructures (e.g. mini-grids) including energy audits
- Familiarity with rural energy interventions with a solid technical experience
- Demonstrated experience in data collections systems.

iv. Solar Energy Technician

- At least 5 years' experience in the field of solar energy with a focus on mini grid
- Showcase experience in technical verification of energy infrastructures.
- Familiarity with rural energy interventions with a solid technical experience
- Demonstrated experience in data collections systems.
- Knowledge of a local language is considered a strong asset.

7. Bidding Process

Proposals can be submitted either as a single entity or a consortium. Technical and Financial proposals should be submitted <u>as separate documents</u>. Proposals must include the following (in either PDF or PPT format):

Technical Proposal

- Brief background about your organization and the year it was founded.
- The organization's experience in carrying out similar work including relevant skills, qualifications, and knowledge. (Organizations are requested to share the scale and number of projects undertaken for each requirement mentioned above).
- Your understanding of the assignment and a work approach/methodology including any proposed changes to the scope of work.



- Proposed timeline of activities, and a work plan of the main and sub activities to be carried out.
- Three (3) relevant organizational/client references from the last three years.
- CVs of key personnel proposed.

Financial Proposal, outlining the costs associated with carrying out the scope of work, including:

- Labour costs (personnel, daily rates, LOE).
- Equipment costs (if any).
- Other costs.
- All costs must be in USD and inclusive of all taxes.

Evaluation, Conflict of Interest, and Terms of Payment

- Statement of Confirmation:
 - Confirmation of no conflict of interest (e.g., none of the bidder's key personnel, including individuals directly involved in project implementation, management, or decision-making, is associated - financially, personally, or employment-wise - with concerned SEforALL staff, SEforALL experts/consultants recruited under this project).
 - Confirmation that no fees, gratuities, rebates, gifts, commissions, or other payments, other than those explicitly stated in the offer, have been given, received, or promised in connection with the selection process or in contract execution.
 - Confirmation of satisfactory past performance, including adherence to contractual obligations, timely delivery of services, and compliance with relevant regulations, and confirmation that the bidder is not debarred from conducting business in the country where the procurement is taking place.
 - Confirmation that the bidder did not participate directly or indirectly in the preparation of the concerned procurement process or the bidding documents, including the terms of reference, being subsequently used by SEforALL.
 - Confirmation of no conflict of interest between or among bidders, and a commitment to disclose any potential conflicts of interest to SEforALL for resolution prior to the submission of bids.
- The evaluation of proposals will be based on an 80 20 split for technical proposal and financial proposal, respectively. Details of the evaluation criteria are attached as Annex III.

How to Apply and Deadline

Please submit your proposal to <u>procurement@seforall.org</u> by **15 August 2024, 17:00 Central European Summer Time (CEST).** In case of questions or queries contact SEforALL at <u>procurement@seforall.org</u>.



Annex I – Details of Primary Project Milestones

Independent Verification Agent - Sierra Leone

Details of the Primary Project Milestones are provided below:

Milestone	Type of Result	Result Trigger[1]	Percentage of UEF Grant Amount Payable
Milestone 1	Activity based result	Proof of delivery of the Major Project Equipment at the Grantee's registered address or approved project site.	40% of total approved grant amount for the approved site.
Milestone 2	Output based result	Construction, installation, testing and commissioning of the mini-grid.	40% of total approved grant amount for the approved site.
Milestone 3	Outcome based result	Submission of claims report which covers connections established by the grantee and verification of connections which meet technical standards and provide stable power supply for at least thirty (30) consecutive days after Commissioning of the mini-grid.	A portion of the remaining 20% of the approved grant amount for the approved site which covers the established and verified connections.



Annex II - Schedule of activities, deliverables, and indicative timelines

Independent Verification Agent - Sierra Leone

The selected consultant should adhere to the following schedule of deliverables:

Activities	Deliverables	Indicative Timeline
Contracting and start of the project: Work with SEforALL to adapt template customer surveys and interviews to be used at all sites to collect qualitative and quantitative data to: optimise the existing survey and provide a template to suit the country context (language, locations, currency etc.). recommend any additional questions that might be necessary to get the best possible outcome.	 Customer surveys or interview questions. Template for verification of selected electricity connections (as specified in Task 2). 	Within 1 - 2 weeks after contract start.
Once Claim Report(s) is submitted by Grantee to SEforALL, SEforALL on behalf of the UEF will notify, the Verification Agent who will carry out the following activities for the mini-grid sites in Sierra Leone: If Milestone 1 is selected for verification, carry out on the ground verification of the Major Project Equipment delivered to the project site. If Milestone 2 is selected, carry out verification of the testing and commissioning of the minigrid. For verification of Milestone 3, work with SEforALL in selecting sample connections. Conduct site visits to verify compliance of the customer connection detail according to Claims Report. Conduct surveys or interviews with at least 30% sample customers per mini-grid site from connected households, in a language easily understood by the customer. Collect data including the number of households connected, number of households led by women, and will work with SEforALL to determine other data outputs. Socio-economic impact assessment: Collect qualitative and quantitative information on the socio-economic impacts of connections on the electrified sites, encompassing cost benefits compared to primary energy sources, quality of life or welfare improvements, gender considerations, customer satisfaction, affordability aspects, energy consumption patterns, and other relevant factors.	 Agreed list of randomly selected electricity connections. Completed on-ground verification, data gathering and uploading. Completed socio-economic survey of the selected customer connections as part of the verification of the customer connections. 	Site visit completed within 21 days of receiving notification from UEF/SEforALL that specific milestones are ready for verification.



 Upload all relevant data to the UEF's online 		
platform.		
Assess technical compliance of the relevant installed mini-grid system: • The mini-grid system should meet UEF technical specifications as stated in the Operating Manual and Project Application Instructions. This task will be performed via an on-site verification of sample sites and a desk review of the commissioning reports from all sites in Sierra Leone.	Completed verification of technical compliance of the installed mini-grid systems.	The consultant will receive commissioning report from UEF/SEforALL. The completed verification needs to be part of the onground verification report, see below.
 After verification of each milestone, the Verification Agent will provide a written report that includes: An aggregate verification report for each minigrid site or per developer in Sierra Leone. This will combine the technical compliance of the mini-grid (via desk review and on-site verification where relevant for milestone 1&2) and the on-ground verification of the selected connections (for milestone 3). 	for each mini-grid site.	Written report submitted within 5 working days from completion of site visit under milestones 1 & 2, and a maximum of 10 days for milestone 3.
Compiled findings from other customer data collection		
 An assessment of the likelihood of fraud which may require further investigations. 		
 Photos of systems, customer connections and any other evidence as agreed on with SEforALL. 		
 Propose percentages for thresholds for deferring/suspending a claim, based on the risk of non-compliance to UEF requirements. 		
The Verification Agent will provide the following to SEforALL:		Within 10 days of the site visit.
	format e.g. excel or via a data	visit.
 Raw data of customer responses to surveys and interviews. The raw data shall be translated and delivered in English. Copies of all photos and videos taken of systems, customer connections and any other evidence as agreed on with SEforALL. 	 collection tool. Photo and video files as agreed with SEforALL. All written permissions and release forms from individuals photographed or videotoped. 	
Written permissions and release forms from individuals photographed or videotaped.	photographed or videotaped.	



Annex III - Evaluation Criteria

Independent Verification Agent - Sierra Leone

1. Compliance with eligibility criteria: Pass/Fail

2. Technical Evaluation Criteria

Technical Capacity: 40 points

- ✓ Is the firm a consulting, engineering, or audit firm with a minimum of five (5) years operational existence as an organization? (5 points)
- ✓ How much relevant experience does the firm have in performing similar assignments in the last five
 (5) years? (5 points)
- ✓ How much experience does the firm have with off-grid and mini-grid verification? (5 points)
- ✓ How much expertise does the firm have on processes related to mini grid project development and
 or verification activities in Sierra Leone, such as: (10 points)
 - Ability to deploy a robust data collection and management system with capacity to track GIS coordinates for the field visits.
 - Capacity to conduct assessments on equipment delivered on sites based on the UEF requirement/ national and international quality standard and draft a report on this verification.
 - Capacity to draft customer surveys or interview questions and develop templates for verification of selected electricity connections.
 - Ability to complete on-ground verification, data gathering and uploading.
 - Ability to complete verification of technical compliance of the installed mini-grid systems.
 - Ability to deliver on-ground verification report for each mini-grid site.
 - Ability to complete a socio-economic survey of at least 30% customer connections as part of the verification of the customer connections.
 - Ability to perform and provide data in suitable format e.g., excel or via a data collection tool.
 - Ability to capture excellent photos and videos of both the physical mini-grid assets and the customers using the energy services.

NB: Those points are only indicative. Technical assessment will be based on the demonstrated capacity stated in the table of activities and deliverables.

- ✓ How much experience does the firm have with solar/-hybrid mini grid systems, particularly in Sierra Leone and other Sub-Saharan Africa? (5 points)
- ✓ What is the experience that the firm has on project assessment, socio-economic studies, and field
 /on-site studies? (5 points)
- ✓ Does the bidder have sufficient project management, organizational structure, adequate staff, local presence and sufficient sources of technical expertise to deliver all work streams of this project for SEforALL in the targeted countries? (5 points)



Approach and Methodology: 25 points

- ✓ How coherent is the overall approach and methodology of the bidder, and does it clearly outline how it will meet some of key principals of the workstreams and scope of work, such as: (10 points)
 - Data collection and preparation of final reports.
 - Technical capacity.
 - Capacity to collaborate efficiently with diverse stakeholders involved in this exercise (UEF team, developers, local community).
 - Effective project assessment reporting capacity.
 - Ability to communicate and perform reporting in both French and English as needed.
- ✓ Are the activities proposed appropriate, practical, and consistent with the objectives and expected results? (5 points)
- ✓ Is the action plan clear and feasible, with a clear flow and sequence to activities (especially maintaining possible simultaneous nature of the work). Bidders are invited to present an expected timeline for each step (10 points)

Team Composition: 15 points

- ✓ Does the team meet the minimum requirements for each respective team member? (10 points)
- ✓ Expertise offered by the overall team and its structure in line with the scope of work and workstreams (2.5 points)
- ✓ Are roles and responsibilities effectively defined? (2.5 points)

Minimum technical passing score is 55 points. Firms who pass the min. passing score will be considered for the commercial evaluation.

3. Commercial Evaluation Criteria

Budget and Cost-effectiveness: 20 points

