ASCENT PROJECT PREPARATION FACILITY

Request for Expressions for Interest

Provision of Consultancy Services for the ASCENT Project Preparation Facility

Issue Date: Wednesday, 24 June 15:00 East African Time
Submission Deadline: Wednesday, 15 July 22:00 East African Time

A. BACKGROUND

The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), through the Accelerating Sustainable and Clean Energy Access Transformation (ASCENT) Program, has established a demand-driven Project Preparation Facility (PPF) to support governments, private-sector companies, investors, and other stakeholders in developing bankable, investment-ready distributed renewable energy (DRE) and clean cooking projects across participating countries.

The PPF is funded by the World Bank and implemented by the COMESA Secretariat. COMESA has appointed Cygnum Capital as the PPF Manager to support the implementation and day-to-day management of the Facility, including technical assistance mobilisation, assignment management, monitoring, and operational administration.

The Facility provides technical assistance, on-demand advisory services, embedded operational support, and milestone-based grants to accelerate energy access, strengthen commercial and operational maturity, improve investment readiness, and crowd-in public and private financing for DRE and clean cooking investments.

The PPF is intended to operate as a flexible and responsive support platform capable of rapidly mobilising specialised expertise across a wide range of technical, commercial, financial, operational, and market development needs.

B. OBJECTIVES OF THIS CALL

COMESA invites eligible consulting firms and individual consultants to express their interest in being shortlisted onto the PPF Roster of Experts to provide consultancy services on an as-needed basis to PPF-supported beneficiaries.

The PPF intends to establish a focused and operationally manageable Roster of Experts comprising pre-qualified service providers across thematic categories and working languages. The roster is designed to facilitate rapid mobilisation of specialised technical assistance providers in relatively thin and emerging DRE and clean cooking advisory markets, while supporting beneficiary-informed matching and assignment allocation.

Successful applicants will be onboarded through non-exclusive framework agreements aligned to approved thematic categories and language combinations.

Assignments may subsequently be issued through Task Orders in accordance with the PPF Operations Manual and internal procedures.

Inclusion on the roster does not guarantee assignment of work.

C. THEMATIC CATEGORIES

The PPF seeks to onboard service providers under the following thematic categories.

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

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
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

Detailed descriptions of each thematic category, including indicative service areas and expected areas of expertise, are provided in **Annex 1: Detailed Thematic Categories and Indicative Service Areas**.

The indicative service areas provided within Annex 1 are intended to guide applicants regarding the anticipated scope of support under each category and are not exhaustive. The PPF reserves the right to refine, expand, consolidate, or adapt service areas during implementation in response to operational requirements, market developments, and beneficiary demand.

D. LANGUAGE COMBINATIONS

Applications shall be submitted in English. However, applications shall be evaluated separately according to demonstrated capability to deliver assignments across one or more of the following working languages:

- English;
- French;
- Portuguese; and
- Arabic.

Language capability shall be assessed based on the applicant's demonstrated experience, personnel resources, and ability to deliver assignments in the relevant language(s).

Applicants may apply under multiple language combinations where capability can be demonstrated.

Shortlisting decisions may vary between language combinations under the same thematic category.

Applicants shall clearly indicate the thematic categories and language combinations for which they are applying.

E. GENERAL ELIGIBILITY AND CAPABILITY REQUIREMENTS

Applicants should demonstrate:

- legal eligibility and relevant operational capability;
- a proven track record of delivering similar assignments;
- relevant sector experience;
- regional and country experience;
- organisational and managerial capability;
- strong analytical and communication capability;
- ability to mobilise qualified personnel rapidly;
- commitment to integrity and professional conduct; and
- commitment to gender equality and inclusion.

Experience working with DFIs, MDBs, donor-funded programmes, impact investors, or international development organisations will be considered an advantage.

Applicants may apply for a maximum of four thematic categories.

F. GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

Assignments may be undertaken in ASCENT participating countries, currently including:

- Burundi;
- Comoros;
- Democratic Republic of Congo;
- Ethiopia;
- Kenya;
- Lesotho;
- Madagascar;
- Malawi;
- Mozambique;
- Rwanda;
- Sao Tome and Principe;
- Somalia;
- South Sudan;
- Tanzania;
- Uganda; and
- Zambia.

Additional countries may be added during implementation.

G. FACILITY AND ASSIGNMENT DURATION

The PPF is expected to operate during 2025–2030. Framework agreements are expected to remain valid for the operational duration of the PPF unless terminated, suspended, or otherwise amended.

Assignment durations may vary depending on assignment scope and complexity.

H. EVALUATION AND SHORTLISTING APPROACH

Applications will be evaluated based on:

- relevance of experience;
- technical capability;
- operational capability;
- regional experience;
- mobilisation capacity;
- language capability;
- and overall suitability for inclusion on the PPF Roster of Experts.

The PPF reserves the right not to shortlist applicants under a given thematic category or language combination where applications do not meet the required technical quality threshold.

The PPF may seek clarifications or supplementary information during the evaluation process, where necessary.

I. Indicative Procurement and Evaluation Timeline

Stage	Indicative Timeline
Publication of RfEOI	Wednesday, 24 June
Clarification period closes	Friday, 3 July
Submission deadline	Wednesday, 15 July
Eligibility and completeness review	Friday 17 July
Technical evaluation	Friday 24 July
Clarifications/interviews (if required)	Monday 27 – Wednesday 29 July
Final moderation and approvals	Thursday 30 – Friday 31 July
Notification of successful applicants	Monday, 3 August
Framework agreement finalisation and signature	Monday 3 August – Friday 14 August
Publication of TA Catalogue v1	Monday 17 August

The above timeline is indicative only. COMESA and the PPF Manager reserve the right to amend the timetable, seek clarifications, extend deadlines, or adjust the evaluation process as required to ensure an effective and transparent selection process.

J. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants shall submit:

- cover letter;
- company or consultant profile;
- completed thematic category and language matrix;
- legal registration documentation;
- contact details;
- relevant assignment experience;
- summary CVs of key personnel where relevant;
- tax compliance documentation where applicable; and
- at least one reference or contactable referee.

Applications and supporting documentation shall be submitted in English. Assignment delivery may subsequently be undertaken in English, French, Portuguese, and/or Arabic, depending on beneficiary requirements and the language capabilities approved during the evaluation process.

K. HOW TO APPLY

Interested applicants should submit applications electronically through the designated submission platform within the application period.

Successful applicants will be onboarded through non-exclusive framework agreements aligned to approved thematic categories and language combinations.

Assignments may subsequently be issued through Task Orders in accordance with the PPF Operations Manual and internal procedures. Task Orders will be administered by the PPF Manager on behalf of COMESA

The PPF reserves the right to onboard additional service providers during implementation in order to address identified capability gaps, language requirements, geographic coverage needs, performance considerations, or increased assignment demand.

L. CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND INTEGRITY

Applicants must disclose any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.

Failure to comply with applicable integrity, anti-fraud, anti-corruption, or conflict disclosure requirements may result in:

- rejection of the application;
- suspension from the roster;
- termination of assignments; and/or
- recovery of funds where applicable.

M. DISCLAIMER

This RfEOI does not constitute a commitment by COMESA to award contracts or assignments.

COMESA reserves the right to:

- amend or cancel the process;
- revise timelines;
- reject any or all applications; or
- withdraw this RfEOI

without liability.

N. ENQUIRIES AND SUBMISSION DETAILS

All enquiries should be directed to: **Ascentppf@cygnumcapital.com**

Applications should be submitted through: https://smartme.adalia.fi/login/A-PPF

Annex 1: Detailed Thematic Categories and Indicative Service Areas

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. 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.

13. 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.

14. 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.

15. 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.

16. 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.

17. 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.

18. 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.