



TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A FEASIBILITY STUDY

Women's Access to Renewable Energy for Economic Development (WAREED)

Social Enterprise Development (SEND) Sierra Leone is seeking a consultant(s) to conduct a feasibility study for a proposed intervention titled 'Women's Access to Renewable Energy for Economic Development' (WAREED). The intervention will be financed jointly by SEND-SL (25%) and the TERRA TECH Förderprojekte e.V. & German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) (75%). The project has a total budget of 741,430.61 euros for 36 months and will be implemented by Social Enterprise Development Sierra Leone (SEND-SL). It is preferred that the applicant(s) has demonstrated working experience in Sierra Leone, particularly in social sciences, education, basic sciences and women empowerment.

1. About SEND-SL

SEND-SL is a non-governmental organization dedicated to enhancing the well-being of individuals across Sierra Leone while upholding the principles of human rights and gender equality. SEND-SL focuses on several thematic areas, encompassing Health, Infrastructure, Nutrition, WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene), Solar Energy, Education (both infrastructural development and capacity building), Governance (with a focus on women's political and economic empowerment), Livelihood, and Climate Change. The organization excels in various competencies, including promoting women's leadership, gender transformation, self-reliance approaches, governance, community resource mobilization, and the facilitation of community-led initiatives.

2. About the Intervention

2.1 Background

Only 6.4% of Sierra Leone's (SL) rural population has access to electricity. The time, cost, and reliability of getting electricity for businesses remain a challenge to the growth of the private sector and the country's struggling economy. Sierra Leone ranks 181 out of 190 countries in "getting electricity" to run a business. Though nascent, developing renewable energy and mini-grids in Sierra Leone offers growth and development opportunities for Sierra Leonean women. Women's low social and economic status puts them at a disproportionate disadvantage in benefitting from economic, leadership and entrepreneurship opportunities. The debate on how electricity impacts enterprises has primarily ignored gender considerations.

The Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) has ambitious plans, and with recent donor investments in mini-grid energy provision, the potential for transformative impact is unprecedented. 2016, Sierra Leone became the first African country to sign the Energy Africa Policy Compact with the UK Government. Since then, DFID, in collaboration with UNOPs and the Ministry of Energy, has invested £43 million in the Rural Renewable Energy Project (RREP), one of the most significant green mini-grids projects in Sub-Saharan Africa "to improve rural renewable energy access through the deployment of 97 mini-grids connecting 360,000 people". One of the recommendations from the impact evaluation report of the RREP is to increase access to productive electrified assets in Project communities. It was further discovered that fewer female-headed households are connected to the mini-grids, thus less electricity usage by women in rural communities.

Most women entrepreneurs run subsistence-level micro-businesses and have limited growth opportunities due to their over-reliance on manual labour. Overall, 56% of all employed women in Sierra Leone live below the international poverty line with little access to finance. Only 15.4% of women can access an account at a financial institution or mobile money service. There needs to be better consumer awareness of how these mini grids can be accessed and utilized, especially among women. Harmful sociocultural norms and beliefs reinforce gender inequalities and men's role as breadwinners and decision-makers. Research also shows that women face specific barriers in connecting to energy for productive use. These include financing to invest in the public use of electricity, discriminatory social norms, and time poverty for income-generating activities.

Approximately 3.6 billion people need access to electricity or modern cooking technologies. This dramatically impacts the quality of life, environment, health, education, and income opportunities. Sierra Leone is considered one of the least developed countries in the world. The country has about 71,740 km² and (as of 2019) about 7.81 million inhabitants (World Population Review), 62% of whom are rural. A large part of the population lives in subsistence agriculture. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the poverty rate is 77.5 %. Poverty problems were aggravated in the recent past by the Ebola epidemic in 2014/15 that destabilised the nation-building efforts by the government of Sierra Leone, Civil Society organisations and International NGOs, the consequences of which placed a heavy burden on the economy, health, and education. The Human Development Index stands at 0.419 (2018), putting Sierra Leone 184th out of 189.

Women make up 50.46 % of the total population and have limited access to finances and education, resulting in underrepresentation and ineffective participation in the economy and leadership positions. The Gender Inequality Index is 0.664, ranking Sierra Leone 153 out of 162 countries (UNDP 2018). Kailahun district was the first and most affected district during the hit of Ebola in Sierra Leone, and its inhabitants are still striving to gain their former being, especially women. These challenges have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the current economic inflations, which have increased women's unpaid care burden and gender-based violence (GBV).

Given this background, the study aims to provide issues of inequality in the productive use of energy between men and women in the Kailahun district by engaging stakeholders and women to identify and determine the underlying gender-based violence and discrimination issues affecting women in accessing finance through renewable energy in the target district. To achieve this, the following objectives will be implemented:

Overall Objective: The project is to improve access and utilization of clean and sustainable energy that promotes women’s empowerment through entrepreneurship and leadership in the Kailahun district.

Specific Objectives/Outputs:

1. Strengthened capacity of women for effective resource mobilization and utilization
2. Improved development and expansion of energy-enabled women's agricultural enterprises in mini-grid sites
3. Increased advocacy and networking on women’s economic empowerment to build an evidence base for decentralized energy provision.

The project is expected to benefit 6,839 women and men, with over 50% women in Kailahun district, Eastern Sierra Leone. It will collaborate with line Ministries Department and Agencies (MDAs), and competent & highly expertise partners (mini-grid suppliers and operators) to support the supply and installation of productive electrified assets in 15 proposed communities.

The indirect beneficiaries will be the total population of Kailahun District 525,372.

3. Objectives of the feasibility study and use

The feasibility study aims to provide SEND-SL and all stakeholders with a sound basis for developing the full project proposal by clarifying prerequisites, assumptions, opportunities, and risks. The study findings should provide an overview of key areas in consideration of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability (DAC OECD) scopes of the proposed intervention. The study will also be submitted to the TERRA TECH/BMZ for assessment of the overall feasibility of the project. The feasibility study will also outline the changes possible for the next three years with project support. It will critically examine the situation of the Kailahun district and the project outcomes and outputs formulated to reach the desired result. It will also help analyze target stakeholders identified as MDAs, mini-grid suppliers and operators, local authorities, etc.

The final report will include findings and recommendations for possible strategies and activities with a clear qualitative and quantitative description of each indicator and develop tools for monitoring, data collection, and an operational M&E plan.

The study is expected to:

1. Check and reaffirm the current situation and the underlying immediate factors causing inequality in the productive use of energy between men and women.
2. Inspect the capacity and sustainability of the proposed mini-grid systems that are in existence in the district.
3. Examine the capacity and experience of the proposed mini-grid operators.
4. Identify interventions prioritized by critical stakeholders within the study areas and their broader interest and support for the proposed project.
5. Make recommendations to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the project.
6. Identifying potential barriers and risks that could impact the results proposed.
7. Identify mechanisms and methodologies to ensure the sustainability of the project.

4. Methodology

It is to be ensured that the methodology is participatory, gender-sensitive and considers the cultural & social settings in Sierra Leone in line with Core Humanitarian Standards, SEND-SL core values, ethics, safeguarding principles and Code of Conduct. The consultant will be responsible for designing the study, including its methodology preferred/possible qualitative and quantitative tools and research methods that could be proposed.

Methods of study will comprise the following (but not limited to):

- a) Desk review of relevant documents, including project documents/data/reports, strategies, and approaches of SEND-SL, documents/manuals from similar interventions by other donor organizations, government notices/policies/documents impacting implementation, etc. The consultant is expected to share primary documents studied with the contracting party.
- b) Focus Group Discussions and Key informant interviews (semi-structured) with SEND staff, MDAs, district and chiefdom stakeholders, women groups, CSOs, Mini-grid operators, Credit Unions/FSAs, community members, and other key stakeholders necessary for successful intervention implementation. The consultant must finalize selection criteria and sample size of interviewees in consultation with the implementation teams. The consultant is expected to prepare the interview guides in consultation with the implementation teams.
- c) Direct observation during field visits.

5. Scope of Work

The consultant needs to conduct a:

- a) Stakeholder analysis at all three levels of outcomes (micro, meso, macro) with an explanation of their influence and power for the successful implementation of the proposed advocacy plan to influence national energy supply and policy formulation in support of local businesses.
- a) Drafting the project impact matrix according to BMZ guidelines and finalizing with TERRA TECH/BMZ.
- b) Facilitate a one-day workshop to discuss the recommendations and theory of change.
- c) Provide an analytical framework to address the purpose and objectives of the feasibility study.

6. 4. Deliverables

The following deliverables are expected from the consultant(s):

- a) Inception report max 5 pages, with the proposed methodology, analytical framework and timelines. Data collection tools should be attached as appendices to the inception report.
- b) Debriefing presentation at the end of the field visits to outline the most important findings of the study
- c) First draft of the feasibility report as per the format in Annex I, at the latest two weeks after completing the field visits, at most 30 pages. The report should have concise recommendations.
- d) The impact matrix
- e) Documents/photos/data studied/collected during the research study.
- f) Final report with all primary data collected.

7. Timeline

At most, the total planned days of consultant engagement are 21 workdays. The days are calculated in the following manner:

No	Task	Days
1	Inception meeting	1
2	Inception report, development of data collection tools and review of documents	3
3	Fieldwork	5
4	Analysis of firsthand data, preparation of debrief presentation, delivery of presentation, finalization of presentation incorporating comments	6
5	Writing of draft report	3
6	Workshop on recommendations and impact matrix	1
7	Writing of final report after comments	4
Total Days		23

Submission timelines:

Event	Milestones*
Advertisement	09.10.2023
Application Deadline	23.10.2023
Selection of Consultant	30.10.2023
Inception Meeting	5.11.2023
Inception Report	8.11.2023
Field Investigation Phase	TBA
Debrief Note/presentation	21.11.2023
Draft Report incl. Logframe and recommendations	26.11.2023
Final Feasibility Report	30.11.2023

*Milestones are only indicative dates for the completion of tasks. During the inception meeting, the exact final timeline will be agreed upon between the consultants and the contracting party.

8. Qualifications of the Consultant

- a) At least 5 years of experience working on and evaluating development projects, including gender, women empowerment, basic and social sciences, with a postgraduate qualification in the same fields. Experience with ex-ante studies is strongly desired. Experience in working on and evaluating women empowerment, gender, renewable energy and agriculture, microfinance and WASH projects is an asset.
- b) Strong knowledge/demonstrated experience of Sierra Leone country contexts is a must.
- c) Knowledge of the context of Sierra Leone, especially related to gender transformative and women empowerment approaches, is an asset.
- d) Proficiency in using MS Office is a must. Experience working with any data representation software is an asset.
- e) Clear, practical writing skills in English and local language skills are desirable.

9. Application Procedure

Applicants must provide a technical and financial offer:

1. The **technical part** (70% wt.) It should include a description of the overall design and methodology of the study and a work plan/adaptation to the timeline at hand (maximum 5 pages).
2. The **financial part** (30% wt.) includes a proposed budget for the complete study. It should state the fees per working day (plus the respective VAT and withholding tax, if applicable), the number of working days proposed and other costs such as travel. The cost of any training, including logistics, stationery, transport, etc., must also be included in the budget.
3. CV with 3 references, and one should be from the recent organization you have worked with.
4. The consultant should provide evidence of previous work or reports on 2 commissioned assignments of a similar nature.

10. Payment Milestones

The consultant will receive payment from SEND-SL in three instalments:

- a) First payment: 40 % upon acceptance of inception report and data collection tools
- b) Second payment: 30 % upon the submission of the draft report,
- c) Final payment: 30% subject to acceptance of the final report by SEND-SL
- d) National tax laws will be applied to all payments.

SEND-SL will only settle payment if the consultant has accomplished all the tasks on time and deliverables are approved by the SEND-SL Country Director and Human Resource Manager/Program Officer.

11. Confidentiality

All documents and data acquired from documents and during interviews and meetings are confidential and to be used solely for the evaluation. Consultants will be expected to sign a data protection agreement (DPA). A consent form should be issued to all respondents participating in this survey. Consultants will undergo credibility screening, including money laundering, fraud, etc.

The deliverables and all material linked to the evaluation (produced by the evaluator(s) or the organization itself), are confidential and always remain the property of SEND-SL.

12. Submission of bids:

Applications should be submitted to the email address recruitment@sendsierraleone.com with the subject title: Feasibility study for WAREED Proposal development.

Women with required expertise are strongly encouraged to apply

Closing date: **10th November 2023**