

Modern Cooking Facility for Africa (MCFA)

Invitation for Expressions of Interest: Technical Assistance Services to the Modern Cooking Facility for Africa (MCFA)

Questions & Answers, 12 December 2024

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q1: What are the most common challenges CSPs face that this TA is expected to address? This will inform how the team is structured and what specific experts to have onboard.

A1: The TA is expected to address all the topics listed under the three components in the Invitation for Expression of Interest ("Invitation"). The qualifications for Key Experts are included in the Invitation, other expert resources can be identified during the Assignment based on the identified TA needs.

Q2: Among the three components in the ToR, which do you see as the highest priority for this assignment?

A2: All three components are of equal importance and the TA allocation will be driven by CSPs' needs.

Q3: What areas of support are most required for the CSPs? For example, financing, marketing, distribution and/or operations.

A3: Areas of support will be further detailed during the scoping of individual TA Assignments.

Q4: Is there a targeted impact for the gender inclusion component?

A4: MCFA's approach to Gender Equality is further detailed in Annex C to the MCFA2 Application Guidelines, available for download [here](#).

Q5: What areas of support are most required for CSPs implementing gender policies?

A5: Areas of support will be further detailed during the scoping of individual TA Assignments but most commonly required areas of support are likely to be related to increasing the gender balance among employees and on sensitising staff on gender equality and SEAH.

Q6: Are there specific ESG or e-waste issues in the clean cooking sector which require prioritising as you see? Or general support and advising ad hoc on this front?

A6: Areas of support will be further detailed during the scoping of individual TA Assignments but most commonly required areas of support are likely to be related to formalisation of ESMS, waste/e-waste management and stakeholder engagement and grievance mechanisms.

Q7: Do most CSPs already have some form of ESG framework?

A7: This varies a lot across CSPs depending on the maturity of their business. Many CSPs may have adopted a high level environmental and social policy however most will require support in its operationalisation based on identified environmental and social risks.

Q8: Are there any quotas/expected amounts for the inclusion of CSPs within each country and/or across the project?

A8: No, TA allocation per CSP is subject to TA needs identified during the due diligence process and further refined in connection to scoping of individual TA assignments. As indicated on the Invitation, 40% of the total budget is tentatively reserved for the gender inclusion component.

Q9: Is the consultant required to have an existing physical workspace in Zambia or Kenya for this assignment? If so, could you please provide more information about the number of working days (person-days) they are expected to be present in the country?

A9: Existing physical workspace in Zambia or in Kenya is not required but it is considered a significant advantage if the Consultant has one from which on or more experts would provide the services under the Assignment.

Q10: Is there a technical and/or financial evaluation criteria to review?

A10: The shortlist of qualified and experienced Consultants will be made from responses to this invitation. The shortlist selection criteria are:

- Consultant's prior experience in providing technical assistance/business advisory services to private companies in the clean cooking sector in Sub-Saharan Africa and in the Project Countries in particular (40%); and
- Qualifications and competence of the Consultant's core team of experts as described above under "Consultant eligibility and profile" (60%).

The full proposal phase technical and financial evaluation criteria will be published to the shortlisted consultants in the Request for Proposals ("RFP").

Q11: Please confirm that you are only requesting CVs for the four key experts at the moment, not for supporting team members.

A11: Yes, we confirm that only CVs of the four key experts: Team Leader, Senior TA Manager, Gender Inclusion Lead and ESG Lead.

Q12: Would you be accepting also partial bids - or are you indeed looking just for full bids? We would be interested to apply to just one of the TA components - as our core and key knowledge, skills and experiences fit mostly with it and we do not have a consortium which can deliver all of the rest.

A12: No, the Consultants are required to submit a bid to all three components.

Q13: Could you provide an overview of the process following the EOI stage, including any expected timelines for RFP issuance, proposal submission, and the final selection of the Consultant?

A13: As stated in the Invitation, the shortlist of qualified and experienced Consultants will be made from responses to this invitation. The shortlisted consultants will be asked to submit technical and financial proposals, from which the highest-ranked consultant will be selected.

The preliminary timeline is as follows: Nefco expects to distribute an RFP with specific evaluation criteria, including Terms of Reference among the shortlisted Consultants by the end of January 2025. The expected submission deadline for consultants' proposals is end of March 2025 and the Assignment is expected to start during May-June 2025.

Q14: Could you clarify the evaluation process for the EOI stage?

a. For instance, will it involve scoring based on the provided information, or will there be additional steps such as interviews or presentations?

b. Will shortlisted firms receive detailed information on scoring criteria, terms of reference, and expectations during the RFP stage, or should these be inferred from the EOI information?

c. When evaluating key expert CVs, will Nefco assess only the expertise specific to the role listed in the TOR, or will broader relevant experience also be considered?

d. How many firms or consortia are expected to be shortlisted from the EOI stage, and will the number depend on the quality of submissions received?

e. By when does Nefco anticipate announcing the list of shortlisted firms for the RFP phase?

A14:

a. Please see Q&A10 above. Nefco typically does not conduct interviews with bidders. We however reserve the right to do so.

b. Please see Q&A13 above.

c. At this EOI stage, Nefco will assess the CVs of Key Experts against the required qualifications indicated in the Invitation.

d. The number will depend on the quality of EOIs received but Nefco aims to shortlist at least three consultants/consortia.

e. Please see Q&A13 above.

Q15: After selection, will there be a negotiation phase to finalize the terms of the framework agreement, or will this be defined during the RFP stage?

A15: Yes, a negotiation phase will follow the selection. As part of the RFP package, Nefco will publish the General Terms and Conditions for Consultancy Services which the Consultants are expected to examine carefully and respect.

Q16: Could you confirm the expected start date for the Assignment and any flexibility in the timeline for contract signing and commencement?

A16: Please see Q&A13 above. Nefco aims to follow this timeline to ensure timely delivery of TA services to CSPs.

Q17: Will the framework agreement provide fixed guidelines for all call-off assignments, or will specific terms be renegotiated for each call-off service?

A17: The framework agreement will include details on how the budget is split between milestone assignments (e.g. inception phase, reporting, knowledge products) and TA assignments. The scope and budget for specific TA assignments will be negotiated and agreed separately between the Consultant and Nefco through signing of call-off notices. A template for the call-off notice will be included in the Framework Agreement.

Q18: Should EOI submissions indicate how the Consultant will scale resources or capacity to meet the demands of the TA during the implementation period?

A18: No, this information will be required in the full RFP stage.

Q19: Will there be additional opportunities for engagement or clarification with shortlisted firms during the RFP stage, or will communication be limited to written questions?

A19: The RFP stage will include a similar written Q&A procedure as this EOI stage. Nefco does not envision arranging a joint pre-bid meeting.

Q20: Is it permissible for an organization to be part of multiple proposals, either as a lead consultant in one and a consortium partner in others, or as a sub-consultant across multiple submissions?

A21: An organisation can be the lead consultant in only one proposal but a consortium member or a sub-consultant in multiple proposals. Bidders should however note that during the RFP stage, a consortium between shortlisted consultants will not be allowed.

Q22: Are there any specific guidelines or restrictions regarding the composition of consortia, such as the minimum or maximum number of partners, or requirements for in-country representation within the consortium?

- a. Would Nefco require clarity on the division of roles and responsibilities among consortium members in the proposal, and if so, is there a preferred format for this?
- b. How will the evaluation process account for submissions by consortia compared to individual consulting firms? For example, will the collective experience of consortium members be considered equally to the lead organization's credentials?
- c. For consortia where multiple members contribute regional or local expertise, does the physical in-country hub requirement apply to all consortium members or only the lead organization?
- d. In the case of a consortium, would Nefco contract only the lead organization, or would all consortium members be co-signatories to the framework agreement?

A22: No, there are no specific guidelines or restrictions regarding the composition of the consortia but bidders are invited to consider efficiency when structuring their bids. Regarding in-country representation, please see Q&A9 above.

- a. The consultant will be expected to describe the division of roles and responsibilities among consortium members and in particular the key experts in the technical proposal during the RFP stage.
- b. Yes, the collective experience of the consortium will be considered in the evaluation of Consultant's experience.
- c. The preference of having a physical presence in one of the Project Countries and in Kenya or Zambia in particular applies to assigned experts irrespective whether these represent the lead consultant or a consortium member.
- d. Nefco may sign the Framework Agreement also with the consortium member(s) if their role in carrying out the assignment is considered to be significant by Nefco.

Q23: Could you clarify the weightage assigned to different aspects of the submission, such as company profile, experience in similar assignments, and CVs of key experts, during the shortlisting process?

A23: Please see Q&A10 above.

Q24: Could you specify how having an in-country hub in Zambia or Kenya would be weighted or assessed during the evaluation process? Would this factor be considered a mandatory or preferential criterion?

A24: Please see Q&A9 above.

Q25: Could you provide more details on how the one-to-one support, cohort-based training, and contributions to the MCFA Academy will be allocated across the three main components (Business and Operations Development, Gender Inclusion, ESG and E-Waste Management)?

A25: Further details on these will be included in the ToR however during the RfP stage, the shortlisted Consultant's will be requested to present its approach and methodology for carrying out the Assignment.

Q26: How does Nefco envision measuring the success of the TA services delivered under this Assignment?

- a. Are there specific KPIs or reporting formats Consultants are expected to follow?

A26: Nefco will measure success mainly against Consultant's timely delivery of deliverables agreed either in the Framework Agreement or in the call-off notices. Nefco may further carry out periodic surveys among the MCFA investee companies to measure their satisfaction in the provided TA services. Specific reporting formats will be agreed during the inception phase. More in-depth assessment on the TA services will be carried in programme-wide mid-term and final evaluation.

Q27: Can you elaborate on the process for scoping and budgeting specific TA needs under the framework agreement?

- a. Will Consultants have a role in prioritizing or selecting CSPs for TA delivery?
- b. With 40% of the budget tentatively reserved for gender inclusion, are there specific expectations for the scale or depth of activities (e.g., number of GAPs developed, trainings delivered, or CSPs supported)?

A27:

- a. Any findings from the due diligence and contracting stages form the starting point for scoping and budgeting of individual TA assignments. These will be further refined in an open dialogue between the CSP, Nefco and the Consultant.
- b. Specific expectations for the TA delivery across the three components will be further detailed in the Terms of Reference.

Q28: For the publishable knowledge products, could you clarify if there are predetermined themes, or would the Consultant have flexibility to propose topics based on TA findings?

A28: The themes are expected to be aligned with the overall topics of the Assignment and leverage on Consultant's findings from the delivery of TA services and related analysis.

Q29: Are there existing templates or frameworks that Nefco expects Consultants to use when developing SEAH policies and GAPs, or will Consultants have discretion in designing these tools?

A29: MCFA's approach to Gender Equality is further detailed in Annex C to the MCFA2 Application Guidelines, available for download [here](#). Further information will be included in the Terms of Reference.

Q30: Could you provide more details on the MCFA Academy's objectives, structure, and how the Consultant's contributions are expected to integrate with this initiative?

A30: The MCFA Academy is envisioned to work as a community of practice among CSPs to share learnings and insights but also for the Consultant to deliver cohort-based training to CSPs on topics covered by this Assignment. Overall, MCFA Academy sessions will be tentatively arranged online on a quarterly basis but not all sessions are expected to be arranged by the Consultant.

Q31: Will multiple applicants be offered a framework agreement and will they be competing for TA assignments? If so, kindly provide more insight into the awarding procedure.

A31: Nefco will conclude only one Framework Agreement for all three components of the Assignment. The details on awarding process will be included in the RFP.

Q32: Is there any estimate for the average budget per TA assignment? Or number of TA assignments to be covered under the total budget?

A32: The budget for TA assignments will be detailed in connection to scoping of each TA assignment. Please see also Q&A27 above.

Q33: Is the TA limited to the MCFA portfolio companies listed on your [website](#)? Or can it also be offered to prospects to help them become more investable for MCFA, or to other businesses critical to the success of MCFA investees (e.g. distributors)?

A33: Yes, TA is limited only to contracted MCFA portfolio companies only. This includes companies that are listed on our website as well as companies shortlisted through the second funding round once contracts with these companies have been concluded.

Q34: Is MCFA expecting to launch a new call for applications and would last-mile distributors of cookstoves be eligible to apply? (i.e. those not manufacturing cookstoves)

A34: There are currently no plans to launch a new call for proposals. MCFA can support only last-mile distributors that enter into contracts with their end-customers for the purposes of providing clean cooking services. Companies supported by MCFA can sell stoves of their own production or by another supplier as long as the stoves meet MCFA's technical requirements.

Q35: Is the TA likely to focus on either the earlier stage (Catalytic Funding Window) or more mature companies (Scale-up Funding Window)?

A35: Both earlier stage as well as more mature companies require TA.

Q36: How will MCFA identify the TA areas for the companies? Can the selected TA provider support this process?

A36: Please see Q&A27 above.

Q37: Would support to marketing, consumer behaviour change, fundraising efforts, and carbon finance also be in scope?

A37: Yes, support to marketing and consumer behaviour change can be included within the scope of TA assignments. Fundraising and carbon finance are however excluded from this Assignment.

Q38: Can you share more about the MCFA-specific gender inclusion policy that companies will be trained on? And to what extent will MCFA and the selected TA provider collaborate to deliver TA on the topic of Gender Inclusion?

A38: Please see Q&A29 above.