APPLICATION GUIDELINES

EEP Africa Call for Proposals 2026

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1. ABOUT EEP AFRICA

The Energy and Environment Partnership Trust Fund (EEP Africa) is a clean energy financing facility hosted and managed by the Nordic Development Fund (NDF) with funding from Austria, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, NDF, Norway and Switzerland. It is guided by a vision for a climate resilient, zero-carbon future with the aim of contributing to the achievement of the Paris Climate Agreement and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The immediate objective is to enhance clean energy access, development, and investment, with a particular focus on benefitting vulnerable and underserved groups.

EEP Africa provides risk tolerant early-stage grant financing for locally driven innovative clean energy projects, technologies and business and delivery models in Southern and Eastern Africa.

1.1 Core activities

EEP Africa focuses on three core activities:

Clean Energy Financing: EEP Africa channels funding through open, competitive calls for proposals, offering both grants and repayable grants on a co-financing basis to early-stage innovative projects that are in active development. There have been 18 Calls for Proposals (CfPs) since 2010.

Investment Facilitation (IF) and Business Development Support (BDS): In addition to financing, EEP Africa enhances the investment readiness of its grantees through targeted business development services and cohort level trainings. Furthermore, EEP Africa actively facilitates linkages between its grantees and the investor community by providing introductions or by co-hosting in-person matchmaking events together with its sector peers, thus offering investors access to a pipeline of investable clean energy projects and enterprises.

Knowledge, Learning and Partnerships: EEP Africa leverages the lessons learned from its diverse project portfolio to develop knowledge products that advance clean energy understanding and awareness. EEP Africa works closely with partners to amplify lessons and harmonise activities for increased efficiency. Moreover, EEP Africa offers visibility and peer-to-peer learning opportunities for grantees.

1.2 SDGs & KPIs

Although EEP Africa-funded projects address a wide array of SDGs, the following five are considered relevant to most projects and thus reported on a portfolio level: SDG 1 No poverty, SDG 5 Gender equality, SDG 7 Affordable & clean energy, SDG 8 Decent work & economic growth, and SDG 13 Climate action. The success of EEP Africa contributing to these SDGs is measured through the following indicators:

SDG 1 No poverty: Amount of savings on energy-related expenditures, additional income generated;

SDG 5 Gender equality: Share of women in leadership, share of women-led companies funded, share of women employed by EEP Africa grantees;

SDG 7 Affordable & clean energy: Number of people with enhanced energy access, amount of clean energy installed & generated;

SDG 8 Decent work & economic growth: Number of decent jobs created (full-time, temporary, commission-based); and

SDG 13 Climate action: GHG emissions reduced or avoided, amount of investment leveraged.

2. HOW DOES THE EEP AFRICA CFP PROCESS WORK?

The CfP follows a two-stage process of Expression of Interest (EoI) and full proposal. In addition, EEP Africa will run pitching sessions with longlisted applicants to gain further understanding of the proposed project narratives ahead of shortlisting. The CfP process is described in more detail in Figure 1 .

Figure 1 EEP Africa Call for Proposals process

2.1 Expression of Interest

In the EoI process, companies are selected based on eligibility criteria as outlined in these guidelines and a high-level presentation of themselves and the proposed project that emphasises the potential for development impact and relevance to the priorities of the Fund.

The EoI includes a **primary due diligence** with a set of mandatory documentation requirements (see Section 5.1 for details). This approach gives applicants clarity to assess their eligibility and chances of success while ensuring additionality and efficiency in the subsequent Full Proposal and contracting stages. During evaluation of EoIs, particular attention will be given to country-specific additionality of technologies and business models.

2.2 Pitch interviews

Following longlisting from the EoI stage, selected applicants are invited to **pitch interviews**. The interviews allow applicants to present their proposed project concepts in more detail and provide an opportunity for evaluators to clarify key questions and provide feedback on the proposed project.

Based on the pitch interview, shortlist decisions are taken to proceed to the full proposal stage.

2.3 Full proposal

The **full proposal** gives the applicant an opportunity to elaborate further on their proposed project. It will highlight the profiles of the lead applicant and any partner(s), details of the proposed projects pertaining to the technology and/or services to be promoted and the applicable business model. The full proposal will also include deeper analysis of project risks and mitigation measures, as well as a detailed project budget and submission of various additional due diligence documents.

2.4 Investment Committee

All information gathered during the full proposal stage is synthesised into a comprehensive investment memo that also includes financial and BDS needs analysis of the company. The Investment Committee consists of experts, nominated by the EEP Africa donors, who have not been involved with the earlier evaluation process.

The Investment Committee may impose conditions on projects where it deems this appropriate to demonstrate a better match with EEP Africa's objectives and purpose. Conditions may include, for example, partial or full repayability of the grant amount, budget restructuring, specific requirements on environmental and/or social safeguards, or limitations on advance payments pending confirmation of co-financing.

NDF holds a right of no-objection on all project decisions stemming from the Investment Committee. All decisions by NDF are final.

2.5 Enhanced due diligence

Companies that have been approved by the Investment Committee will undergo a **comprehensive due diligence process**. As part of this process, the risk analysis and BDS needs assessment are deepened and expanded with a stronger focus on the proposed project, the team capacity and the implementation environment.

The enhanced due diligence evaluates companies across multiple categories, including environmental and social safeguards, governance, financial management, and partners and suppliers as well as compliance and integrity aspects. Due diligence also reviews the applicant's proposed mitigation actions relative to their actual capacity and further informs forthcoming BDS needs through a more detailed and structured assessment. evaluates companies across multiple categories, including environmental and social safeguards, governance, financial management, and partners and suppliers as well as compliance and integrity aspects.

To ensure harmonisation of support and efficient allocation of funds, existing and/or past supporters (investors/donors/TA providers) of the companies may be contacted for reference checks. Furthermore, interested applicants can be referred to other investors or support programmes regardless of the outcome of the EEP Africa funding decision.

2.6 Contracting

All applicants who received Investment Committee approval, passed enhanced due diligence and submitted all necessary documentation and subsequently received a no-objection from NDF, can proceed to contracting. The contract template is standard and non-negotiable. The contracts are usually signed for a project period of 2 years and include detailed annexes governing all aspects of project implementation.

Pending successful closure, the applicants will enter into a financing contract with NDF. The contract will enter into force, and mark the start of project implementation, upon signature by both parties.

2.7 Onboarding and implementation

All grantees will undergo an onboarding programme that helps them to prepare for project launch and contract implementation.

The Project Implementation Manual guides implementation of all EEP Africa projects and forms an integral part to this contract. It is available for download on the EEP Africa website.

3. WHAT TYPE OF PROJECTS IS EEP AFRICA LOOKING FOR?

EEP Africa's focus is to support early-stage and locally driven innovative clean energy projects in active development.

3.1 Special limitations for CfP2026

Applicants should pay close attention to the following additional information for the 2026 Call for Proposals (CfP):

- **Reduced maximum ticket size**: To enable a greater number of projects to be selected under the approved funding amount, the ticket size for EEP Africa grants has been reduced from previously EUR 1 million to EUR 500,000. More detail on financing amounts can be found in Section 4.
- **Emphasis on e-waste management for select countries**: For this CfP, EEP Africa limits applications from Kenya, Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia and South Africa to projects that focus on e-waste management, specifically e-waste generated from the clean energy sector. See Annex II for more details.
- **Country-specific guidance on geographic additionality**: As in previous CfPs, projects need to demonstrate additionality of their innovation within their geographic context of implementation. To help applicants identify better which projects are more likely to be successful in receiving EEP Africa funding, please refer to Annex III for more details.

3.2 General characteristics

The following characteristics need to be demonstrated clearly for projects to successfully move to be considered for funding from EEP Africa:

Innovation - The applicant is expected to explain in what way their project is innovative within the market and geographic context where it will be implemented. Innovation can be demonstrated in the technology and proposed product, in the business model (including the financing model, distribution approach, service, etc.), in partnerships or other innovations that do not fall under these three categories. Innovation can also include replication and scaling of comparatively mature and tested technologies or business models into new nascent markets. See Annex III for more detail at country-level.

Active development – The applicant needs to demonstrate that they have actively worked on the proposed project before the launch of the EoI. Applicants should provide some or all of the following proof: 1) company registration at least 6 months prior to the EoI opening date (mandatory), 2) founding staff activity relevant to the project, 3) sweat or seed equity invested, 4) other evidence such as a **minimum viable product**, tested business model, key partnerships, etc.

Financial additionality – The applicant needs to prove that the project would not proceed without EEP Africa funding or other public money and that the project is unlikely to be financed by commercial financiers. The grant should not be a substitute for private sector financing but instead bridge the gap where private sector money would be too risk-averse. The grant is hence justified and necessary to de-risk the early stages of a promising technology, business or delivery model.

Geographic additionality – The project needs to demonstrate that it adds value within the geographic context within which it will be implemented. Applicants should demonstrate that the local market is not already solving the issue and/or is unable to do so without EEP Africa funding or other public money. Annex III provides more information on geographic context and which solutions EEP Africa considers innovative and hence additional in the local market.

Locally driven – The applicant needs to demonstrate that they are committed to sustainable long-term local development. Project implementation, business models and partnerships should be rooted in the local context. Local engagement can be demonstrated through local company registration and years of operation in the country and/or EEP Africa region, majority local ownership of the company, and/or a strong existing local team/partner.

Pathway to commercial sustainability - Project activities must be consistent with a clear path to profitability with reasonable expectation of further investment and sustainable commercialisation. Each proposed project needs to have a compelling business case that supports the objectives of EEP Africa in a sustainable manner.

3.3 Priority themes

EEP Africa's thematic focus takes a holistic approach. Applicants are expected to address one or more of the following themes in their project proposal:

Gender & Youth: EEP Africa looks for proposed projects which promote gender equality and youth and create opportunities for women and youth (18-35 years of age) in the clean energy sector whilst also supporting the core business objectives of the applicants. Projects submitted under this theme should therefore incorporate one or more of the following dimensions:

- Inclusion of women and youth in value chains
- Development of women and youth entrepreneurship & leadership
- Promotion of women and youth economic empowerment through productive uses of energy
- Increased access to finance for women and youth (entrepreneurs and/or end users)

Circular economy & productive uses of energy: Applicants are encouraged to submit projects that create sustainable and decent jobs and increased economic activity through promoting productive uses of energy as well as solutions that drive the circular economy.

Solutions promoting productive uses of energy are those that will have a direct net positive impact on the end users' ability to generate income and increase revenue. Such projects should be designed with a vision to scale and benefit the wider sector in which they are implemented.

The development of a circular economy involves redesigning production and consumption models to prioritize reducing, reusing, and recycling, while leveraging clean energy. This can include e.g. waste-to-energy and energy efficiency projects.

Projects submitted under CfP2026 for Kenya, Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia and South Africa will only be considered if submitted under this theme and with a clear focus on e-waste management related to clean energy.

Climate change adaptation & resilience: Enhancing access to clean energy is traditionally linked to climate change mitigation. However, the climate adaptation and resilience co-benefits achieved through investing in early-stage clean energy solutions often outweigh the mitigation impact, especially in the off-grid sector. EEP Africa therefore encourages project proposals which leverage clean energy to implement solutions that help communities to adapt and/or become more resilient to the adverse effects of climate change.

Leave no one behind (LNOB): EEP Africa strongly supports the LNOB agenda as a central and transformative promise behind the SDGs to 2030. Applicants are therefore encouraged to propose projects which target solutions for those communities and end users at the bottom of the pyramid, especially vulnerable groups that are hardest to reach and marginalised from economic development. Proposed projects can also target fragile and humanitarian contexts, such as communities and end users in regions of conflict and/or refugee camps.

3.4 Technology

EEP Africa is technology agnostic, but all solutions have to be based on renewable energy sources (solar, biomass, wind, hydro, geothermal, other renewable energy sources) or energy efficiency as outlined. Projects should fall into one of the following groups of technologies:

- Residential electricity access
- Productive uses of energy (commercial and/or institutional)
- Mini grids (AC or DC)
- Power generation
- Clean cooking (residential and/or institutional, stoves and/or fuels)
- Mobility (electric and/or fuels)
- Energy efficiency & storage
- Other[1]

Projects submitted under CfP2026 for Kenya, Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia and South Africa focused on e-waste management will submit their applications under the category of Energy efficiency & storage.

3.5 Project types

Projects are classified into different project types. The choice of project type influences eligibility for co-financing approaches such as inclusion of in-kind contribution and repayment requirements (see Section 4):

Feasibility study: Analysis and evaluation to determine technological, commercial, social, environmental and economic viability. The feasibility study may be a refinement of a pre-feasibility study and should present information for investors to finance the next stage of the project. Investors may be part of the work to help ensure financing for a pilot phase after the study. The main outputs should be agreements needed to move on to a piloting phase e.g., permits and licenses, environmental impact assessment (EIA) approvals, access to land, supply and purchase agreements.

Pilot project: Testing and/or implementing of a product, service, and business or delivery model for the first time or in a new market. Activities should test the conditions and develop operational details on a small scale regarding e.g., time, cost, size and risks before a large scale roll out or commercialisation. Proposals should clearly indicate further steps envisaged within an overall market development strategy that will apply lessons learned from the pilot phase.

Replication project: A project that has proven the viability of its technology and the sustainability of its business model in one market and is now looking for support to take the model to another market. Applicants need to demonstrate local presence and an understanding of the target market e.g., market barriers, existing alternatives, current demand and future growth potential, and differences to the current market of operations. A replication can be conducted either nationally, to a different geographical area within the existing country, or regionally, to another eligible EEP Africa country.

Scale-up project: A project that has a high probability of reaching commercial viability with “bridging finance” from EEP Africa. Applicants should provide information on the commercial

[1] Digital platforms are eligible where they directly improve energy efficiency or unlock scaling of clean energy solutions in a concrete and measurable way. In addition, platforms should generally address issues that existing players in the market are unable to solve themselves, or where the proposed solution significantly increases the efficiency of company operations by being outsourced to a third party.

maturity of the business or project and why EEP Africa funding is needed. The application must clearly demonstrate what the bridging finance is for, why this funding has not been obtained from other sources, and how and when the business or project would graduate to a level where it could obtain commercial funding, etc.

4. HOW DOES EEP AFRICA FINANCING WORK?

EEP Africa grants can be used flexibly depending on the vision of the grantee. It is meant to help companies on their journey to becoming a successful and sustainable business.

The grant can cover, for example:

- Staff costs
- Fixed assets and goods
- External services (such as e.g., business development support, legal and tax advisory services, data management systems, marketing, etc.)
- Office costs
- Transportation and travel
- Audits, licencing, permits

The applicant is expected to submit a high-level financial proposal at EoI stage, and a full budget at proposal stage. However, the figures submitted at EoI stage should be based on a carefully planned budget.

Ineligible costs are listed in the Project Implementation Manual. Note again that the Investment Committee is at liberty to impose conditions on projects where it sees this as appropriate.

4.1 Ticket size and disbursements

The fund supports access to grant financing between EUR 200,000 to EUR1 million unless stated otherwise. Conditions apply for grants being repayable (see Section 4.2).

EEP Africa disburses grants and repayable grants with a typical project period of 2 years. Grant disbursements are processed against project milestones and verified co-financing. Milestones and co-financing needs are defined for each project according to project design and budget.

4.2 Repayable grants

Repayable grants bring additional dimensions to EEP Africa's financing toolkit. Repayment requirements are defined according to the following principles:

1. For funding rounds with maximum grants of EUR1million, any proportion of the EEP Africa grant exceeding EUR 500,000 will automatically be considered as a repayable grant. [2]Any feasibility studies for on-grid and/or utility scale development are considered repayable pending financial close (regardless of financing level requested).
2. Any share of the requested grant amount which is dedicated to the acquisition of stock and/or inventory that will generate direct revenue to the applicant through sales, essentially working capital, will need to be repayable.
3. The whole grant can be considered repayable in the following cases:
    a. the grantee wants to demonstrate more "skin in the game" as part of their application process and thus chooses to apply for a repayable grant, or
    b. the EEP Africa Investment Committee approves an application for funding on a condition of the grant being fully repayable, or

[2] For example, of EUR 750,000 grant request, EUR 250,000 would be automatically treated as repayable.

the lead applicant is classified as a mature company or the parent company/majority shareholding entity (in the case of an SPV) is considered mature.Terms and conditions of the repayable amounts will be defined in the Contract. Repayable grants do not incur interest. Repayment of the grant will be linked to the achievement of pre-agreed repayment triggers and typically happens over a period of five years following project close. Repayment may be undertaken in instalments or, in the case of a clear financial close, in one instalment.

4.3 Co-financing

4.3.1 General considerations

EEP Africa requires a minimum of 30% cash co-financing. Exemptions exist for early stage and mature companies as outlined in this section.

Cash co-financing can be in the form of equity, loans, credit facilities, other grants or cash reserves and is required to be in place and verified prior to disbursement of EEP Africa financing. Revenues from carbon projects can be a source of co-financing if the project is already in place and is an additional source of income to the company and hence the project. However, it cannot be the sole source of income to the project.

All cash co-financing should be new financing to the project, and therefore costs and expenditures incurred prior to EEP Africa financing are not eligible.

Applicants should provide details of their planned co-financing structure and sources at EoI stage. They can submit proof of available co-financing (e.g. bank statements, a Letter of Intent by an investor, signed financing agreements, etc.) for co-financing at full proposal stage to strengthen their case with the Investment Committee. Future revenue from product sales cannot be submitted as a form of cash co-financing as availability of funds is not verifiable in advance.

A Letter of Intent or any other proof of available or planned co-financing by a third party needs to include at minimum a letter or other document (properly signed and dated) confirming:

- ticket size of the investment,
- type of financing,
- purpose of the financing,
- DD stage, and
- foreseen timelines for realising the investment.

Failure to provide sufficient detail on planned sources of co-financing may result in the application being disqualified for further evaluation.

4.3.2 Co-financing conditions for early-stage companies

In case of **pilot projects** conducted by **early-stage companies** (see Section 4.4), co-financing can be partially provided in-kind for up to 20% of the EEP Africa budget. This approach is supposed to encourage cash-strapped early-stage companies to test new ideas, business models and technologies.

Cash co-financing will still be required: in-kind co-financing for pilot projects can cover up to 20% of the total proposed budget, while cash contribution would need to be at 10% minimum.

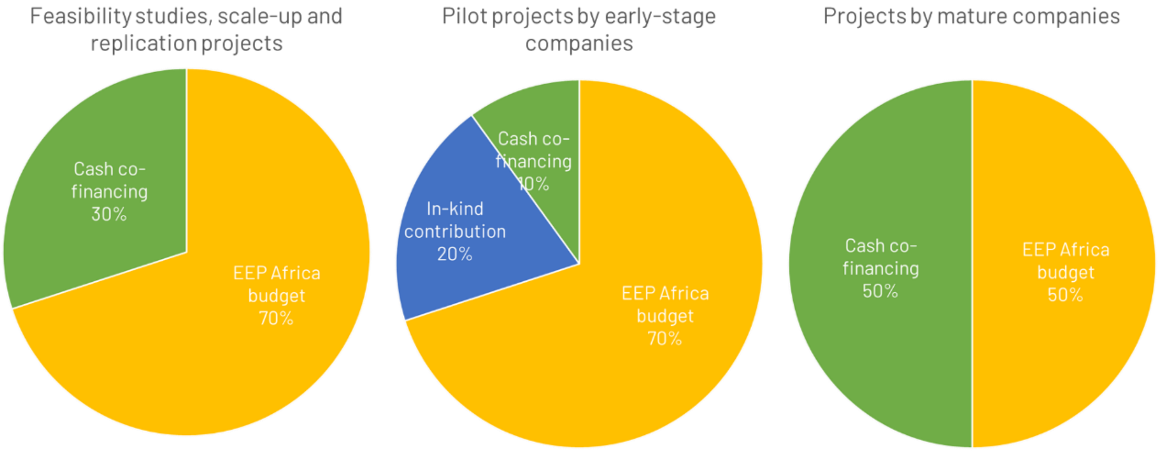
In-kind contributions should be quantifiable, verifiable, and relevant to the project. The contribution should furthermore be specific, feasible and realistic and timely to the project implementation. Eligible expenses for in-kind contribution can be incurred within maximum of two years before the contract start. Personnel cost does not qualify as in-kind contribution unless verifiably incurred within two years of the contract start and clearly linked to the proposed project.

Details on how to identify eligible sources of in-kind contribution and measure their value can be found in the Project Implementation Manual.

4.3.3 Co-financing conditions for mature companies

Companies that qualify as mature (see Section 4.4) are required to provide minimum 50% cash-based co-financing for expansion phase projects. This also applies to lead applicants whose parent company/majority shareholding entity (in the case of SPVs) is considered mature.

Figure 2 Co-financing approaches



4.4 Company maturity

Company maturity will influence the Investment Committee's decision on co-financing requirements to ensure that the applicants demonstrate enough "skin in the game" according to their relative financial abilities.

Company maturity will be assessed at EoI stage based on the criteria defined in Table 1. The framework was developed by EEP Africa based on benchmarks from the clean energy sector and EEP Africa's portfolio experience. [3] If no clear category can be identified based on the overall matrix, then the indicators profitability, revenue, and funding will determine the final classification.

Companies classified as start-up, commercialisation or scale-up are considered early-stage companies.

[3] International Finance Corporation, accessed in 2021, IFC's Definitions of Targeted Sectors; Powering Agriculture, 2020, Access to Financing for Early-Stage Innovators in the Clean Energy-Agriculture Nexus; Wood Mackenzie, 2019, Strategic investments in off-grid energy access: Scaling the utility of the future at the last mile.

Table 1 Company maturity matrix

Characteristics	Start-Up	Commercialisation	Scale-Up	Mature
	Early-stage			
Years of operation	0 - 3	3 - 5	5 - 7	8 +
Number of staff	<10	10 - 49	50 - 99	100 +
Profitability	Negative	Negative	Approaching break-even	Profitable
Revenue	<€100,000	€100,000 - €1m	<€1m - €3m	<€3m +
Total assets	<€100,000	€100,000 - €1m	<€1m - €3m	<€3m +
Funds raised	<€500,000	€500,000 - €1m	<€1m - €3m	<€3m +
Funding stage	Founding capital	Seed capital	Series A	Series B
Funding source	Mostly owner, sweat equity, founder equity/loans, and grants	Mostly owner, plus 1 or 2 equity investments and grants	Mostly equity and debt funding	Mostly commercial equity and debt funding
Financial statements	No annual statement or statutory audit	Annual statement, no statutory audit	Annual statement and statutory audit	3 years of annual statements and statutory audits

5. AM I ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

In principle, all legally registered private entities proposing a project under active development in EEP Africa's focus markets and within the eligible thematic scope can apply for funding, based on a set of eligibility criteria.

5.1 Lead applicants

EEP Africa funds the following types of organisations:

- Private companies
- Start-ups
- Social enterprises

All applicants must be registered legal entities for at least six months at the time of the EoI opening date. Registration documents and other required statutory documents should be submitted for the entity that will be the eventual signatory and lead implementer of the EEP Africa project.

During the due diligence process, EEP Africa will review the status of all necessary registrations, licensing and permitting, conduct the necessary integrity due diligence checks, and will require compliance with all local requirements as well industry standards.

Mandatory documents to be provided by the lead applicant needs to be **dated within six months before the EoI opening date** and include:

- Company registration
- Tax registration
- Bank account holder confirmation
- Signed letters of intent from partners referred to in the proposal
- Financial information (last audited accounts[4] are mandatory for mature companies)

[4] Audited accounts can be from the last full financial year and don't have to be dated within the six months timeframe if not yet available.

Additional information will be requested regarding business permits and licenses to operate in the target market. In the case of early-stage companies, a clear plan needs to be presented to acquire any licenses and permits required to run the business in the focus country. Furthermore, where land rights need to be acquired, correct processes and procedures need to be followed and documented.

5.2 Geographic scope

The geographic scope for CfP 2026 includes 17 countries: Botswana, Burundi, Comoros, Eswatini, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Note the limitation for CfP2026 on projects for Kenya, Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia and South Africa: EEP Africa will only accept projects focused on e-waste management in these countries this year. More detail on the scope of e-waste projects has been included in Annex II. Projects may be implemented in more than one of the above countries as regional projects. Results and project outputs need to be clearly attributed to each country within the regional scope.

Projects can focus on one or several sub-regions within one country and choose to target different geographies of end users (urban, peri-urban, rural).

It is advisable to select a geographic scope and project and focus on this with one application. We strongly discourage applicants to apply with the same project scope in multiple countries as individual applications. This will lead to disqualification of all applications.

In general, projects need to demonstrate additionality of their innovation within their geographic context of implementation. Several markets are considered mature for certain products and services as outlined in Annex III. Proposed projects for this technology and in these markets are unlikely to pass the EoI stage unless they can demonstrate innovation and/or strong additionality in these markets.

5.3 Project duration

The project implementation period is limited to 24 months after signing the contract. Applicants should propose the project period based on their best estimate of the time necessary to finalise all project activities and report to EEP Africa.

5.4 Partnerships

Consortia are eligible to apply but need to nominate one organisation as the lead applicant. The lead applicant has full responsibility for the implementation of the project, including compliance with the funding contract and reporting.

Organisations may only serve as lead applicant on ONE application. However, in addition to being lead applicant in one application, organisations are eligible to be involved in other applications as a project partner. That said, we advise against multiple applications of the same company through partnerships. Each partnership is evaluated on its own merits and should demonstrate an existing engagement and relationship of the entities.

Individuals, NGOs, research institutions and mainstream government institutions, e.g., government ministries, UN agencies and national/provincial/district departments, are NOT eligible to apply as lead applicant but may be included in an application as a project partner.

6. HOW DOES EEP AFRICA EVALUATE APPLICATIONS?

EEP Africa uses a standardised methodology to evaluate applicants. The evaluation process is harmonised across EoI, pitching and proposal evaluation stages.

6.1 EoI stage

At the EoI stage, applicants must demonstrate their eligibility for EEP Africa funding as outlined in Section 5. Applications from local and/or women entrepreneurs are strongly encouraged.

In addition, companies will be evaluated based on the following questions:

- Company maturity and ownership (nationality, gender of majority shareholders) as well as local embedment within the project country;
- Clear project description which matches the EEP Africa focus and mission;
- Level of innovation of the proposed technology, business model, and/or partnership within the context of the proposed geographic focus;
- Level of active development of the project and clearly defined route to market and geographic additionality;
- Sensible budget breakdown and financial additionality; and
- All mandatory documents for the lead applicant (the eventual contract signatory and project implementer) (at minimum: company and tax registration, bank accountholder confirmation and financial data).

In the case of equally strong applications, preference will be given to projects that enhance the diversity of the EEP Africa portfolio and/or the sector in general. Longlist decisions are final and cannot be challenged.

6.2 Pitching stage

Longlisted applicants will be invited to pitching sessions. During the pitch session, applicants will be invited to present their projects in more detail. The evaluation will be based on the following criteria to make a shortlist decision:

- *Thematic match* – a clear and relevant match to EEP Africa priority themes;
- *Applicant's capacity to implement* – track record and achievements to date; vision & business outlook
- *Current status & timelines of the project* – project is in active development; proposed timelines are reasonable and feasible; and
- *Innovation* – the level of innovation of the proposed project while remaining feasible;
- *Technology* – (if applicable) track record with the proposed technology and/or the proposed technology fits well into the company's overall portfolio and business strategy;
- *Business model* - (if applicable) track record with the proposed business model and/or the proposed business model fits well into the company's overall portfolio and business strategy;
- *Financial proposal* – a clearly defined project budget breakdown is presented; co-financing is clear; and
- *Risks & mitigation measures* – a clear understanding of the project risks and mitigation measures.

Furthermore, the evaluation committee will have a constructive discussion on any BDS and IF needs with the applicant. However, the findings from this discussion will not feed into the evaluation scoring. They serve to identify BDS & IF support needs during proposal development and project implementation stage.

Shortlisting decisions are final and cannot be challenged.

6.3 Full proposal stage

At the full proposal stage, applicants are expected to elaborate on their proposed project and on their technical and financial proposal, considering feedback provided by EEP Africa during the EoI and pitching stage.

Under the **technical proposal**, the following topics will be reviewed and evaluated:

- *Thematic match, innovation in technology and/or business model* – clear and carefully considered explanations are provided in line with the previously pitched project proposal or as amended based on feedback by EEP Africa;
- *Likelihood of success* – the applicant demonstrates active development of the project and capacity to successfully implement and achieve the proposed results; the applicant has a clear vision for commercial sustainability of the project post-EEP Africa grant;
- *Impact and targets* – the project is likely to have a positive impact on the wider clean energy space and within the context of the highlighted SDGs; the project's approach to impact monitoring is clear; a link exists to gender and/or social inclusion; and
- *Scalability and replicability* – (if applicable) clear description of the applicant's plans for scale-up and/or replication.

Under the financial proposal, the applicant will be expected to submit a full project budget (as per the budget template) which details the project budget and co-financing plans.

- *Detailed project budget* – the project budget should be well thought through and address the relevant needs of the project to ensure successful project implementation; the budget should also be balanced across the relevant budget categories; and
- *Plan for co-financing* - EEP Africa will evaluate co-financing as per the criteria outlined in Section 4.3 and details provided in the Project Implementation Manual. All proposed co-financing will be carefully evaluated and assessed.

Understanding that early-stage companies will not necessarily have robust financial documentation yet, the applicant is expected to provide an overview of:

- *Income* – in the absence of audited statements, a clear view of projected income and mix of sources of income appropriate to the maturity of the company over the past 12 months (or since company registration);
- *Expenditures* – in the absence of audited statements, a clear view of the company's expenditures and assets appropriate to the maturity of the company.

Furthermore, the applicant is expected to describe their capacity and expertise – a clear and credible description of the project lead and partner roles and responsibilities, the project management structure, and a summary of the experience and expertise of key project staff (can be marked as vacancies).

EEP Africa may contact previous supporters as per the contact details provided by the applicant in the EoI stage. Contact details for a reputable referee are encouraged and can be provided for the lead applicant and/or partner(s) to strengthen the application but are not mandatory. At this stage, and especially in the absence of referees, the evaluation committee may decide on a site visit during proposal development stage.

The applicant will also be asked to elaborate on their governance structure. However, given differences in governance between early-stage and more mature companies, this will not be evaluated beyond the majority ownership of the company.

6.4 Reasons for exclusion

6.4.1 Projects with limited alignment to EEP Africa's objectives

As per the specifications in Annex III, projects that target products or services indicated as no longer innovative will not be considered for funding by EEP Africa unless a significant level of innovation can be demonstrated.

In addition, projects with limited visibility for post-grant replication and scalability are unlikely to be considered for funding.

6.4.2 Current EEP Africa grantees

Lead applicants who have an active EEP Africa grant contract cannot apply. Active grant contracts are those where the final audit and final disbursement are still pending at the time of the EoI opening date.

Lead applicants who are currently partners in active EEP Africa grant contracts, and vice versa, current EEP Africa grantees who want to apply as partners in an application to CfP2026, will be evaluated on the scope of their activities in the proposed project or existing grant contract.

6.4.3 Applicants with multiple applications

Lead applicants should submit only one application. Multiple applications by the same lead applicant will be disqualified. This also holds for subsidiaries of the same parent company.

Companies can apply as partners across several applications with different lead applicants. However, in such cases the existing partnership and its benefits need to be clearly demonstrated.

6.4.4 Projects without a clear business case

Projects that mainly focus on market studies, technology research, capacity building/training or policy development, and cannot demonstrate a clear business case will not be accepted.

However, activities of this kind can be considered as part of the wider project scope.

6.4.5 Projects clearly not in active development

Companies need to demonstrate that they have already made progress in the implementation of their proposed project. Projects that only start implementation activities upon EEP Africa financing approval will not be considered.

6.4.6 Proven technologies and business models

Technologies and business models that have already been proven in the focus market and thus should not require grant financing, will not be considered See Annex III for a breakdown of eligible scope within geographies.

6.4.7 Lack of clarity on co-financing

While it is not expected that applicants have their full co-financing in place prior to application, we need to see a clear vision of where the co-financing for the project will come from. This should include names of investors or organisations likely to provide the required co-financing, or (in the case of pilot projects by early-stage companies) a clear view on eligible sources of in-kind contribution.

6.4.8 NDF eligibility criteria

Projects in conflict with the list in Annex I will be automatically excluded from the CfP process.

Furthermore, all applicants, project partners and consultants must operate in line with the NDF Policy on Anticorruption and Integrity. Any indication of non-compliance will cause automatic exclusion at any point in the evaluation process. All applicants and project partners will be identified and verified during the CfP process and must pass an integrity due diligence.

6.5 Data privacy considerations

Applicants should take note of NDF's privacy policy and SNV's privacy statement before proceeding with the application process.

EEP Africa will also request for approval to share the applicant's data and relevant project information submitted in the EoI with other clean energy financing and support initiatives. Data shared would include name of company, name and email of the primary contact person, full project title, type of project, country of implementation, project sector and category.

The objective is to enable applicants to potentially receive relevant assistance from other programmes and funders regardless the outcome of the EEP Africa application process. The applicant can accept or decline the data sharing statement with no impact on the EoI or proposal evaluation.

7. WHAT ARE THE CFP TIMELINES AND HOW DO I CONNECT WITH EEP AFRICA?

7.1 Submission of applications

All applications are to be submitted through an online platform accessible from the EEP Africa website. The application form allows you to save it and continue and/or edit at a later stage without losing any entered information. Once you have fully completed your application (EoI) you should submit it to EEP Africa by pressing 'Submit'. After submission, changes to the EoI are not possible. Please only submit one application for your project.

EEP Africa and NDF cannot be held responsible for any accidental loss of entered information or inability of the applicant to access our online submission portal. EEP Africa will not accept any form of proposal submission other than the online submission tool. Please note that partially completed applications or applications filled in any language other than English will not be considered.

The deadline for submission of EoIs is Monday, 16 March 2026 at 2 p.m. EAT. Late submissions will not be accepted, and the system will not allow late submission. Each applicant will receive a confirmation email after a successful submission.

We strongly encourage submission of the EoI in good time before the deadline to avoid any last-minute problems which can otherwise be avoided.

7.2 Indicative timeline and communication

The indicative timeline for the call for proposals process is illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2 Indicative timeline for the EEP Africa 2026 call for proposals

Time	CfP milestone
Monday, 16 February	Call for Proposals opens
Monday, 16 March 2 p.m. EAT	EoI submission deadline
Friday, 24 April	Communication to longlisted applicants
Tuesday, 28 April	Webinar for longlisted applicants
4 -22 May	Pitch interviews
Friday, 29 May	Communication to shortlisted applicants
Tuesday, 2 June	Webinar for shortlisted applicants
Monday, 27 July 2 p.m. EAT	Full Proposal submission deadline
End of September	Final Investment Committee decision
October onwards	Enhanced due diligence and contracting process

Clarifications to these guidelines and Frequently Asked Questions will be published on the EEP Africa website. Enquiries and consultations regarding the specifics of individual applications are not allowed.

EEP Africa reserves the right to amend the guidelines and eligibility criteria at any point in time.

EEP Africa agrees to regard all information related to the application and subsequent progress of the project that is not in the public domain if not otherwise communicated and agreed as confidential. Only EEP Africa, its staff and consultants, members of the Investment Committee and NDF officials will have access to your application without your prior approval.

Once you have started the application process, we strongly recommend that you use the **in-platform support function** to communicate any questions or problems you may have. If this is not possible, please send your enquiries to **cfp@eepafrica.org**. Any questions or clarifications regarding the EoI application form and process are to be sent no later than **Friday, 6 March 2026**.

ANNEX 1. EEP AFRICA EXCLUSION LIST

EEP Africa exclusion list defines the types of projects that the Fund will not finance. It is based on NDF's exclusion list and is regularly updated to include activities excluded by any of the EEP Africa donors.

EEP Africa will not knowingly finance, directly or indirectly, projects involving the following:

1. Forced labour, or harmful or exploitative forms of child labour.
2. Activities deemed illegal under host country laws or regulations, or international conventions and agreements or subject to international phase-out bans, such as:
    a. Production of or trade in products containing PCBs;
    b. Production of or trade in pharmaceuticals, pesticides/herbicides and other hazardous substances subject to international phase-outs or bans (Rotterdam Convention, Stockholm Convention);
    c. Production of or trade in ozone-depleting substances subject to international phase-out (Montreal Protocol);
    d. Trade in wildlife or wildlife products regulated under the CITES Convention;
    e. Transboundary movement of waste prohibited under international law (Basel Convention) except for non-hazardous waste destined for recycling;
    f. Activities prohibited by host country legislation or international conventions relating to the protection of biodiversity resources or cultural heritage;
    g. Production or trade in or use of unbonded asbestos fibres or asbestos-containing products;
    h. Shipment of oil or other hazardous substances in tankers which do not comply with IMO requirements.
3. Unsustainable fishing methods, including blast-fishing, drift-net fishing or trawling in the marine environment.
4. Production and distribution of ammunition and weapons, and weapons carriers.
5. Ethically controversial projects:
    a. Sex work and related infrastructure and services;
    b. Gambling and related equipment;
    c. Tobacco (production, processing and distribution).
    d. Alcohol (production, processing and distribution of hard liquor)
6. Production of or trade in radioactive materials. This does not apply to medical equipment, quality control (measurement) equipment and any equipment where the radioactive source is trivial and/or adequately shielded.
7. Investments into search, extraction, production, distribution, processing and promotion of fossil fuels (coal, oil, natural gas and peat).
8. Activities that increase use of fossil fuels and/or prolong the technical or economic lifetime of heat and power production using fossil fuels, except for back-up in power generation plants, for household cooking purposes and for processes where feasible alternatives do not exist.
    a. Projects targeting the promotion of LPG are not eligible for EEP Africa funding.
9. Activities that have an adverse social or environmental impact, intended or unintended, e.g. where a conflict may arise between livelihoods and the proposed project objectives (e.g. use of local resources for project implementation that would otherwise be important to sustain local livelihoods such as use of primary food crops for biofuels) or where there is a risk of an adverse

environmental impact (e.g. over-abstraction of resources in resource-scarce environments such as solar-powered irrigation in semi-arid areas or drones enabling the use of pesticides).

10. Biofuel projects if they are:
    a. Based on feedstock grown on land with high carbon content or biodiversity value, such as rainforests, wetlands, peat lands and grasslands, in reserves or on protected lands, or on lands with a high conservation value;
    b. Using a feedstock for production of liquid biofuels, where the overall climate and development benefits would be higher by using the same feedstock unprocessed for, e.g., direct combustion in a co-generation plant.
    c. Using a feedstock that could be considered as a primary food crop (excluding using the waste streams from such feedstock).
    d. Using solid biomass fuels from forests, planted or natural, having a carbon cycle incompatible with the Paris Agreement.
    e. First generation biofuel projects with production area over 75ha.
11. Commercial logging operations or the purchase of logging equipment for use in primary tropical moist forests or old-growth forests.
12. Production or trade in wood or other forestry products other than from sustainably managed forests.

ANNEX 2. DEFINITION OF E-WASTE MANAGEMENT PROJECTS

This Annex provides a definition for clean energy sector-linked e-waste management projects under the EEP Africa 2026 Call for Proposals.

Definition of E-Waste

For the purpose of defining eligibility for EEP Africa funding, electronic waste (e-waste) refers to discarded electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) and their components that can be clearly traced back to clean energy operations, including but not limited to[5]:

- **Solar equipment:** solar panels, inverters, charge controllers, and batteries from solar lanterns, solar home systems, and mini-grids
- **Batteries:** lithium-ion, lead-acid, nickel-cadmium, and other battery types from various applications
- **Lamps:** fluorescent lamps, high intensity discharge lamps, and LED lamps
- **Cooling and freezing equipment:** refrigerators, freezers, air conditioners, heat pumps.
- **Appliances:** ICT equipment and white goods that are sold in combination with off-grid solar systems or minigrids, electric cooking appliances, radios, TVs
- **Other EEE components**: cables, circuit boards, power supplies, and electronic accessories

Definition of E-Waste Management Projects

E-waste management projects are initiatives that address one or more stages of the e-waste value chain with demonstrable clean energy and environmental benefits. Eligible projects must include activities in at least one of the following categories as far as they relate to the clean energy sector:

Collection and Logistics

- Establishment of e-waste collection centers, drop-off points, or take-back schemes
- Development of reverse logistics systems for e-waste retrieval from households, businesses, or institutions
- Mobile collection units or community-based collection programmes
- Implementation of producer responsibility schemes or systems and related circular economy business models, including digital platforms

Sorting and Dismantling

- Facilities for manual or semi-automated sorting of e-waste by category and hazard level
- Safe dismantling operations that separate components for re-use, refurbishment, or recycling
- Systems for identifying and segregating hazardous materials (e.g., mercury, lead, cadmium, brominated flame retardants)

Recycling and Material Recovery

- Processing facilities for recovering valuable materials (e.g. precious metals, copper, aluminum, plastics, glass)
- Technologies for safe extraction of materials from e-waste components
- Partnerships with certified recyclers for downstream processing of separated materials
- Innovation in recycling processes that reduce environmental impact and improve recovery rates

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[5] Adapted from The Global E-Waste Strategic Partnership globalewaste.org

Refurbishment and Re-use

- Programmes for testing, repairing, refurbishing, and then reselling functional electronic equipment for life extension
- Quality assurance systems ensuring refurbished products meet safety and performance standards
- Distribution channels for refurbished equipment to underserved communities or markets
- Training programs for refurbishment technicians[6]

Safe Disposal and Treatment

- Facilities for environmentally sound material recovery and recycling of e-waste fractions
- Facilities for environmentally sound disposal of non-recyclable e-waste fractions
- Treatment systems for hazardous components requiring specialized handling
- Technologies for neutralizing or safely containing toxic substances

Energy Recovery

- Systems for recovering energy from non-recyclable e-waste fractions through waste-to-energy processes
- Technologies that convert e-waste materials into fuel sources or energy, provided they meet environmental safeguards

Clean Energy Nexus

All e-waste management projects must demonstrate a clear connection to clean energy objectives through one or more of the following:

- **Clean energy operations:** Use of renewable energy (solar, wind, biogas, etc.) to power e-waste management facilities and operations
- **Energy efficiency:** Implementation of energy-efficient technologies and processes in e-waste handling, processing, or transportation
- **Solar e-waste focus:** Specific focus on end-of-life management of solar panels, inverters, batteries, and other solar energy system components. Other e-waste could also be included as long as solar is the core focus.
- **Resource recovery for clean energy:** Recovery of materials (e.g., silicon, silver, aluminum, rare earth elements) and/or product components that support clean energy technology (re-)manufacturing
- **Circular economy contribution:** Demonstrable contribution to circular economy principles that reduce the environmental footprint of clean energy technologies
- **Climate impact:** Quantifiable reduction in greenhouse gas emissions through proper e-waste management versus improper disposal or landfilling[7]

Ineligible Activities

The following activities are not eligible for funding as e-waste management projects under EEP Africa:

- Projects that cannot demonstrate a clear linkage to the clean energy sector
- Pure trading or brokerage of e-waste without value-addition or processing
- Informal or backyard operations lacking environmental and safety controls

[6] As per general EEP Africa CfP guidelines, trainings are only eligible for funding in combination with other business activities.

[7] Support with the quantification of GHG emissions is provided during project implementation

- Projects solely focused on exporting e-waste to other countries for processing, without domestic value addition, or where the destination country cannot demonstrate compliance with international standards
- Landfilling or dumping of e-waste without proper treatment
- Activities involving child labour or exploitative labour practices, or where adherence to broader labour rights and community health and safety is not assured
- Open burning or uncontrolled incineration of e-waste

Evaluation of e-waste management projects

The evaluation criteria outlined in the general CfP2026 guidelines apply to e-waste management projects in the same way as to all other projects submitted to EEP Africa. In addition, the following criteria apply

Environmental and Health Safeguards

In addition to the general environmental health and safety standards required for all EEP Africa projects[8], the following standards relevant to e-waste need to be adhered to:

- Compliance with national environmental and, where applicable, e-waste regulations and international standards (e.g. Basel Convention - Home Page)
- Worker health and safety protocols meeting international standards (e.g. ILO guidelines as per the 2019 Global Dialogue Forum on Decent Work in the management of electrical and electronic waste (e-waste).)
- Monitoring plans for:
    - Prevention of environmental contamination (soil, water, air) from e-waste processing
    - Proper handling of hazardous materials with documented safety procedures

Formalization and Legitimacy

- Legal business registration and necessary permits/licenses for e-waste operations
- Mechanisms to formalize (meaning as a minimum to register, train and equip) informal e-waste workers where applicable
- Transparent tracking and documentation systems, encouraging the use of digital tools for improved data availability and accuracy to enable traceability of e-waste flows

[8] IFC Performance Standards: ifc.org/content/dam/ifc/doc/mgrt/ifc-performance-standards.pdf
World Bank EHS Guidelines: https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/157871484635724258/pdf/112110-WP-Final-General-EHS-Guidelines.pdf

ANNEX 3. GUIDANCE ON COUNTRY-LEVEL INNOVATION & ADDITIONALITY

The below list has been developed to assist applicants in better gauging which projects EEP Africa evaluators will not consider innovative or with sufficient additionality in the given geographic context. These are indicative of EEP Africa's assessment of the local market. Applicants who feel strongly about the value addition of their project (e.g. due to a highly innovative new business model approach or reach of disadvantaged communities) are still encouraged to apply.

The following technologies are not considered innovative by EEP Africa in the listed markets unless value addition can be demonstrated:

Product	Countries
Solar lanterns	E-Swatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe
SHS	Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda
Improved biomass cookstoves	Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda

No specifications have been provided for South Africa, Kenya, Botswana, Mauritius, and Namibia as only e-waste management projects will be eligible for funding in these markets under CfP2026.