

Call for Proposals

Deadline for Submission of Proposal Submission Form: 14th April 2023

1. Background

The Signify Foundation is a non-profit organization with a mission to enable access to the benefits of sustainable lighting solutions to underserved communities. In keeping with this mission, the core activities of the Signify Foundation contribute to the supply of clean technology-based lighting to underprivileged populations, promoting a participatory approach where the recipients can take ownership and sustain the interventions.

Solar- powered products have become instrumental in the ongoing efforts to meet the energy needs and demands especially in under-electrified geographies. The market for off-grid solar products across sub-Saharan Africa and the Asia-Pacific region consists of 716 million people without electricity access.¹ Last-mile distribution models are essential to bring these life-changing products to off-grid communities.

Signify Foundation focuses on supporting key actors across the energy/ light access value chain. From distribution agencies, financing partners to training institutions - are all key to enabling market ecosystems where local need for light is met through local supply. We partner with, and support intermediaries across this value chain to foster an ecosystem approach of tackling their barriers to growth and scalability.

2. Types of funding support

This Call for Proposal aims to provide support to two specific areas for last-mile distribution actors for solar home systems:

- a. **Competency Build-up:** Grants (in EUR or USD) for sales agent training, customer finance/MFI partnerships, and overall technical assistance for organizational growth.
- b. **Working capital** Recoverable grants (in EUR or USD) as inventory capital and project financing, with a grace period of 6 months and a maximum tenor of 24 months. No interest is incurred.

3. Applicant Profile

Social enterprises, MFI or other customer finance institutions or non-profit organizations – who are targeting ‘Bottom of Pyramid’ off-grid households with solar home systems.

Please note that neither investment, consulting companies nor equipment suppliers are eligible for this support.

Organizations who have on-going projects with Signify Foundation are not eligible for this funding.

¹ <https://nextbillion.net/scaling-last-mile-distribution-data-driven-lending/>

4. Eligibility and selection criteria

S.no	Criteria	Type of grant funding to apply for:	
		A. Competency Build-up grant	B. Working capital grant
1	Geographical Focus	Ethiopia, Rwanda, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda	
2	Target group	Population living off the electric grid in the above countries. This can be households, essential services (e.g., schools/health centers), and communities.	
3	Product Specifics	a. Product brand agnostic b. Tier 0-1 solar systems (with lights) c. Lighting Global certified	
4	Types of projects eligible for funding	a. Building ecosystems (product suppliers, customer financing, distribution, and services) b. Training (installation, product application, business)	a. Inventory capital b. Project financing
5	Ticket size	Between EUR 25,000 – EUR 50,000 (Or USD equivalent).	Between EUR 50,000 – EUR 150,000 (Or USD equivalent).
6	Exclusions	a. Product development b. Utility/mini- grid c. Projects without lighting relevance (e.g., solar pumps/cookstoves) d. End-user subsidy e. Feasibility studies f. Guarantee and risk premiums for financing	
7	Other eligibility criteria	a. Applicant must have the necessary expertise (at least 12 months distributing clean energy products) and administrative capacity for project implementation and reporting. b. Applicant must have at least one year of audited financial accounts c. Post-revenue is not required; however, the applicant must demonstrate how the project will contribute to financial growth of the organization. d. Applicant must demonstrate good insights into the market, customer needs/requirements and affordability. e. Applicant must demonstrate good insights into its own business model, incl. governance efficiency, distribution efficiency, competency and opportunities for growth. f. Applicant must be brand agnostic. g. Applicant must declare all public funding granted to the project	
8	Additional points to applications with a focus on	a. Gender lens b. Local ownership models	
9	Cross-cutting issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human rights • Gender equality and women’s rights • Climate change and environment • Anti-bribery and anti-corruption <p>Applicants must identify risk factors that may have a negative impact on the above issues.</p>	

5. Proposal Submission Format

- If you apply for both types of funding, please submit separate project summary forms for each.
- The proposal submission form can download via [this link](#).
- **NOTE: Please download the form from the link above and submit the form in Word/PDF format.**

Section 1		General Information
	Question	Response
1.1	Project Name:	
1.2	Name of Applicant (natural person) and contact info	
1.3	Name of the organization (legal entity)	
1.4	Geography of project:	
1.5	Type of funding requested:	<input type="checkbox"/> Grant for competency build-up <input type="checkbox"/> Recoverable grant as working capital support
	Total funding requested. (Specify in EUR/USD):	
1.6	Please attach the following documents:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official Registration • Ownership document that clearly displays names of natural persons and percentages of ownership • Organizational chart that clearly displays management structure • 2022 audited financial report. • Description of organization's experience in last-mile distribution (incl. years active, distribution model, products, prices, customer financing options, and number of systems sold in 2022)
Section 2		Project Description
2.1	Description of the project:	
2.2	Target group and rationale	
2.3	Description of project activities:	
2.4	Expected results:	<p><u>Level 1: Key performance indicators</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated number of people gaining access to clean energy solutions that the project contributes to • Estimated number of new jobs created or number of personnel trained in the private sector, disaggregated by gender and youth. • Sales growth projection because of the funding support • Others, please specify. <p><u>Level 2: Medium/long term impact</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated number of solar lights distributed still working. • Estimated number of jobs retained over one year, disaggregated by gender and youth. • Estimated further funding to be unlocked. • Others, please specify
2.5	Risk assessment	Do you foresee any material risk factors that may have a negative impact on the above cross-cutting issues?

6. How to apply

- The applicant can submit word/pdf version of the Proposal Submission Form to the following email addresses: signify.foundation.finance@signify.com
- Kindly save the Word/PDF file as: **<Call for proposal_name of organization submitting proposal>**
- Kindly provide the following information in the subject line of the email: **Submission_specify type of grant funding (competency build-up / working capital)**

7. Selection Process & Timeline

- The project summary forms will be reviewed by the operations team at Signify Foundation.
- Only shortlisted applicants will be called upon individually for a discussion/Q&A round. If application is approved, the selected applicant will be asked to complete an extended application form.
- Final commitments from Signify Foundation will be communicated in the last week of May.

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