



Application Guidelines Call for Entrepreneurs



Introduction

Smart Energy Solutions for Africa (SESA) is an EU-funded project, coordinated by the ICLEI Europe Secretariat (a non-profit entity based in Germany) and implemented by Siemens Stiftung and other international partners that was launched in October 2021 and has a duration of 48 months. Implemented in nine African countries (Kenya, Ghana, South Africa, Malawi, Morocco, Namibia, Tanzania, Rwanda and Nigeria), the SESA project is developing and testing innovative solutions as well as business models to accelerate the green transition and energy access in Africa.

The project aims to test, validate and later replicate scalable energy solutions in multiple locations supported by solid business models and partnerships between African and European stakeholders. SESA believes that access to clean, affordable and reliable energy services provided by renewable energy technologies will contribute to social and economic development. As such, Productive Use of Energy is considered the main priority for energy access in African countries and presents one of the main innovation areas of the SESA project.

SESA believes that the uptake of new solutions and business models **requires close cooperation between local start-ups, innovative entrepreneurs, social enterprises, industry, city administrations and research and academic institutions**. Small and medium-sized enterprises can play a key role in this process through the provision of their innovative products or services and by having a positive social as well as environmental impact on their communities. SESA's long-term impact and replicability can only be ensured through beneficial collaboration amongst all these stakeholders.

Main characteristics of the SESA Call for Entrepreneurs

- **Submission period:** from 26th of September 2022 to 20th November 2022 (8 weeks)
- **Target group:** Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Ghana, Malawi, Morocco and South Africa.
- **Sectoral Focus:** Productive Use of Energy Solutions

For further information, please read the country challenges on the SESA website. Please contact us at opencall@siemens-stiftung.org if you are not sure whether your sector(s) fit(s) the criteria.

• What does the SESA Call for Entrepreneurs offer?

Successful applicants will receive both financial and non-financial support:

- Funding of Euro 50,000 up to EUR 70,000 over max. 18 months per selected business
- Access to non-financial support such as mentoring, coaching, and technical assistance, which is based on an individual needs assessment

Eligibility criteria

We can only consider applications, which meet the below minimum criteria:

- Your enterprise must be registered and operationally active in Ghana, Malawi, Morocco, or South Africa;
- Your enterprise must have officially been in operation for at least two years;
- Your enterprise must have generated revenues and provide financial statements for the last two years (if 2021 is not available yet, please provide financial statements for 2019 and 2020);
- Your enterprise must contribute to at least two of the SESA Key Performance Indicators (please see the Application Form for further detail);
- There are no pending litigations against your enterprise or members of its management team;
- Thematic focus of **country challenge** must be met.

Women-led and women-owned businesses are particularly encouraged to apply.

Required (Mandatory) Documents

Applications must include all mandatory documents and must be submitted electronically via email to opencall@siemens-stiftung.org before the deadline of 20th of November 2022.

List of mandatory documents:

- Application Form
- Certificate of incorporation/association and registration certificate
- Financial statements for the last two years (if financial statements for 2021 are not available yet, please provide financial statements for 2020 and 2019)
- If you operate as a non-profit, hybrid organisation (both non-profit and for profit entities) or are governed by a charity/ NGO we kindly request you to also submit:
 - o List of trustees and board members
 - o Governance structure
 - o If applicable, confirmation of tax exempt status

How to apply?

Participants are requested to carefully read and follow the instructions:

1. Review the **Eligibility Criteria** to make sure your social enterprise is eligible
2. Review the **Required (Mandatory) Documents** to make sure you can provide all documents with your application

3. Fill in the **Application Form**; please try to stay within the character limit
4. Submit your complete application (including the Application Form and all relevant documents) via e-mail to **opencall@siemens-stiftung.org** by **20th November 2022**.

Applying to an open call takes time and dedication and we would like to make sure that you succeed, hence we have provided a quick check-list for your application:

- **Be on time:** Make sure you submit your proposal electronically via email before the deadline of 30th November 2022. If you submit the form correctly, the system will send you an automatic confirmation of your submission. Get in touch with Siemens Stiftung if it was not the case. Proposals submitted by any other means, will not be evaluated.
- **Be exhaustive:** Have you answered all the sections of the form and uploaded all required Annexes? It will not be possible to add any information after the submission deadline.
- **Language:** English is the official language of SESA project. All proposals must be in English in all their mandatory parts in order to be eligible. Submissions done in any other language will not be evaluated. English is also the only official language during the whole length of the SESA Call for Entrepreneurs.
- **Every question deserves your attention:** All mandatory sections of your proposal must be filled in. Make sure that the data provided is true and complete. This is crucial for us to properly assess your proposal.
- **It is your proposal:** Your project should be based on your original work. Going forward, any foreseen developments must be free from third-party rights and if not, these third-party rights must be clearly stated.
- **Documentation format:** Any document requested in any of the phases must be submitted electronically in PDF format without restrictions for printing.

NOTE: It is strongly recommended to not wait till the last moment of submission. Failure of the proposal to arrive in time for any reason, including communications delays, or network issues is not acceptable as an extenuating circumstance and will automatically lead to rejection of the submission. The time of receipt of the proposal as recorded by the submission system will be definitive.

Multiple submission

Only one proposal will be accepted for funding per SME.

In the case of a multiple submission, the first one received (timestamp of the system) will enter into the evaluation process, the rest being declared as non-eligible. You will receive an automatic response notification that your application has been received. In case of missing documents, we will contact you directly.

Conflict of interest

Applicants shall not have any actual or/and potential conflict of interest with the SESA selection process and during the whole project. All cases of conflict of interest will be assessed case by case. In particular, **applicants cannot be SESA Consortium partners or affiliated entities nor their employees or co-operators under a contractual agreement.**

Evaluation Process

The evaluation process of the SESA Call for Entrepreneurs will follow the below steps:

1. Proposals reception: via opencall@siemens-stiftung.org

2. Eligibility filter: Eligibility check will verify (i) the existence of a legal entity in an eligible country, (ii) the uniqueness of the proposal & innovation element, (iii) the alignment with SESA Call for Entrepreneurs and the country challenges.

3. Remote evaluation: The eligible proposals will then be given to an internal SESA jury of technical as well as country experts and will select the shortlisted candidates focusing on the following criteria:

- *Innovation & Impact*
 - o Social and environmental impact (i.e. demonstrated or ideally measured impact of your enterprise/solution on the environment and, ideally, for those at the bottom of the pyramid)
 - o Innovation degree of proposed solution or business model
- *Business Robustness & Market Potential*
 - o Market potential, revenue, and proven traction
- *Expertise and excellence of the proposed team*
 - o Appropriateness of skills, expertise, and experience available within the team
 - o Gender equality (i.e. demonstrating fair representation of women and men across all functions of the business)
- *Implementation Plan & Value for Money*
 - o Quality, effectiveness and clarity of project activities, structure, and timing
 - o Appropriateness of expected costs and resources assigned to the project

4. Online interview and consensus meeting: SESA evaluators will gather in an online meeting to talk with the top shortlisted candidates. During this teleconference, applicants will give a pitch of their business, followed by a Q&A session. This will be an opportunity for evaluators to cover any doubts that they may have about the written application as well as about the commitment and engagement of applicants towards participating in the SESA project. The evaluators will share, compare and revise (if necessary) their scores aiming to have a consensus about the respective proposal.

5. Final ranking: At the end of the evaluation process, the proposals will be ranked. The criteria for the ranking of the proposals will be semi-automatic following the rules below:

- ✓ Rule 1: The proposals will be ranked based on their overall score.
- ✓ Rule 2: In case following Rule 1 there are proposals in the same position, priority will be given to proposals from women-led businesses and female founders.

- ✓ Rule 3: In case following Rule 2 there are proposals in the same position, priority will be given to proposals that have higher score on the implementation & value for money section.

6. Selection: The proposals with higher scores, independently of the targeted topic/challenge, will be selected until reaching the available funding. The independent experts will score each award criterion on a scale from 0 to 4:

- **0 = Proposal fails** to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.
- **1 = Poor:** criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
- **2 = Good:** proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings is present.
- **3 = Very good:** proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings is present.
- **4 = Excellent:** proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

Please note: The SESA Consortium is not obliged to select the highest scoring proposal where it has objective grounds for objecting to the participant if, for example commercial competition issues or strategic issues to balance technologies between the different platforms available in SESA, becomes apparent during the evaluation process. In this case, the choice may pass to the next ranked proposal.

9. Communication of Results: Every applicant will receive e-mail notification of the status of their application.

SESA Call for Entrepreneurs cannot fund:

- Subsidiaries of commercial investors
- Refinancing of debt or other liabilities
- Subsidies for models which are not financially self-sustainable in the long run
- Companies that currently have an active contract with Siemens Stiftung or any other SESA Consortium Member
- Companies which are predominantly commercially oriented
- Projects that are not directly creating additional, measurable impact

Financial support

Each applicant will develop an implementation plan including milestones and deliverables as part of the application form, and a cost estimate justifying the costs and resources in relation to the implementation plan. Checking the consistency between these costs and the expected work of the project will be part of the evaluation. Once a finalist has been selected and nominated for a final contract, final milestones and deliverables will be agreed upon together with the SESA partners in country and Siemens Stiftung. The payments will be made according to a staged payment arrangement based on the successful completion of specified milestones, deliverables and reviews after each of the sprint. Detailed payment schedule and payment conditions will be settled in detail in the final agreement.

SESA Incubator Programme

All SMEs selected for the funding will benefit from a tailored incubator programme offered by the SESA project. Funded companies will become a member of the SESA incubator run by the project partner *Smart Innovation Norway* during the SESA project period. In a Kick-Off Meeting, your company together with Smart Innovation Norway and other SESA consortium partners will evaluate the specific needs of your business and develop an individualised strategy to support you in one of our main topics:

- Business Planning & Monitoring
- Organisational Development & Financial Transparency
- Marketing & Sales
- Fundraising

Each funded company will have a dedicated mentor (local or international, as per the need) who shall provide regular support in the above-mentioned topics. Additionally, technical and business expertise from SESA partners will also be to the companies. By becoming a member of the *SESA incubator* your company will also have long-term benefits. Please visit our website in order to get more information about the benefits of contributing to and partnering with the SESA project.

Complaints Mechanism

If, at any stage of the evaluation process, the applicant considers that a mistake has been made or that the evaluators have acted unfairly or have failed to comply with the rules of this SESA Call for Entrepreneurs, and that her/his interests have been prejudiced as a result, the following complaints mechanism is available.

A complaint should be drawn up in English and submitted by email to: opencall@siemens-stiftung.org.

Any complaint made should include:

- contact details,
- the subject of the complaint,
- information and evidence regarding the alleged breach.

Please note: This procedure is concerned only with the evaluation and/or eligibility checking process. The SESA Team will not call into question the scientific or technical judgement of appropriately qualified experts. A re-evaluation will only be carried out if there is evidence of a shortcoming that affects the final decision on whether to fund it or not. This means, for example, that a problem relating to one evaluation criterion will not lead to a re-evaluation if a proposal has failed anyway on other criteria.

Data protection

Your personal data will be processed in accordance with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the Federal Data Protection Act (Bundesdatenschutzgesetz, BDSG) and other relevant data protection regulations. We process your data, some of which may be personal, solely for the purpose of carrying out the selection process within the framework of the SESA project.

Please read the attached data protection regulations carefully before submitting your application. By submitting your application, you have given us consent to process personal data. You can revoke consent at any time with effect for the future.

Contact

For further information, please contact Ms Elisabeth Biber at Siemens Stiftung via opencall@siemens-stiftung.org.