



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT FUND II (RFP 15-2)

The Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves

The Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves (Alliance) is a public-private partnership with the goal to save lives, improve livelihoods, empower women, and protect the environment by creating a thriving global market for clean and efficient household cooking solutions. The Alliance's '100 by 20' goal calls for 100 million homes to adopt clean and efficient stoves and fuels by 2020. The Alliance is working globally with over 1,000 partners from the bilateral, United Nations, private, humanitarian, NGO, academic, and philanthropic sectors to help overcome the market barriers that currently impede the production, deployment, adoption and use of clean cookstoves and fuels in developing countries.

The clean cookstove and fuel value chain offers new and viable pathways for women's economic empowerment. Women can participate in, own businesses around, and earn income from product design, engineering, manufacturing, maintenance, marketing, distribution, sales and related enterprise that involve cooking, such as restaurants and street food vendors.

Clean cookstoves and fuels – more affordable, culturally compatible products that produce fewer harmful emissions and burn more efficiently – are available today. However, the global prerequisites for a thriving cookstove and fuel market are not yet in place. Specifically, significant barriers to large-scale adoption, such as low consumer demand, nascent industry standards, diffuse distribution networks, underdeveloped financing mechanisms, and inadequate national policies continue to limit the potential for the sector to reach sustainable scale. The Alliance recognizes that women play an instrumental role in increasing awareness about the dangers of household air pollution, driving demand for new technologies that mitigate these dangers, and speeding their adoption and widespread use across their networks and within communities.

The Alliance's gender strategy is focused on addressing several key barriers to scaling women's empowerment and gender-informed approaches and is built around the 5 following pillars:

- 1) Establishing a strong evidence base and evaluating effective approaches;
- 2) Increasing access to finance to integrate women's empowerment into the sector;
- 3) Building capacity of enterprises and women entrepreneurs;
- 4) Raising awareness and generating demand among women consumers and adolescent girls and boys; and
- 5) Influencing and setting gender-equitable international and national policies and processes.

Under the framework of this gender strategy, the Alliance is working to build evidence that demonstrate the important impact that women can have on adoption as engaged entrepreneurs in the value chain. The Alliance is working with its partners to test the most effective gender-informed business models for scaling adoption. In addition, the Women's Empowerment Fund provides finance for partners to test innovative approaches to gender integration and women's empowerment. The Alliance also provides targeted capacity building, training, and other tools to help partners address gender issues and integrate women in the clean cooking sector.

Scaling Women's Empowerment in the Clean Household Energy Sector

The Alliance's Women's Empowerment Fund (WEF) is one of the few financing mechanisms designed to scale effective business models for empowering women energy entrepreneurs. The Fund serves as the Alliance's principal financing mechanism to realize our women's empowerment goals. The WEF is a grant facility that provides funding and capacity building to enterprises to increase the number of women earning income in the cooking value chain and/or to test innovative approaches to scaling women's empowerment throughout the clean cooking sector. The WEF strongly encourages applicants to utilize business models that strengthen women's livelihood opportunities by bundling household energy products and/or diversifying the suite of products for women to produce, distribute, maintain, etc.

The objective of the WEF is to allow clean energy enterprises to pilot innovative empowerment interventions and/or scale approaches that increase opportunities for women entrepreneurs, employees, sales agents, producers, etc. For the purpose of this fund, an entrepreneur is defined as a person seeking to increase her income through her own business activities. The term entrepreneur is used broadly, in reference to both micro-entrepreneurs and small-sized enterprise owners, as well as sales agents.

The Women's Empowerment Fund Round II

Overview

The Women's Empowerment Fund (WEF) seeks to scale the number of women energy entrepreneurs throughout the value chain and test innovative empowerment approaches. Target projects supported by WEF will:

- 1) Scale women's energy entrepreneurship and employment throughout their business models and the sector. This can include scaling existing proven gender and empowerment approaches or adding women's income-generating opportunities into existing business models; and/or
- 2) Pilot innovative interventions for women's empowerment in the clean cooking sector. Applicants must make the case that the proposed innovation is a game-changing, unique intervention that has not previously been tried in the clean cooking sector.

Universal Best Practices to Engage Women:

- Conduct analysis to understand community gender roles and dynamics
- Develop a strategy to engage men
- Schedule times and locations of meetings/activities around women's availability and remain flexible
- Identify and build strong local partnerships with trusted individuals and organizations; Strongly consider working with women's groups
- Conduct gender-sensitive trainings on relevant topics; Offer continuous training opportunities and mentorship

All applications must demonstrate how the gender best practices outlined in the [Alliance's Resource Guide on Scaling Adoption of Clean Cooking Solutions' through Women's Empowerment](#) will be implemented throughout the project/business model.

Note: WEF will not provide funding for general operations.

Grant Terms

Under RFP 15-2, the Women's Empowerment Fund will award grants of up to US\$75,000 to at least 4 qualifying organizations. Selected projects will have a 12-month timeframe from the disbursement of the grant to meet clear objectives and performance milestones. Regular reporting on activities and milestones will be required throughout project execution, in addition to a final results report 3 months after the end of the project. Recipients are also required to submit the Alliance's annual Results Reporting Survey.

Applicant Organization Criteria

- **Alliance Partnership:** The applicant organization **must** be a registered partner of the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves. Applicants who are not currently a Partner must be registered **prior** to submitting their application. Please follow the instructions on how to do so here: <http://community.cleancookstoves.org/become-a-partner>.
- **Organizational Type/Legal Structure:** Organizations can include but are not limited to for-profit companies, social enterprises, foundations, non-profits, universities, research institutes, faith-based institutions, etc.
- **Organization Stage of Development:** Organizations at all stages of operational development from seed-stage to large global organizations and enterprises. We encourage applicants to submit at least one year of financial statements as part of their application, if available.
- **Focus Geographies:** All qualified individuals and organizations, regardless of location, are encouraged to apply. Although the Alliance has a preference for partners operating in Alliance focus countries, organizations operating in other countries are also encouraged to apply.¹ The Alliance will select the most qualified applications regardless of location; the preference for Alliance focus countries is only weighted if the Alliance needs to make a final selection between applications of comparable quality.
- **Impact:** The applicant **must** be focused on driving highly scalable gender and empowerment impacts in alignment with the Alliance’s mission to save lives, improve livelihoods, empower women, and protect the environment.

Project Criteria

- **Type of Project:** The proposed intervention **must** be an innovative approach to gender mainstreaming and/or women’s empowerment, and strive to increase opportunities for women entrepreneurs, employees, sales agents, producers, etc.
- **Commercial Viability and Scalability:** The applicant **must** demonstrate commitment towards proposing commercially viable, market-based solutions. In addition, the proposed intervention must demonstrate a clear potential to scale and be replicated across markets in the long term.
- **Industry/Sector Focus:** The proposed intervention **must** be within the clean cooking value chain; applications with the option to bundle additional non-cooking energy products will be given preference.

Requirements for Testing

Applicants are asked to adhere to requirements for testing released by the Alliance in [March](#) 2014.

- For WEF applications that are focused on technologies that already exist in the market, it is preferred that third party testing has been done and reported publicly.
- Fuel manufacturers and distributors must have their fuels tested with the stoves they are predominantly used with.

Potential Project Focus

The list below provides a few examples of Women’s Empowerment Fund proposals that would be acceptable. This list is only intended to provide examples and is by no means exhaustive.

- Scaling the recruitment and retention of women clean energy distributors throughout a particular business model.
- Strengthening and scaling existing women’s groups or associations to increase production, distribution, access to finance, or after-sales services.
- Testing an innovative partnership that will empower women and scale adoption through nontraditional partners.

¹ Alliance focus countries are: China, Bangladesh, Kenya, Uganda, Ghana, Nigeria, India, and Guatemala.
<http://cleancookstoves.org/country-profiles/focus-countries/>

- All testing must follow protocols that have been mapped to IWA tier ratings for laboratory testing, using the requirements specified in the [IWA](#). Information for specific testing methodologies and protocols are available on the [Alliance webpage](#).

Applications with technologies that have test results that meet the criteria above will be given priority.

Application Process & Deadlines

The application process will be open from March 17 – April 14, 2015. **Applications are due on April 14, 2015 by 6 pm EDT.** Applicants must first create a user login and profile at <https://cleancookstoves.bidx.net/> in order to have access to the competition. Applicants that already have a user account from previous applications will be able to use their existing login information. New users will create a member account and complete an entrepreneur profile and business summary on this site. If you already have an account, please make sure your profile and proposal are up to date before proceeding with your application

Applicants must download the application materials available (listed below), complete them as part of the application, and attach the completed documents to the applicant’s business summary. The application materials have been designed to serve as useful tools for applicants to build and plan their Women’s Empowerment proposal.

Once the applicant’s business summary is complete and all application materials are attached to the business summary, applicants should go to the WEF II competition page (<https://cleancookstoves.bidx.net/competition/1>) and click on “Participate”. Select the applicant’s business summary from the drop-down menu, and click “Apply”. After ensuring that all of the application materials in the business summary are completed, uploaded, and up-to-date, applicants can click “Submit”. Once you click “Submit”, the application is final and will be submitted to the Alliance for consideration.

Applicants will be asked to download, complete and return the following:

- 1) An **Executive Summary** of the applicant organization and on the proposed intervention to be funded (no more than 5 pages; a template is provided in “Attached Documents”)
- 2) An **Application Workbook** containing four sections to be completed by the applicants
 - A General Information section on the applicant organization
 - A Financial model including
 - A simple, mandatory Income Statement
 - An optional Breakeven Analysis template, for applicants that have this information
 - A Women’s Empowerment Project Plan including expected outcomes, action plan, timeline and a budget
 - A Technical Questionnaire on the technical and sector-specific aspects of the proposed intervention

Applicants will also be asked to provide the following information and attachments as part of their application:

- 3) **Partnership Agreement Letter(s):** All applications submitted with co-applicant partner organizations must submit one page letters signed by all critical partners outlining the roles and responsibilities of each party
- 4) **CVs** of all key management and project team members. Please upload no more than three.
- 5) Proof of **legal incorporation**
- 6) A minimum of one and up to three **references**, with at least one letter of recommendation. It is preferred that at least 1 reference or letter of recommendation come from a previous funder.

Additionally, applicants can submit the following optional attachments if they have them or wish to submit them:

- 7) **Results of internal or third-party testing** (following the Alliance’s Grant Applicants Test Results Reporting Guidelines & Requirements²) – results of internal testing should be shared using this [template](#).
- 8) **Historical Financial Statements** (Income Statement, Balance Sheet and Cashflow Statement)

Comprehensive instructions and guidelines are provided in the Application Workbook. Applicants are asked to only submit the documents indicated in the list above and to closely follow the provided guidelines, including length restrictions. Only one proposal per lead organization can be submitted.

The Alliance reserves the right to reject applications that are incomplete or that do not follow any of the requirements or guidelines in this RFP.

Applicants are asked to closely follow the application requirements and deadlines listed in the following table:

Step	Description	Minimum Requirements	Dates
Step 1 Application Submission	To apply for the WEF II, please create a member account at https://cleancookstoves.bidx.net/ , click on “Participate, and download the contents of the WEF application found under “Attached Documents.” Submit the application requirements by the deadline via the competition page. Only applications submitted via this website and by the deadline will be accepted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Executive Summary ✓ Application Workbook ✓ Partnership Agreement Letter(s) ✓ CVs of Key Management & Project Team ✓ Proof of Legal Incorporation ✓ References ✓ Historical Financial Statements 	Application Deadline April 14 th , 2015 at 6:00pm EDT
Step 2 Judging Panels and Winners Selection	Submitted proposals will be reviewed by external screening committees using the criteria indicated below. <i>Note: Finalists may be asked to submit additional materials for further clarification during the review process on a case-by-case basis prior to final decisions.</i> At least 4 grant recipients will be selected and announced by May 26 th , 2015.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Additional information on a case-by-case basis 	Winners Announcement May 26 th , 2015
Step 3 Grant Negotiation and Contracting	The Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves ³ and WEF grant recipients will negotiate terms and conditions of the grant and sign contracts. Funds are expected to be deployed in the three months following contract signature.		Negotiation & Contracting June-August 2015

² http://www.cleancookstoves.org/resources_files/grant-applicant-test-results-reporting-guidelines.pdf

³ On behalf of the United Nations Foundation

Evaluation Process

Given the interdisciplinary, inter-sectoral nature of the Alliance and its goals, final funding decisions will be made on the basis of technical merit as well as the relevance of the intervention and ability to scale. The Evaluation Criteria below will be used to facilitate direct comparisons among proposals during the evaluation and selection process.

Category	Criteria	Description
1. Strength of Proposed Empowerment Initiative	a) Project Objectives & Outcomes	Assesses the proposed project plan and its ability to play a transformative role in the target market and across the clean cooking industry. Assesses the strength and feasibility of the proposal based on key performance indicators, timeline and budget, the expected level of technology/fuel performance and user adoption, the potential viability of the target market, and established partnerships (if any) to support project execution. Assesses the applicant's understanding of empowerment interventions and impacts, and ability to make the case for a gender-informed business model.
	b) Game-Changing Potential of Intervention (Innovative and/or Scalable)	
	c) Project and Technical Feasibility	
	d) The Business Case	
	e) Gender-Informed Practices	
2. Commercial Viability and Potential for Scale	a) Commitment to Commercially Viable Market Solutions	Assesses whether the project follows a market-based approach, can be commercially viable in the long-term, is aligned with the Alliance's objective to enhance demand or strengthen supply, and if the proposed intervention can be scaled. Verifies that the applicant's plan for revenue generation is well thought out and reasonably executable. Assesses the uses of the funds and the applicant's financial planning ability and accuracy for the project. Determines if project's management team has the background, local market or BoP experience, sufficient industry knowledge, adequate capacity, and the ability to manage reporting requirements, among others. Evaluates the strength and feasibility of proposed project partnerships, where applicable.
	b) Potential to Scale	
	c) Uses & Covenants	
	d) Track Record	
	e) Knowledge of the Market	
	f) Management Team	
	g) Project partnerships	
3. Commitment to Impact	a) Impact on Women's Social & Economic Empowerment	Assesses if the submitted proposal has a clear, measurable, and realistic commitment to impact on women's social and economic empowerment, household social and economic well-being, and/or gender equality. Assesses if the applicant has the capacity to monitor and report on the impacts and outcomes of the intervention, including knowledge management capacity to capture lessons learned, case studies, and best practices.
	b) Impact on Household Social & Economic Well-being	
	c) Monitoring Capacity	
	d) Knowledge management	

All application materials can be accessed on the following website: <https://cleancookstoves.bidx.net/>. If you are experiencing technical problems, please describe the nature of the problem in an email addressed to investment@cleancookstoves.org **before** the application deadline.

Contracting Information

Grant Agreement

Agreements will be made between the Grantee and the United Nations Foundation. Funds will be disbursed in tranches based on the achievement of milestones outlined in the application and amended in the grants process.

Reporting Requirements

Recipients under RFP 15-2 will be required to submit quarterly reports on activities and progress including quarterly financial/budget statements. The Alliance will provide a general reporting template required of all recipients and customize reporting for each recipient according to specific proposal goals and milestones developed between the Alliance and the applicant during the contracting process. In addition, recipients will be required to report on basic social and environmental impact indicators. All data reported will be sex disaggregated. All recipients under RFP 15-2 Women's Empowerment Fund II will also be required to complete the Alliance's annual Results Reporting questionnaire. Furthermore, the Alliance, on behalf of the United Nations Foundation, will monitor and conduct assessments of operations under the grant, which may include a visit from Alliance personnel or designee to observe projects and programs and to review financial and other records and materials connected with activities supported by the grant. In addition, the Alliance requires a final report within 30 days from the end of the funding term that describes in narrative fashion what was achieved with the funds, a line item comparison of budgeted versus actual expenses as they relate specifically to the grant, a statement certifying that all funds were expended for the purposes of the grant, and an explanation of any variance from the proposal budget submitted with the original proposal.

Communication of Results

The Alliance is committed to ensuring that results achieved by grantees will inform the sector, as well as advance the adoption of cleaner, more efficient cooking technologies. Grantees supported under WEF II will be expected to actively engage with fellow grantees, Alliance staff, and other designated partners as requested by the Alliance. This coordinated engagement could include: input into achieving collective grantee goals; sharing of best practices; participation in meetings or calls or research being conducted by the initiative; and participation in additional capacity building activities needed to further those goals, provided that such requests do not constitute a violation of any applicable law or regulation. The Alliance will work with funded projects to ensure that progress and results are widely disseminated, and profiled at technical meetings as relevant. Materials, reports, and results of grants may be available for dissemination to the public, i.e. through the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves website, newsletters, and webinars. The Alliance has the right to ensure that study results are made publicly available in a timely and transparent process, while ensuring intellectual property rights of investigators, as well as subject and manufacturer confidentiality as required.