ASCENT PPF — Private Sector Support Window

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

This document sets out the guidelines for private-sector DRE and clean cooking companies seeking grant support under the first window of the ASCENT Project Preparation Facility (PPF), managed by Cygnum Capital on behalf of the COMESA Project Implementation Unit (PIU) and funded by the World Bank Group.

PPF Manager:
Cygnum Capital Asset Management Limited

PPF Implementing Entity:
COMESA Secretariat, Project Implementation Unit (PIU)

July 2026

1. About the ASCENT PPF and the Private Sector Support Window

1.1 Background

The Accelerating Sustainable and Clean Energy Access Transformation (ASCENT) Programme is a World Bank-supported Multiphase Programmatic Approach (MPA) designed to expand energy access across the COMESA region. A central component of the ASCENT Programme is the Project Preparation Facility (PPF), hosted and managed within the COMESA Secretariat's Project Implementation Unit (PIU). The PPF is a US$ 25M facility, operational from 2026 to 2030.

The Facility was established to address a critical bottleneck in energy-access markets: the chronic under-investment in the project preparation activities that private-sector companies need to attract equity, debt, and results-based financing from private and public investors. By providing technical assistance and grants, the PPF helps promising DRE and clean cooking companies reach the stage where investors and lenders are ready to commit capital.

Cygnum Capital Asset Management Limited (the PPF Manager) was engaged by the COMESA PIU to manage the PPF and provide related project preparation management services. The PPF Manager is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the facility, including issuing and managing Calls for Proposals (CfPs).

1.2 Purpose of this Window

This document sets out the Application Guidelines for the PPF’s Private Sector Support Window. The window is open to private-sector distributed renewable energy (DRE) and clean cooking companies operating in any of the 16 eligible ASCENT countries: Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.

The goal is to identify and support companies that require technical assistance or grant financing to reach financial close, enabling them to scale their operations and deepen their impact on energy access.

> *Important: This window is for project preparation and business development grants only. It does not support primary technology development, proof-of-concept activities, or working capital in isolation. All supported activities must be directed toward achieving a clearly defined financing milestone.*

1.3 Programme Objectives

All companies supported under this window must contribute to the ASCENT PPF’s overall results framework. The PPF is designed to support companies to achieve financial close using any combination of PPF’s instruments: technical assistance, grants, cohort-based investment readiness training, or introductions to investors.

This window is one of several ways the PPF creates an enabling environment for DRE and clean cooking investment across the region. Alongside direct company support, the PPF also provides technical assistance to national agencies, funds publicly available market resources such as geospatial planning tools and country briefs and make grants to industry associations and investors who deliver project preparation services to eligible countries.

2. What Type of Support is on Offer?

2.1 On-Demand Technical Assistance -Roster of Experts

Under this Window, the PPF provides in -kind, on demand technical assistance through a prequalified roster of experts to beneficiaries under any thematic area that enhances investment readiness.

Technical assistance may be used to finance the following categories of project preparation and business development activities, where these are directly linked to advancing a concrete financing transaction:

- Feasibility studies and other investment-grade studies;
- Business development and operational support, including digitization and credit risk management;
- Legal and transaction advisory services;
- Hiring of key staff whose roles are directly essential to advancing a financing transaction (e.g., CFO, Head of Finance, ESG Manager); and
- Technical, commercial, financial, legal, environmental and social due diligence activities, including environmental and social assessments, legal structuring, and transaction advisory support required to satisfy investor requirements and achieve financial close.

The PPF Manager maintains a Roster of Experts through which in-kind technical assistance (e.g., financial advisory, legal, ESG documentation) is delivered directly to approved companies. Including:

Category Code	Category Description
PPF/EOI/001	Pre-feasibility, Feasibility and Investment-Grade Technical Studies
PPF/EOI/002	Market Assessments, Demand Studies and Geospatial Planning
PPF/EOI/003	Product and Technology Piloting, Validation and Market Entry Support
PPF/EOI/004	Financial Modelling, Business Planning and Investment Readiness
PPF/EOI/005	Transaction Advisory, Legal and Commercial Structuring
PPF/EOI/006	Transaction Execution and Financial Close Support
PPF/EOI/007	Digitalisation, MIS, Data Systems and Analytics
PPF/EOI/008	Credit Risk Management and PAYGo Analytics
PPF/EOI/009	Interim Management and Embedded Operational Support
PPF/EOI/010	Environmental, Social, Health and Safety (ESHS) Advisory and Due Diligence
PPF/EOI/011	Gender, Inclusion and Workforce Development
PPF/EOI/012	Impact Measurement, ESG and Sustainability Reporting
PPF/EOI/013	Carbon Finance, Environmental Attributes and Impact Monetization

Category Code	Category Description
PPF/EOI/014	Capacity Building, Training and Knowledge Products
PPF/EOI/015	Catalytic Finance, RBF and Grant Funding Support
PPF/EOI/016	Policy, Regulatory and Tariff Advisory
PPF/EOI/017	Operations, Maintenance, Asset Management and Circular Economy Support
PPF/EOI/018	Productive Use of Energy (PUE) Strategy, Piloting and Scale-Up

For a detailed list of services available through the Roster of Experts, see Annex A. Applicants should indicate any technical assistance needs alongside their grant application, as these will be assessed separately. Grant funds should not duplicate services available through the roster of experts. Applicants will be required to disclose any other facilities that are currently providing technical assistance or grant funding to their organization, and to explain how the requested TA support is additional to, or distinct from, existing support.

2.2 Grants for Project Preparation and Business Development

In addition to technical assistance, the PPF may provide milestone-based grants to eligible private-sector DRE and clean cooking companies for activities critical to unlocking financing that fall outside the scope of the roster of experts.

Grants are not loans and are not repayable, provided the company complies with its support agreement. Grants are not a substitute for a company's operating expenditure or working capital. Applicants will be required to disclose any other grants currently being received by their organisation and explain how the PPF grant is additional to, or distinct from, existing grant support.

Grant funding will be considered only where the required expertise is not available through the PPF Roster of Experts.

2.3 Ineligible Activities

The following activities are not eligible for PPF grant financing under this window:

- Primary technology development or proof-of-concept activities;
- Working capital or inventory financing as the sole purpose of the grant (noting that funding requests to cover costs of establishing new structures to better manage working capital or inventory management may be considered);
- General operating expenditure not directly linked to a financing milestone;
- Activities that duplicate support already provided by the PPF Roster of Experts, unless rationale if clearly presented and justified for using other advisors;
- Activities prohibited under the PPF Exclusion List (see Annex B); and
- Retroactive costs incurred prior to the grant agreement signing date.

2.4 Combined TA and Grant Package Size and Disbursement

Grants under this window will generally range from USD 50,000 to USD 200,000 per company. The PPF Manager may make partial awards when the proposed scope may be managed through the

Roster of Experts, exceeds available resources or when only a portion of the proposed activities meets the eligibility requirements.

Grants request above USD 200,000 are possible. However, they will be subject to enhanced due diligence, including a more detailed review of the proposed budget, implementation capacity, and the credibility of the milestone to which the grant is linked.

Grants are disbursed in tranches against pre-agreed milestones that applicants propose to the PPF manager. Milestones must be clearly defined, measurable, and linked to project preparation outcomes. A typical milestone structure would include:

- An initial mobilisation disbursement (up to 50% of the grant) upon execution of the Grant Agreement and satisfaction of pre-conditions;
- Subsequent tranches upon verification of defined project preparation milestones

All disbursements are processed by the COMESA PIU on the instruction of the PPF Manager, following milestone verification.

2.5 Co-Financing Requirements

The PPF requires all applicants to demonstrate a minimum of 20% co-financing relative to the total project budget. Co-financing may be in cash (equity, loans, other grants) or verifiable in-kind contributions, subject to the following conditions:

- Cash co-financing must be confirmed prior to the first disbursement. Acceptable evidence includes bank statements, signed financing agreements, or Letters of Intent from investors that specify the ticket size, type, purpose, and expected timeline of the investment.
- In-kind co-financing is acceptable for a maximum of 10% of the total project budget. In-kind contributions must be quantifiable, verifiable, and directly relevant to the proposed project activities. Personnel costs incurred prior to the grant agreement do not qualify unless clearly linked to the proposed scope.
- Revenue projections or expected future sales cannot be submitted as a form of co-financing.

Applicants should provide a co-financing plan at the application stage. A failure to demonstrate a credible co-financing structure will be treated as a disqualifying factor.

3. Eligibility

3.1 Eligible Companies

The Private sector window is designed for established and growing DRE and clean cooking companies. We are looking for companies that meet the following eligibility criteria:

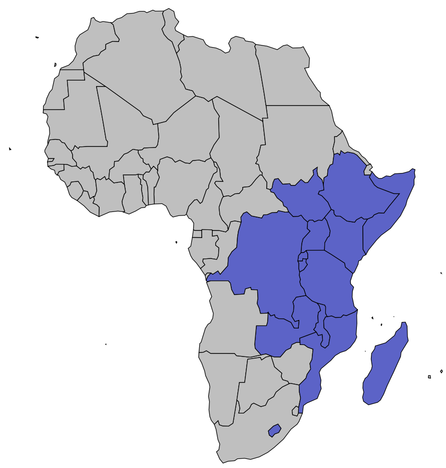
- At least three years of operations and verifiable revenue generation.
- Minimum annual revenue of USD 250,000 for Solar Home Systems companies and USD 150,000 for Minigrid, clean cooking, and Productive Use Energy (PUE).
- Credible, experienced management team, including at minimum a full time Chief Executive Officer (or equivalent) and at least one full time senior staff member in a functional leadership role.
- Actively engaged with one or more investors or lenders regarding a financing transaction and can provide verification in the application.
- Registered as a private company or equivalent legal entity in at least one ASCENT country.

Very early-stage companies (under three years of operation, pre-revenue, or without investor engagement) do not meet the eligibility threshold for technical assistance and grants under this window. Such companies may still benefit from the PPF's publicly available market resources, or from support provided through industry associations that receive PPF funding. They are encouraged to engage with these routes.

The following entity types are NOT eligible to apply as lead applicants: NGOs, research institutions, government ministries, UN agencies, and public-sector entities. These entities may be referenced as partners within an application but may not be the primary grant recipient.

3.2 Geographic Scope

This window is open to companies operating in the following 16 eligible ASCENT COMESA countries: Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.



Projects may cover more than one eligible country. Regional applications are welcome, provided results and outputs are clearly attributed to each country covered.

Please submit a single application covering your intended geographic scope. Companies that submit the same project across multiple countries as separate applications will be asked to consolidate them into a single application before their submission is considered.

Companies that have previously received support under this window may apply again once they have completed their initial support period and submitted their final report. Second applications must clearly demonstrate a new, distinct financing transaction and will be assessed on the same criteria as first-time applicants.

3.3 Documents Checklist

The following documents must be submitted by the lead applicant at the time of application.

- Certificate of company incorporation or registration;
- Tax registration certificate (or equivalent);
- Most recent audited financial statements (mandatory for companies with more than three years of operations); companies without should provide management accounts or equivalent financial statements;
- Signed letters of intent from any investor referred to in the application; and

Additional documentation, including business permits, operating licences, and regulatory approvals relevant to the target market and Completed Environmental and Social Screening Tool (see Annex C) will be requested during due diligence for shortlisted applicants.

4. How Does the Window Work?

4.1 Application Submission

The Window follows a single-stage application process. Companies are invited to submit an electronic application through the application portal. Partial applications can be saved for later completion, and completed applications can be submitted at any time after the window opens. Applications will be reviewed at regularly published intervals and evaluated competitively. Figure 1 below summarises the process.

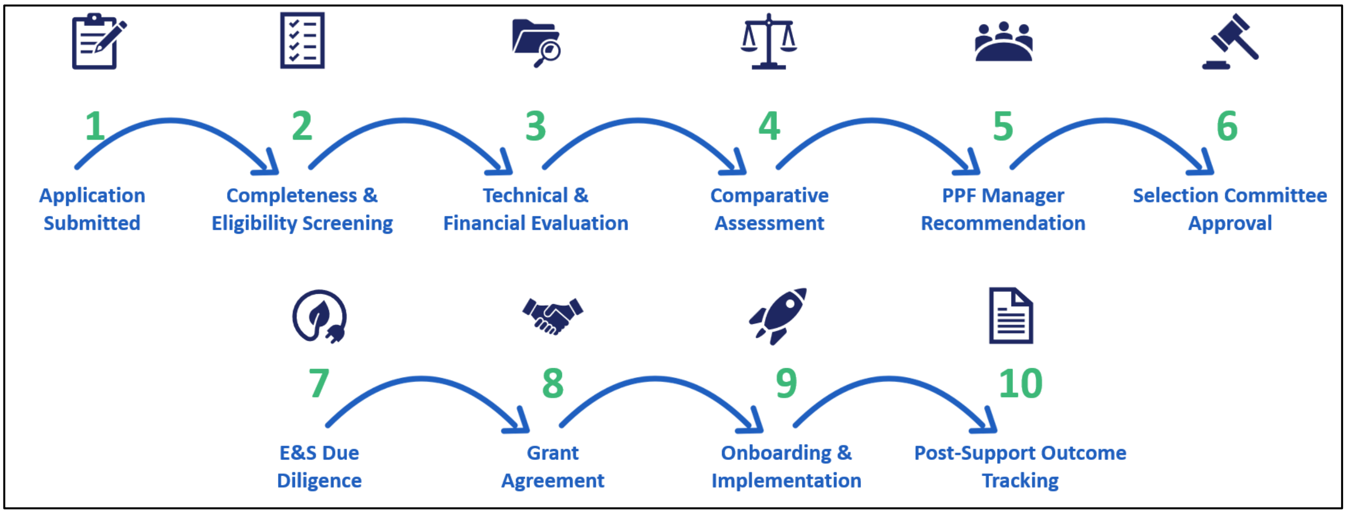


Figure 1: ASCENT PPF Call for Proposals Process

The Call for Proposals will remain open until further notice. Applications may be submitted at any time and will be assessed through successive submission cycles. Applications received after the closing date for one submission cycle will automatically be considered in the next submission cycle.

All applications must be submitted through the application portal. The portal allows applicants to save progress and edit before final submission. Once submitted, applications cannot be amended.

Applications must be submitted in English. Incomplete applications, or applications in any language other than English, will not be considered. Each applicant may submit only one application per call window.

4.2 Completeness and Eligibility Screening

Following the submission deadline, the PPF Manager will conduct a completeness and eligibility review of all applications received. This screening confirms:

- All required application forms and supporting documents have been provided;
- The applicant falls within the eligible beneficiary categories for this CfP;
- The proposed activities are consistent with eligible activities under the PPF Private Sector Window;
- The geographic scope falls within ASCENT-eligible countries;
- The proposed activity does not duplicate support already received from the PPF or other known donor programmes, unless clear additionality is demonstrated; and
- There are no known sanctions, integrity concerns, or conflicts of interest that would preclude further consideration.

Where an application is incomplete, the PPF Manager may issue a single request for clarification. Applications that remain incomplete after the clarification deadline will be removed from consideration.

4.3 Technical and Financial Evaluation

All complete, eligible applications proceed to a structured technical and financial evaluation conducted by the PPF Manager. Evaluations follow a standardised scoring framework aligned with the criteria set out in substantive evaluation criteria.

The PPF Manager may engage external technical expertise to support evaluations where required. All evaluation scores, commentary, and rationale for recommendations are documented and retained in the PPF's electronic management system.

4.4 Selection Committee Approval

Following evaluation, the PPF Manager prepares a list of recommended applications and submits these to the PPF Selection Committee for final approval. For this first round of grants, the World Bank Supervisory Authority will also provide a No Objection before awards are confirmed.

The Selection Committee may impose conditions on awards where appropriate, including requirements relating to co-financing confirmation, environmental and social safeguards, or milestone restructuring.

All Selection Committee decisions are final and are not subject to appeal.

4.5 Environmental and Social Due Diligence

Applicants recommended for approval by the Selection Committee will undergo Environmental and Social Due Diligence (ESDD) in accordance with the World Bank Environmental and Social Framework (ESF). The ESDD process is described in Annex C of these guidelines. No technical assistance or grant agreement will be executed until E&S requirements are satisfied.

4.6 Grant Agreement and Onboarding

Applicants who pass ESDD and receive Selection Committee approval (and World Bank No Objection for the first round) will be invited to execute a Grant Agreement with the COMESA PIU. The Grant Agreement template is standard and non-negotiable.

All new grantees will undergo an onboarding programme to prepare them for project launch, compliance obligations, reporting requirements, and the milestone verification process.

4.7 Implementation, Monitoring, and Post-Support Outcome Tracking

Grant disbursements are milestone-linked and verified by the PPF Manager prior to each payment. Grantees must maintain adequate records, submit periodic progress reports, and participate in monitoring visits as required.

Given that many financing outcomes (e.g., financial close, equity raised) occur after grant completion, all grantees are required to submit semi-annual post-support outcome reports until 31 December 2030. Reporting is conducted through a simple digital tool maintained by the PPF Manager.

4.8 Substantive Evaluation Criteria

Eligible applications are assessed against the following criteria. Relative weightings may be adjusted between calls and will be published in the call announcement.

Evaluation Criterion	Description
Mandate fit	Clear alignment with PPF and ASCENT objectives. The proposed activities directly support the expansion of clean energy access in eligible ASCENT countries.
Fundraising Traction	The applicant has identified a concrete financing transaction, named target investors or lenders, and can demonstrate active engagement (e.g., term sheet, indicative offer, ongoing due diligence). The applicant demonstrates a credible and realistic timeline to financial close or investment readiness. The proposed milestones are achievable within the grant period
Technical Feasibility and Appropriateness	The proposed activities are technically sound, proportionate in scope and cost, and consistent with industry standards. The technology and business model are appropriate for the target market.
Team Capacity and Track Record	The applicant has the institutional, financial, and technical capacity to implement the proposed activities. The management team has relevant experience, and the organisational structure is appropriate.
Additionality of PPF Support	The proposed activities would not proceed, or would be materially delayed, without PPF financing. The grant bridges a genuine market or financial gap that cannot be closed with commercial resources alone.
Development Impact	The project is likely to generate significant positive impact on energy access, household welfare, women and youth inclusion, and/or climate resilience. Impact targets are realistic and monitoring methodology is clearly defined. The applicant has identified and adequately addressed relevant environmental and social risks. There are no known integrity, sanctions, or conflict-of-interest concerns.
Value for Money	The proposed grant budget is well-justified, cost-efficient, and proportionate to expected outputs and outcomes. Costs are competitive with market rates.

4.9 Reasons for Exclusion

Applications will be automatically excluded in any of the following circumstances:

- The applicant or proposed activities appear on the PPF Exclusion List (Annex B);
- The applicant has an active grant agreement with the PPF (as lead applicant);
- The lead applicant submits more than one application in the same call window, including through subsidiaries of the same parent company;
- The proposed activities are primarily focused on market research, capacity building, or policy advocacy with no clear business case;
- The project cannot demonstrate active development prior to the CfP;
- No credible co-financing structure is presented;

- The applicant fails integrity due diligence or KYC screening; or
- The application is submitted in a language other than English or is incomplete at the time of the submission deadline.

5. Timelines

5.1 Indicative Review Timeline[1]

The table below shows indicative timings from your submission date. These are targets, actual timings will vary depending on the volume of applications and their complexity.

#	Stage	Indicative Timeline (1st Batch)	Key Gate / Output
0	CfP / Application Guidelines published; portal opens	Monday 13th July	Portal goes live
0(a)	Clarification questions deadline	Friday 7th August	Cut-off for public clarification process
0(b)	Clarifications & TA Catalogue published	Monday 17th August	Final clarifications and TA catalogue published together
1	Application submission deadline	Monday 31st August	First submission cycle closes – the second submission cycle opens immediately
2	Completeness & eligibility screening	Tuesday 1st – Friday 4th September	Eligible/ineligible decision
3(a)	Evaluation Stage 1 — first-cut technical & financial review	Monday 7th – Monday 14th September	Ranked longlist
3(b)	Evaluation Stage 2 — full review of shortlisted applications	Tuesday 15th – Friday 18th September	Full scoring set for shortlisted applications
3(c)	Moderation, TA Package Design & Recommendation	Monday 21st - Thursday 24th September	Moderated scores; recommended awardees; proposed grant amount; rapid TA assessment, recommended RoE categories, estimated TA cost, recommended grant/TA split, award conditions; complete approval package
3(d)	PPF Manager internal recommendation / approval meeting	Thursday 24th September	Approval to circulate SC packages
4(a)	Selection Committee package review	Friday 25th September – Thursday 8th October	Selection committee recommendation

[1] The timelines provided in these guidelines are indicative only and may be revised by the ASCENT Project Preparation Facility (PPF) at its discretion. Applicants will be notified of any material changes through the ASCENT PPF website or other official communication channels.

#	Stage	Indicative Timeline (1st Batch)	Key Gate / Output
4(b)	Selection Committee approval meeting	Friday 9th October	Approve/approve with conditions / defer/reject
5	World Bank No Objection	Monday 12th – Friday 16th October	WB No Objection, subject to any conditions
6	Conditional award notification	Monday 19th October	Conditional notification to beneficiaries
7	Post-approval due diligence and award finalisation	19th – 30th October	Full E&S DD, full KYC/integrity/media/criminal checks, reference investor check, co-financing verification, final milestones and CPs
8	Grant agreement / TA contracting / onboarding	2nd – 13th November	Grant agreement, TA arrangements and onboarding completed
9	Public beneficiary announcement	Mid- November	Public announcement of TA/grant beneficiaries
10	Initial disbursement / TA mobilisation	After agreement and CP satisfaction	Initial tranche and/or TA mobilisation
11	Implementation & delivery	6–24 months	Milestone delivery, reporting, verification
12	Post-support tracking	Semi-annual through to 2030	Financial close and impact tracking

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis through successive submission cycles. Applications received after the closing date for one submission cycle will automatically be considered in the next submission cycle.

5.2 Frequently Asked Questions and Clarifications

Clarifications to these guidelines and responses to Frequently Asked Questions will be published on the ASCENT/COMESA PPF website. Questions regarding specific applications may not be discussed by phone or email outside of the formal clarification process. All clarification requests must be submitted through the online platform or to the dedicated email address published in the window Announcement, no later than the clarification deadline.

The PPF Manager reserves the right to amend these guidelines and eligibility criteria at any point prior to the submission deadline. Any amendments will be published on the PPF website and communicated to registered applicants.

5.3 Data Privacy

Applicants should review the COMESA data privacy policy and the World Bank data privacy policy before applying. Application data will be held by the PPF Manager and the COMESA PIU in accordance with applicable data protection requirements and will be shared only with Selection Committee members, the World Bank Supervisory Authority, and evaluation experts involved in the review process.

Applicants may be asked to consent to the sharing of limited application information (company name, contact details, project description, country, and sector) with other clean energy financing initiatives and TA programmes operating in the region. This data sharing is intended to improve applicants' access to complementary support regardless of the outcome of the PPF application. Applicants may accept or decline this data sharing with no impact on their application evaluation.

ANNEX A — DETAILED THEMATIC CATEGORIES AND INDICATIVE SERVICE AREAS

The indicative service areas below are not exhaustive and may evolve during implementation.

PPF/EOI/001 Pre-feasibility, Feasibility and Investment-Grade Technical Studies
The PPF seeks service providers capable of supporting the preparation of high-quality technical, commercial, and investment-grade studies for DRE and clean cooking projects and businesses.
Indicative support areas may include:

- pre-feasibility and feasibility studies;
- technical system design and optimisation;
- resource assessments;
- load forecasting;
- site assessments;
- investment-grade studies;
- technical due diligence; and
- project preparation support.

Applicants should demonstrate relevant experience in:

- DRE and/or clean cooking technical studies;
- mini-grids, PAYGo solar, productive use of energy, or clean cooking technologies;
- and preparation of studies used by investors, lenders, or DFIs.

PPF/EOI/002 Market Assessments, Demand Studies and Geospatial Planning
The PPF seeks service providers capable of supporting market intelligence generation, customer and demand analysis, geospatial planning, and market expansion strategy development.
Indicative support areas may include:

- market assessments;
- geospatial analysis;
- customer segmentation;
- rollout planning;
- demand forecasting;
- competitive landscape analysis;
- market entry strategy; and
- ecosystem mapping.

Applicants should demonstrate relevant experience in:

- DRE and/or clean cooking market analysis;
- GIS and geospatial planning tools;
- demand analysis and market intelligence generation;
- and commercial strategy development in emerging markets.

PPF/EOI/003 Product and Technology Piloting, Validation and Market Entry Support
The PPF seeks service providers capable of supporting product piloting, technology validation, commercial testing, and market entry activities.
Indicative support areas may include:

- product-market fit analysis;
- pilot design and implementation;
- technology validation;
- supplier and product due diligence;
- commercial rollout support;
- consumer adoption analysis; and
- market expansion support.

Applicants should demonstrate relevant experience in:

- piloting and scaling energy access technologies;
- clean cooking or DRE market entry support;
- and commercialisation of new products or business models.

PPF/EOI/004 Financial Modelling, Business Planning and Investment Readiness

The PPF seeks service providers capable of supporting beneficiaries in strengthening financial planning, investment readiness, and commercial strategy.

Indicative support areas may include:

- project finance models;
- company financial models;
- business planning;
- scenario analysis;
- fundraising preparation;
- investment memoranda;

Applicants should demonstrate relevant experience in:

- financial modelling for DRE and/or clean cooking businesses;
- investment readiness support;
- and commercial advisory in emerging markets.

PPF/EOI/005 Transaction Advisory, Legal and Commercial Structuring

The PPF seeks service providers capable of supporting investment transactions, legal structuring, commercial negotiations, and project bankability.

Indicative support areas may include:

- legal advisory;
- commercial structuring;
- PPP structuring;
- blended finance structuring; and
- investor engagement support.
- licensing and regulatory advisory;

- contract negotiation support; and
- commercial due diligence.

Applicants should demonstrate relevant experience in:

- energy sector transactions;
- investment and financing structures;
- and legal or commercial advisory for infrastructure or climate-related sectors.

PPF/EOI/006 Transaction Execution and Financial Close Support
The PPF seeks service providers capable of supporting live transactions through due diligence, financing negotiations, and financial close.
Indicative support areas may include:

- transaction execution support;
- due diligence coordination;
- lender and investor engagement;
- data room management;
- financing negotiations; and
- financial close support.

Applicants should demonstrate relevant experience in:

- transaction execution;
- financing processes;
- and investor or lender coordination.

PPF/EOI/007 Digitalisation, MIS, Data Systems and Analytics
The PPF seeks service providers capable of supporting digitization, operational systems strengthening, and data-driven business optimisation.
Indicative support areas may include:

- MIS and CRM implementation;
- operational data systems;
- reporting systems;
- digital operations support;
- analytics and dashboards;
- interoperability; and
- digital transformation initiatives.

Applicants should demonstrate relevant experience in:

- digitization initiatives;
- operational systems deployment;
- and data-driven operational improvement.

PPF/EOI/008 Credit Risk Management and PAYGo Analytics
The PPF seeks service providers capable of supporting PAYGo portfolio management, credit analytics, and repayment optimisation.
Indicative support areas may include:

- credit scoring models;
- portfolio analytics;
- repayment optimisation;
- customer risk analysis;
- collections strategy support; and
- portfolio performance improvement.

Applicants should demonstrate relevant experience in:

- PAYGo business models;
- credit risk management;
- and data-driven portfolio optimisation.

PPF/EOI/009 Interim Management and Embedded Operational Support
The PPF seeks service providers capable of delivering embedded operational support, interim management, and specialised operational expertise.
Indicative support areas may include:

- interim management support;
- embedded technical advisors;
- fundraising support;
- operational improvement;
- specialist operational expertise;
- recruitment and talent sourcing support; and
- short-term embedded advisory roles.

Applicants should demonstrate relevant experience in:

- operational advisory;
- embedded support models;
- interim management;
- or specialist talent sourcing and deployment.

PPF/EOI/010 Environmental, Social, Health and Safety (ESHS) Advisory and Due Diligence
The PPF seeks service providers capable of supporting environmental and social safeguards compliance and ESHS due diligence processes.
Indicative support areas may include:

- ESHS due diligence;
- safeguards assessments;

- environmental and social management plans;
- stakeholder engagement support;
- occupational health and safety support; and
- compliance with MDB safeguards requirements.

Applicants should demonstrate relevant experience in:

- World Bank ESF and/or IFC Performance Standards;
- infrastructure or energy sector ESHS support;
- and safeguards documentation preparation.

PPF/EOI/011 Gender, Inclusion and Workforce Development

The PPF seeks service providers capable of supporting gender equality, workforce inclusion, and inclusive business practices.

Indicative support areas may include:

- gender assessments;
- inclusion action plans;
- workforce development;
- inclusive customer strategy;
- organisational inclusion support; and
- diversity and workforce policy advisory.

Applicants should demonstrate relevant experience in:

- gender and inclusion advisory;
- workforce development;
- and inclusive operational strategy development.

PPF/EOI/012 Impact Measurement, ESG and Sustainability Reporting

The PPF seeks service providers capable of supporting ESG reporting, impact measurement, and performance benchmarking.

Indicative support areas may include:

- KPI development;
- ESG reporting;
- impact frameworks;
- benchmarking;
- sustainability reporting;
- impact data systems; and
- investor-aligned disclosure support.

Applicants should demonstrate relevant experience in:

- ESG reporting;

- impact measurement;

and sustainability or impact benchmarking.

PPF/EOI/013 Carbon Finance, Environmental Attributes and Impact Monetisation

The PPF seeks service providers capable of supporting beneficiaries in accessing carbon finance, environmental attribute markets, and broader impact monetization opportunities.

Indicative support areas may include:

- carbon finance readiness;
- carbon asset development;
- MRV systems;
- baselining and methodology support;
- D-RECs and P-RECs;
- environmental attribute monetization;
- Article 6 readiness;
- results monetization; and
- climate and development impact monetization mechanisms.

Applicants should demonstrate relevant experience in:

- carbon markets;
- environmental attributes;
- MRV systems;
- and climate or development impact monetization mechanisms.

PPF/EOI/014 Capacity Building, Training and Knowledge Products

The PPF seeks service providers capable of supporting practical capacity building, training delivery, and knowledge product development.

Indicative support areas may include:

- training delivery;
- operational toolkits;
- workshops;
- peer learning;
- technical guidance materials;
- knowledge product development; and
- ecosystem learning support.

Applicants should demonstrate relevant experience in:

- practical training delivery;
- stakeholder facilitation;
- and development of operationally relevant knowledge products.

PPF/EOI/015 Catalytic Finance, RBF and Grant Funding Support
The PPF seeks service providers capable of supporting beneficiaries in accessing catalytic financing mechanisms including RBF and grant facilities.
Indicative support areas may include:

- RBF application support;
- grant proposal development;
- donor compliance support;
- funding strategy development;
- financing application structuring; and
- catalytic funding readiness.

Applicants should demonstrate relevant experience in:

- RBF mechanisms;
- grant funding applications;
- and donor-funded financing processes.

PPF/EOI/016 Policy, Regulatory and Tariff Advisory
The PPF seeks service providers capable of supporting policy implementation, regulatory strengthening, and tariff advisory processes.
Indicative support areas may include:

- policy implementation support;
- tariff analysis;
- regulatory advisory;
- licensing frameworks;
- utility engagement;
- subsidy framework support; and
- market rules and regulatory assessments.

Applicants should demonstrate relevant experience in:

- energy policy or regulatory advisory;
- tariff frameworks;
- and DRE and/or clean cooking regulatory environments.

PPF/EOI/017 Operations, Maintenance, Asset Management and Circular Economy Support
The PPF seeks service providers capable of supporting operational efficiency, portfolio performance, and circular economy approaches.
Indicative support areas may include:

- operational optimisation;
- maintenance systems;
- asset management;

- reliability improvement;
- portfolio performance enhancement;
- refurbishment;
- recycling; and
- e-waste lifecycle management.

Applicants should demonstrate relevant experience in:

- operations and maintenance support;
- distributed energy asset management;
- and circular economy or end-of-life management approaches.

PPF/EOI/018 Productive Use of Energy (PUE) Strategy, Piloting and Scale-Up
The PPF seeks service providers capable of supporting productive use of energy initiatives linked to income generation and commercial sustainability.
Indicative support areas may include:

- PUE strategy development;
- pilot implementation;
- agricultural and SME energy applications;
- demand stimulation;
- productive-use business models;
- cold chain applications; and
- commercial scale-up support.

Applicants should demonstrate relevant experience in:

- PUE initiatives;
- rural enterprise development;
- and linking energy access interventions with productive economic activity.

ANNEX B — PPF EXCLUSION LIST

The ASCENT PPF will not fund any projects or companies involved in the following activities. This list is based on the IFC Exclusion List, as required by the World Bank Environmental and Social Framework.

1. Production or trade in any product or activity deemed illegal under host country laws or regulations or international conventions, including pharmaceuticals, pesticides/herbicides, ozone-depleting substances, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), wildlife or products regulated under CITES.
2. Production or trade in weapons and munitions (this does not apply to project sponsors not substantially involved in these activities).
3. Production or trade in alcoholic beverages (excluding beer and wine).
4. Production or trade in tobacco.
5. Gambling, casinos, and equivalent enterprises.
6. Production or trade in unbonded asbestos fibres. This does not apply to the purchase and use of bonded asbestos cement sheeting where the asbestos content is less than 20%.
7. Drift net fishing in the marine environment using nets in excess of 2.5 km in length.
8. Production or activities involving harmful or exploitative forms of forced labour or harmful child labour.
9. Commercial logging operations for use in primary tropical moist forest.
10. Production or trade in wood or other forestry products other than from sustainably managed forests.
11. Production, trade, storage, or transport of significant volumes of hazardous chemicals, or commercial-scale usage of hazardous chemicals (including gasoline, kerosene, and other petroleum products, when applied to microfinance contexts).
12. Production or activities that impinge on the lands owned or claimed under adjudication by Indigenous Peoples, without full documented consent of such peoples.

A reasonableness test may be applied where a proposed activity would have a significant development impact, and country-specific circumstances warrant consideration. Any such adjustment requires prior approval from the PPF Selection Committee and, where applicable, the World Bank Supervisory Authority.

ANNEX C — ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SCREENING GUIDANCE

All applicants must complete and submit the Environmental and Social Screening Tool (ESST) as part of their application. The ESST guides applicants through a structured assessment of the potential environmental and social risks associated with their proposed project activities.

The completed ESST enables the PPF Manager to:

- Assign an initial E&S risk category (Low, Moderate, Substantial, or High) to each application.
- Determine the level and scope of E&S assessment and management measures required prior to grant execution; and
- Identify whether specific Environmental and Social Standards (ESS) under the World Bank Environmental and Social Framework are triggered.

Projects are assigned one of the following E&S risk categories based on the nature, location, scale, and potential reversibility of their impacts:

E&S Risk Category	Description
Low	Minimal adverse impacts on communities or the environment. Impacts are negligible, highly localised, and easily managed. No targeted assessments or management plans required beyond standard good practice.
Moderate	Limited adverse impacts, mostly site-specific, temporary, and reversible. Standard mitigation measures are sufficient. Targeted management plans may be required for specific risk areas.
Substantial	Considerable adverse impacts that may be diverse, complex, or sensitive. An Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) is required. Active monitoring and reporting expected throughout implementation.
High	Significant, large-scale, or potentially irreversible adverse impacts. A full Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) is required prior to grant execution. Enhanced monitoring and reporting required.

For most DRE and clean cooking project preparation activities, the expected E&S risk category is Low or Moderate. However, activities involving mini-grid construction, land acquisition, or community-level interventions may attract Moderate or Substantial ratings. The PPF Manager will confirm the assigned category and any required instruments following review of the submitted ESST.

The full Environmental and Social Screening Tool is available on the ASCENT/COMESA PPF website and must be completed and uploaded as part of the application package.