CYNOSURE

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

EVALUATION OF THE UEF/RBF PROGRAMME

SUBMITTED TO

SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FOR ALL (SEforALL)

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ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

ABERME	Agence Béninoise d'Electrification Rurale et de Maîtrise d'Énergie (*Beninese Rural Electrification and Energy Management Agency)*
AfDB	African Development Bank
AMDA	Africa Minigrid Developers Association
ARE	Autorité de Régulation de l'Électricité (*Electricity Regulatory Authority)*
ARPU	Average Revenue Per User
BMZ	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development)
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EnDev	Energising Development
ESMS	Environmental and Social Management System
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
GEAPP	Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MT of CO2	Metric Tons of Carbon Dioxide
NEP	Nigeria Electrification Project
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development-
PHC	Powering Healthcare
PRF	Investment-Grade Policy & Regulatory Frameworks
RBF	Results Based Financing
RREP	Rural Renewable Energy Project
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEforALL	Sustainable Energy for All
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SSPU	Standalone Solar for Productive Use
TA	Technical Assistance
ToC	Theory of Change
ToRs	Terms of References
UEF	Universal Energy Facility
UIEP	Universal Integrated Energy Planning
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While significant strides have been made to achieve universal energy access, the world is not on track to meet this goal with as around 660 million people around the world are estimated to be without electricity in 2030. Achieving the goals of SDG7 requires a radical rethinking of the way that energy is produced, distributed and consumed as well as requires a renewed sense of urgency and new approaches. Access to sustainable and appropriate finance has been identified as a key barrier to the achievement of SDG7. In light of this challenge, SEforALL launched its Universal Energy Facility (UEF) in 2020 with an explicit aim to unlock finance in the renewable energy sector and encourage a paradigm shift towards the use of Results Based Financing (RBF) approaches to fast track the deployment of clean energy solutions and scale up their implementation.

The UEF is a multi-donor RBF facility launched with the objective of providing a funding mechanism that allows for scale, speed and efficiency to deliver new connections to households and businesses across Africa. The UEF utilizes an RBF approach wherein direct incentive payments (grants) are provided to energy providers upon the successful independent verification of customer energy connections installed by the developers based on pre-determined standards. By using an RBF approach, the UEF seeks to shift risk of delivery towards the private sector, provide greater regulatory certainty to industry about financial support to be provided, and aggregate financing and scale support across multiple countries.

In its first Wave (Wave 1), the UEF focused on the deployment of solar mini-grids across Madagascar, Sierra Leone and Benin. The current evaluation examined all stages of the UEF pertaining to the current formulation, design, operational processes, and implementation of the mini-grid component covering the period between January 2020 and October 2021 and the following four stages: Pre-Launch and setup phase; the Pre-Qualification Stage; the Site-Specific Stage; and the contracting phase including grant agreement signing process (and contractual components in relation to data, MEL, etc.). In addition, the evaluation also aimed to assess UEF processes and provide recommendations for improvement in and further strengthening of the operations and processes of the UEF for scaling up in subsequent Waves. The evaluation adopted a formative and process approach employing an integrated mixed methodology, combining qualitative and quantitative data to capture information relating to the Evaluation objectives through the use of Desk Review of existing UEF and SEforALL documents, Desk Research of secondary sources pertaining to donor programmes utilizing RBF approach, and through 20 Key Informant Interviews with various internal and external stakeholders including SEforALL Programmes, developers, donors and strategic partners. However, a key limitation of the evaluation is the missing perspectives of government stakeholders regarding the UEF as the Evaluation team was unable to secure interviews with government stakeholders in all three countries despite repeated attempts by the UEF and Evaluation Teams to reach out to these stakeholders as well as extending the data collection period by an additional two weeks.

The evaluation found that the UEF is highly relevant to the needs of the sector through its focus on establishing new electricity connections in the most energy-deficient region of the world through directly incentivizing the implementation of new mini-grids using an RBF mechanism that aims to speed up and scale up the delivery of energy solutions and unlocking finance for the energy sector by raising funds for a financing vehicle.

Prior to SEforALL's engagement, the UEF primarily existed as a concept for nearly two years. However, within a period of just six months in 2020, SEforALL was not only able to develop but also successfully launch the UEF in October 2020 despite the challenges and disruptions presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to operationalize the UEF, SEforALL established the governance structure for the UEF

comprising of the Advisory Board, the Investment Committee, and the Taskforce. Moreover, the UEF Team also undertook the necessary financial modelling to establish a viable subsidy amount and developed its Operating Manual which specifies the eligibility criteria for applicants and lists the technical and financial requirements at each stage of the application process, The UEF also finalized contracting with Odyssey which serves as the a secure, web-based IT project platform that enables transparent application processing, project monitoring, remote connection verification, and data aggregation.

The MEL Team within SEforALL was responsible for facilitating the development the UEF's Theory of Change (ToC) with the UEF Programme team and key stakeholders. An assessment of the ToC revealed that the current ToC is developed for all current and future components, technologies and Waves of the UEF, which does not reflect the actual incremental approach undertaken by the UEF. In addition, there is an overreliance on outcomes external to the programme to achieve impact at the SDG7 level without an explicit demonstration of how UEF's programmatic outcomes achieve those external outcomes. Lastly, there is also a need to revisit the assumption that countries are willing to work with the UEF given the challenges encountered and to identify strategies for deeper and sustained engagement with government counterparts. The UEF's KPIs were developed as part of an organization-wide Three Year Business Plan for SEforALL. Its targets (USD 500 million by 2023, etc.) were set with an aim to not just be bold and ambitious but to also reflect that the UEF intended to be a rolling facility with sufficient capital for developers to be able to apply on an ongoing basis. Therefore, the UEF aimed to serve a catalysing function to enable the mini-grid sector to grow at speed and scale by attracting other investors.

Overall, the evaluation found the project design to be sound as it is based on an RBF modality that is highly relevant and well-suited to the sectoral needs to enable deployment of mini-grids at speed and scale. Moreover, the criteria on the basis of which the UEF assesses applicants are also in line with international standards, particularly those of international multi-lateral banks such as the World Bank. However, the UEF was found to have overambitious KPI targets and a highly accelerated timeframe that did not sufficiently consider country-specific implementation challenges and put in place risk mitigation strategies to overcome those challenges. Progress towards achieving these ambitious targets was negatively impacted from the start of the UEF due to challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic which delayed the launch of the UEF and impacted the speed of implementation on the ground due to disruptions and delays with regulatory processes.

Prior to launch, the UEF conducted due diligence through AMDA's assessments which was followed up by country assessments through a legal firm for Sierra Leone and Madagascar, and later Benin. While the AMDA assessments offered details on country and developer readiness for mini-grid projects and including information on country's regulatory framework, this information wasn't found to be accurate, in part likely also due to a changing context due to COVID-19. Similarly, country assessments conducted by the legal firm sought to provide a detailed picture of the regulatory, legal and corporate landscape of the three countries. However, these country assessments lacked an analytical or critical analysis of challenges and risks to implementation from the UEF's perspective and did not critically examine potential areas of risks that could emerge at various points and stages of the process. In addition, some significant information gaps were observed in all the country assessments, but especially for Madagascar as elaborated in the Country Assessments Section (Section 4.2.4).

The UEF was first launched in Madagascar and Sierra Leone in October 2020. The pre-qualification stage was extended from the planned four weeks to an actual six weeks due to lengthy processes for developers to obtain required documentation under technical and financial criteria. The site-specific stage was closed by the end of Q2 2021 and a new site-specific window was launched for the two countries due to unutilized funds. The UEF was then launched in Benin in January 2021. with GIZ as a

technical implementing partner. The UEF applied lessons learned from the first window in October 2020 to set the timeframe for the pre-qualification stage in Benin to six weeks, rather than the initial four weeks that were set in the prior window. The site-specific stage in Benin saw extensive challenges as a result of prolonged processes and timelines for developers to obtain regulatory permits, thereby resulting in an extension of 5 months to October 2021.

As of 31st December 2021, the UEF has not met the targets set for its core KPIs due to various operational and country-specific challenges and has not been able to deploy any mini-grids since its inception in October 2020. However, the UEF has been able to show progress towards results by successfully signing Grant Agreements and conditional offer letters with developers in Madagascar and Sierra Leone on an accelerated schedule of one year from launch, despite operating in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In terms of the UEF's application criteria and requirements, the evaluation revealed that a certain redundancy is built into UEF application process as developers already have to undergo much of what the UEF requires in terms of design process, financial models, and adherence and compliance with technical specificities as part of the process with their regulatory agencies. Developers have highlighted specific instances of application requirements and criteria, elaborated in the Application Criteria and Requirements Section (Section 4.3.3), which may benefit from review. The UEF has already incorporated some of the feedback obtained during the course of the first window into its launch in Benin by changing the language of the Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) requirement to make them more comprehensible and granting extensions to developers who faced challenges in submitting documentation at the pre-qualification stage rather than outright rejection. Moreover, the UEF has also been able to navigate challenges with its criteria coming into friction with on the ground realities in the case of Benin where the UEF has made provisions to developers to waive the minimum of 200 connections per site as a sizeable proportion of eligible sites fall below that criteria.

While the UEF made special provisions to encourage participation of local developers, no local developers have signed either a Grant Agreement or a conditional offer letter with the UEF. Local developers have faced unique challenges in the form of difficulty adapting internal standards of operation to the UEF's design methodology, finding technical specifications of mini-grid design to be more inflexible due to unfamiliarity with implementing mini-grids under such specifications, and difficulty navigating UEF's financial modelling tools. Developers, particularly local developers, have also faced challenges using the Odyssey platform in the form of difficulties around visibility of submission deadlines, lack of awareness regarding launch of application windows or additional training sessions offered, and persistent challenges understanding and navigating Odyssey mechanisms to link specific documents across multiple sites. In light of these challenges with Odyssey and with certain elements of the UEF Application (financial modelling/technical specifications), developers have strongly indicated a need for additional, in-depth trainings on specific aspects of the UEF application that bolster their understanding of the application requirements and improve their user experience of Odyssey. From the UEF's perspective, data for monitoring progress on the KPIs is obtained not only through Odyssey but other tools such as SharePoint and Salesforce are also used to obtain various data points that feed into the UEF's reporting on its KPIs. The key challenges encountered include: a) only 10% to 20% of the data needed to report on KPIs is available on Odyssey through automated mechanisms; b) the remaining data is available in CSV and other formats which require manual tabulation and analysis resulting in inefficient processes.

While SEforALL has engaged with stakeholders, such engagements were primarily conducted through webinars to introduce the Programme to stakeholders and, in the case of developers, to provide an overview of the Odyssey platform and application. Nevertheless, the UEF has undertaken some

prominent activities as part of its advocacy efforts including convening the RBF Leadership Group in September 2020 and publishing the Mini-Grid Carbon Emissions Tool, the first of its kind in the sector, which has also been accepted by UNFCCC. The UEF may want to closely examine other successful mini-grid programmes in the SSA context such as UNOPS Rural Renewable Energy Project (RREP) and MCC's Beyond the Grid Fund Africa (BGFA). Their success has been attributed to their robust in-country presence aimed towards bridging the gap between government agencies and the private sector and facilitating government buy-in through its participation in decision making processes, while also ensuring that those processes are reflective of the operational realities for developers. In contrast to Madagascar and Sierra Leone, the UEF through GIZ as its technical implementing partner has in-country presence in Benin. The GIZ Team has attempted to mitigate challenges encountered by developers in Benin by providing technical support to the Beninese REA and regulatory authority and assist the developers in site selection. However, in spite of these efforts, developers are facing challenges in the form of stalled regulatory processes, as authorities are seeking grant agreements with the UEF as a requisite to moving forward in granting regulatory approvals and permits to developers.

Internally, the UEF faced challenges in the form of limited staffing and lack of requisite French-speaking resources within the Team to communicate with developers and government stakeholders effectively. Staffing resources of SEforALL from different programmes (outside the UEF) have been used to support processes such as monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL), and resource mobilization.

With regards to collaboration between the UEF and other programmes within SEforALL, there are opportunities for the UEF to leverage the knowledge and expertise of the Universal Integrated Energy Planning (UIEP), Clean Cooking, and Investment Grade Policy and Regulatory Framework (PRF) programmes at not just the planning and strategizing stage prior to the UEF's deployment in a given country, but also in the form of a more coordinated and phased-approach to implementation. In addition, given that the UEF shares some of the same donors who are also supporting the work of these programmes, there may be an opportunity for SEforALL to engage such donors for a more coordinated and strategic phased-implementation approach in current and future countries that the UEF plans to launch in.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Review of KPIs and targets in light of implementation challenges**: It is recommended that the UEF undertake a review of its core KPI targets to better manage expectations around fundraising, disbursement, and operationalization of mini-grids and establishment of connections. In addition, it is also recommended that the UEF establish a more detailed Logframe that further lists the programme's activities, outputs, and outcomes along with indicators across all preconditions at the output and outcome level, means of verification, as well as risks and further assumptions in light of opportunities and challenges in Wave 1. It is recommended that insights from this evaluation are integrated into the more detailed Logframe.

2. **Establish Robust In-Country Presence:** It is recommended that the UEF prioritize hiring of senior local staff to coordinate and liaise with government counterparts and overcome process hurdles, troubleshoot with developers, and ensure that the regulatory process to obtain permits is carried out smoothly.

3. **Prioritize operationalization of Mini-grids:** It is highly recommended that the UEF first establish its proof of concept through the deployment of mini-grids and establishing electricity connections prior to operationalizing other energy access solutions such as Standalone Solar for Productive Use (SSPUs) or clean cooking solutions. It is also recommended that a staggered deployment approach be used as the concurrent operationalization of SSPUs in addition to the existing mini-grid

technology in the current limited financial and human resources could hamper progress for either or both technologies.

4. **Review the Country Selection Process:** It is recommended that the UEF undertake a review of its country selection process to incorporate a thorough analysis of how and where country-specific processes could impact and pose challenges for the UEF at all possible points in the Application process to enable it to devise mitigation measures and ensure that the UEF remains adaptable and flexible to country-specific contexts. Moreover, in light of crucial information gaps elaborated in the Country Assessment Section (Section 4.2.4), the UEF may want to utilize multi-pronged approach comprised of Desk Review and In-country expert consultations to obtain a holistic and up-to-date picture of on-ground realities.
5. **Review the UEF Application Criteria and Requirements:** The evaluation revealed several opportunities for the UEF to further streamline its application process at specific application areas such as the ESMS requirements, components listing of distribution networks, provision of notarized letters for each site, and audited financial statements which could be reviewed further. The UEF has mitigated delays faced during the regulatory processes through the provision of conditional offer letters on a case-by-case basis. It is recommended that the UEF consider establishing a more formalized approach internally around a minimum threshold an applicant needs to reach to obtain conditional offer letters.
6. **Technical Assistance to Government:** In light of extensive stakeholder feedback as well as learnings from other successful mini-grid programmes, it is recommended that the UEF explore opportunities for the provision of technical assistance to government agencies and/or regulatory authorities to build their capacity to ensure government buy-in and smooth operation of regulatory processes. One potential avenue that the UEF may want to consider is partnering with or engaging other donor agencies working in countries with an explicit focus on providing technical assistance and capacity building to either the private sector or the public sector.
7. **Provision of Additional Trainings on Odyssey Platform:** Developer feedback has revealed challenges around the Odyssey platform's usability. It is recommended that the UEF facilitate applicants by providing additional and ongoing trainings to help developers navigate the UEF application process and improve their capacity to effectively use the Odyssey platform.
8. **Develop an Integrated Approach to Data Management:** It is recommended that the UEF develop a consolidated data management approach that enables it to leverage automation tools to enable a more efficient and streamlined data collection and analytics approach in order to meet its various quarterly, semi-annual and annual reporting requirements to donors. Since data for KPIs is supplied by various actors, it is highly recommended that the UEF make expectations around the provision of data from various sources explicit during the contracting stage so that developers and other actors commit to providing the data needed for the UEF to report on its KPIs.
9. **Overcome Key Skill Gaps in the Upcoming Expansion of the UEF Team:** It is highly recommended that the UEF cover identified language gaps by hiring personnel with French language skills. It is also recommended that the UEF onboard staff based in SSA who have a better understanding of the regulatory and policy environments, which will enable it to better guide developers and address concerns stemming from local contexts.
10. **Leverage Synergies with Internal SEforALL Programmes:** The evaluation revealed that there are potential points of increased synergy between specific SEforALL Programmes such as the UIEP, Clean Cooking, PRF and the UEF which may be leveraged for a more integrated and phased approach to

country implementation by the UEF. In addition, there may be value in institutionalizing internal coordination mechanisms within SEforALL that would allow these Programmes to better leverage synergies, for instance, through joint workplans that outline time-bound activities, outputs, and outcomes of collaborations between Programmes, or a jointly developed theory of change on how these Programmes work together to support energy access as a whole.

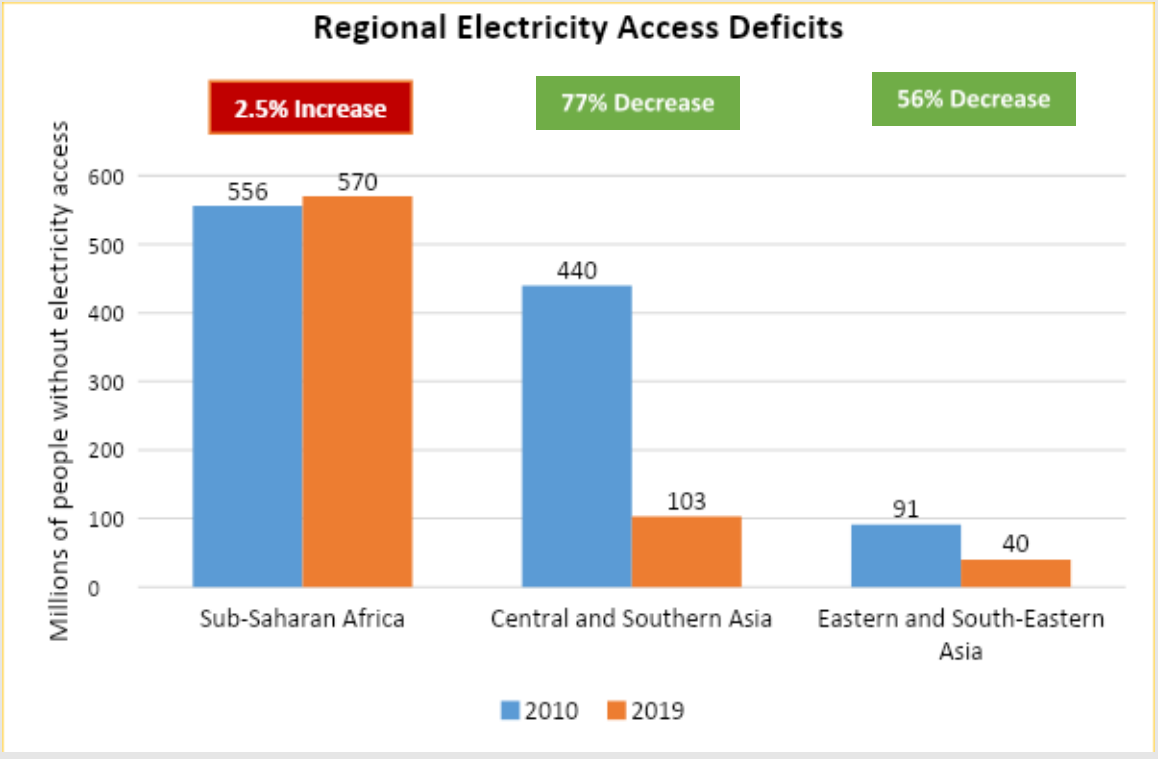
2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE EVALUATION

Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG7) pertains to ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.[1] By 2030, the SDG7 aims to: a) ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services; b) substantially increase the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix; c) double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency; d) enhance international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy and technology; and e) expand infrastructure and upgrade technology for supplying modern and sustainable energy services for all in developing countries. SDG7 lays out ambitious goals which require transformation at an unparalleled scale by all stakeholders including leaders in government, private sector companies, institutions, financiers, development banks, unions, communities, entrepreneurs, and civil society.

The world has made significant strides in improving access to electricity, increasing renewable energy use in the energy sector and improving energy efficiency. Since 2010, global access to electricity increased from 83% to 90% in 2019 and global access deficit decreased from 1.22 billion to 759 million in 2019.[2] As of 2019, Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for three-quarters of the global population lacking access to electricity (570 million).[3] In Sub-Saharan Africa, while the share of the population with access to electricity has grown from 33% in 2010 to nearly 46% in 2019, with population growth, the absolute access deficits have risen in the same period – from 556 million in 2010 to 570 million in 2019.[4] Compared to 2010, Central Asia and Southern Asia and Eastern Asia and South-eastern Asia regions have seen a reduction in their absolute access deficits by 77% (337 million) and 56% (51 million) respectively in 2019.[5]

FIGURE 1: REGIONAL ENERGY ACCESS DEFICITS (IN MILLIONS OF PEOPLE) 2010-2019[6]

[1] https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal7
[2] UN Economic and Social Council. 2021. Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Report of the Secretary-General. E/2021/58. https://undocs.org/en/E/2021/58
[3] IEA, IRENA, UNSD, World Bank, WHO. 2021. Tracking SDG 7: The Energy Progress Report. World Bank, Washington DC. © World Bank. License: Creative Commons Attribution—NonCommercial 3.0 IGO (CC BYNC 3.0 IGO) Available at: https://trackingsdg7.esmap.org/data/files/download-documents/2021_tracking_sdg7_report.pdf
[4] IEA, IRENA, UNSD, World Bank, WHO. 2021. Tracking SDG 7: The Energy Progress Report. World Bank, Washington DC. © World Bank. License: Creative Commons Attribution—NonCommercial 3.0 IGO (CC BYNC 3.0 IGO), p. 29, Available at: https://trackingsdg7.esmap.org/data/files/download-documents/2021_tracking_sdg7_report.pdf
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.



In 2019, 66% of the global population had access to clean cooking fuels and technologies, an increase of 9% compared to 2010 (57%).[7] However, an estimated 2.6 billion people around the world lack access to clean cooking fuels and technologies with 94% of them residing in three regions of the world: Sub-Saharan Africa (35%), Central Asia and Southern Asia (31%) and Eastern Asia and South-Eastern Asia (28%).[8] In fact, compared to the other two regions which have showed decreases in their share of total access deficit, Sub-Saharan Africa's share in access deficit has increased from 25% in 2010 to 35% in 2019.[9]

The share of renewable energy in total final energy consumption increased from 16.4% in 2010 to 17.1% in 2018.[10] In 2018, the share of renewable energy in all three main end-use categories of all total final energy consumption was 21% for electricity, 32% for transport and 47% for heat.[11] Sub-Saharan Africa has the largest share of renewable sources in its energy supply with traditional uses of biomass representing more than 85% of the renewable energy consumed in the region.[12] However, despite the gains made, the world is not on track to meet the Goals and

[7] Ibid
[8] Ibid
[9] Ibid
[10] UN Economic and Social Council. 2021. Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Report of the Secretary-General. E/2021/58. https://undocs.org/en/E/2021/58
[11] IEA, IRENA, UNSD, World Bank, WHO. 2021. Tracking SDG 7: The Energy Progress Report. World Bank, Washington DC. © World Bank. License: Creative Commons Attribution—NonCommercial 3.0 IGO (CC BYNC 3.0 IGO)
[12] Ibid

targets laid out in the SDGs by 2030. It is estimated that there may still be as many as 660 million people worldwide without access to electricity in 2030 and 2.3 billion people without access to clean cooking fuels and technologies.[13]

Achieving the goals of SDG7 requires a radical rethinking of the way that energy is produced, distributed and consumed as well as requires a renewed sense of urgency and new approach. Access to sustainable and appropriate finance has been identified as a key barrier to the achievement of SDG7. In order to provide finance at the speed and scale needed to achieve SDG7, a paradigm shift towards results-based financing (RBF) is required. RBF allows governments and donors to shift an appropriate level of risk of delivery to the private sector, provides greater certainty to industry about access to the level of financial support requires and aggregates financing and scales support across multiple countries.

2.1 ABOUT THE UEF

In order to meet the challenges of access to sustainable finance and the need for targeted high impact interventions, the Universal Energy Facility (UEF) was launched in October 2020 as a multi-donor RBF facility established to support the electrification of households, businesses, public institutions and other electricity consumers in Sub-Saharan Africa that lack reliable access to electricity services.

The UEF has its origins as the Universal Electrification Fund, an initial concept formed through the collaboration of Africa Minigrid Developers Association (AMDA), the Shell Foundation, and Rockefeller Foundation. This was then developed as a 'SMART RBF' concept in late 2018 and early 2019 through a series of technical meetings with developers, investors, and government representatives. In late 2019, the Shell Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation and AMDA requested SEforALL take on the role of Programme Manager to complete the design, launch and subsequently operate the Facility. At the heart of the conception of the UEF was the idea of creating a pan-African financing vehicle to act as a catalyst for the development and implementation of mini-grids across the continent by providing capital subsidies to developers who have demonstrated experience operating existing mini-grids and who are on the pathway to regulatory compliance and meeting technical standards.

The UEF provides incentive payments in the form of grants, on a 'results-based' approach to selected eligible organizations that develop and operate systems and provide verified electricity connections. As traditional government procurement methods such as minimum required subsidy tenders are time intensive and difficult to scale, the advantage of shifting to RBF incentives allows governments and donors to:

- Shift risk of delivery towards the private sector.
- Provide greater regulatory certainty to industry about financial support to be provided.

[13] UN Economic and Social Council. 2021. Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Report of the Secretary-General. E/2021/58. https://undocs.org/en/E/2021/58

- Aggregate financing and scale support across multiple countries.

The objective of the UEF is to build up to a USD 500 million facility that will provide more than 1.3 million new electricity connections to more than 6.37 million people, directly mitigate 4.8 Mt CO2e of greenhouse gas emissions and help to create a step change in deployment of decentralized renewables in Sub-Saharan Africa. In the first Wave the UEF selected three countries across Africa i.e., Sierra Leone, Benin, and Madagascar. Under this wave, the UEF has secured approximately USD 8.6 million (USD 6 million earmarked for disbursements and USD 2.6 million for setup and operational costs) to deliver over 14,000 new connections across the three countries based on a results-based incentive of USD 433 per electricity connection.

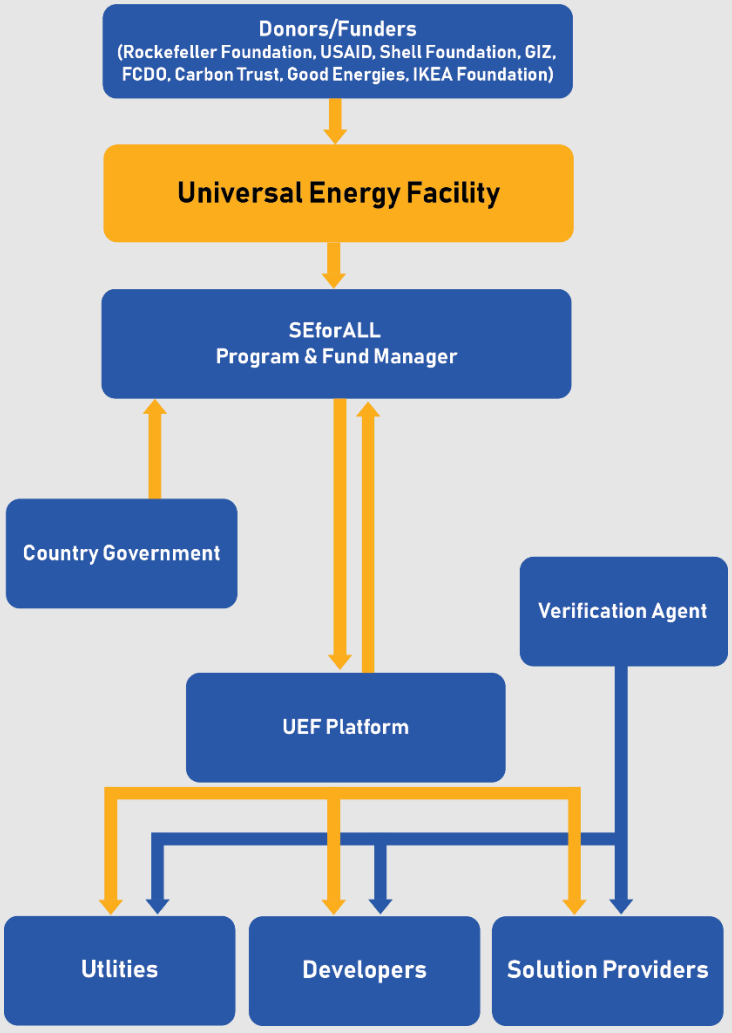
In the second wave, the Initiative aims to scale up to deliver over 240,000 connections across mini-grids and stand-alone solar for productive use through USD 100 million of funding. The second wave is also expected to displace about 0.9 MT of CO_2e. In the third wave by 2023 the UEF aims to deliver over 1 million connections across Africa. The initiative aims to use USD 400 million funding for the third wave and cumulative funding of USD 500 million. The third wave is also expected to displace a total of 3.08 MT of CO_2 by the end of 2023. Overall, the UEF expects to create 1 million local jobs in Africa over the period of these three waves.

The UEF initiative is funded by multiple donors, i.e., the Rockefeller Foundation, Shell Foundation, and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) as consortium driving the UEF. Some funders are also integrated in the governance structure of the UEF as members of the Advisory Board and Investment Committee.

SEforALL is the Programme Manager of the UEF and is responsible for running day to day operations, providing oversight to the UEF, managing the project platform, ensuring sufficient funds for UEF fund, and ensuring that information is shared with all stakeholders. Currently, SEforALL is also responsible for managing the financial resources and disbursements of grant payments, however it is envisioned for the UEF in the future to operate as an independent entity separate from SEforALL.

The UEF platform, run via Odyssey, is used by SEforALL to manage the workflow for the application process, manage documentation and data from project developers, and verify connections remotely. The connections are also verified by an on the ground verification agent before the payment is made to eligible utilities, developers, and solution providers. The figure below depicts the UEF's organizational structure.

FIGURE 2: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE UEF



In subsequent Waves, the UEF plans on expanding from mini-grids only to also deliver on stand-alone solar for productive use and potentially connections for clean cooking solutions as well. In addition, within the mini-grid component, the UEF currently (Wave 1) only focuses on the delivery of connections through mini-grids that use solar PV technology.[14] In subsequent Waves, the UEF could expand the number and types of technologies that can be used from solar PV to also include wind, hydroelectric and sustainable biomass or biogas.[15]

[14] UEF Revised Operating Manual. March 2021. SEforALL. pp. 14-15
[15] Ibid.

3. EVALUATION APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the current evaluation was to assess the operations of the first Wave of the UEF in order to generate learnings and create an internal and external facing learning document that shapes key recommendations for integration into the scale-up of the UEF. The current evaluation is composed of two components: a) A retrospective assessment of the UEF since January 2020 to October 2021 (Wave 1); and b) A forward-looking component regarding UEF processes for scale-up in subsequent Waves.

3.1 RETROSPECTIVE ASSESSMENT OF WAVE 1

In its first Wave, the focus of the UEF has been on the delivery of verified connections through mini-grids. Therefore, for its retrospective assessment, the evaluation focused on all stages of the UEF pertaining to the current formulation, design, operational processes, and implementation of the mini-grid component. The current evaluation covers the first Wave of the UEF which includes: a) Pre-Launch and setup phase of the UEF; b) the Pre-Qualification Stage of the UEF application process; c) the Site-Specific Stage of the Application process; and d) the contracting phase including grant agreement signing process (and contractual components in relation to data, MEL, etc.) with successful applicants. The current evaluation covers the time period from Programme development in January 2020 to October 2021 as detailed in Annex 02.

3.2 FORWARD-LOOKING COMPONENT OF THE EVALUATION

The forward-looking component of the current evaluation aimed to:

- Seek to utilize the findings of the retrospective assessment to provide recommendations and considerations in terms of the UEF's design to further solidify long-term impacts and sustainability
- Identify areas of improvement in and further strengthening of the operations and processes of the UEF for scaling up and expanding to include future development of mini-grids using technologies in addition to solar PV, stand-alone solar for productive use and clean cooking solutions
- Examine the extent to which the UEF can leverage other SEforALL initiatives in the future for both the current Wave and expansion beyond mini-grids.
- Identify the advantages of and challenges with the RBF approach vis-à-vis other financing approaches experienced in the wider African context and examine the potential for replication of the RBF approach in the context of Asia.

3.3 EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODS

The evaluation adopted a **formative and process approach** employing an integrated mixed methodology, combining qualitative and quantitative data to capture information relating to the Evaluation objectives. The UEF was evaluated on the basis of four of the key OECD-DAC criteria of Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Coherence. The table in Annex 03 maps the key evaluation questions for each Criteria to the retrospective and forward-looking components of the evaluation with the *italics* referencing modifications in the questions or additional questions across the two components.

3.3.1 SAMPLING AND RESEARCH DESIGN

The evaluation was conducted applying an integrated mixed methods approach based on the desk review of relevant project documents provided by the UEF Team, combined with desk-based research and literature review of relevant publications, articles, statistics, national policies from academia, government, and other development agencies. Further complementing the use of secondary sources of data were Key Informant Interviews with relevant UEF and SEforALL programme staff, donors and strategic partners, and developers from whom primary data was collected.

An in-depth desk review was undertaken to facilitate a clear understanding of the project and enable an effective evaluation design. As part of the evaluation, the Evaluation Team developed a **Preliminary Learning Draft from Desk Review** using an approach and methodology mirroring that of the Evaluation through a retrospective assessment of the UEF using internal UEF and SEforALL documents and a forward-looking component incorporating desk research with a focus on the subsequent Waves and scale-up of the UEF. A list of documents reviewed as part of the Desk Review is provided in Annex 05.

Interviews with key stakeholders were conducted between 6th December 2021 and 19th January 2022 during which time a total of 20 interviews were conducted against the 24 that were planned. The following table identifies the types of stakeholders and the number of interviews that the Evaluation Team planned to conduct and the interviews that it was able to conduct.

TABLE 1: STAKEHOLDERS FOR KIIS

	STAKEHOLDERS		Component(s) Involved In	INTERVIEWS PLANNED	INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED
1.	UEF	Programme Management Team	Retrospective and Forward-looking	02	03
		Chief Executing Officer (CEO)			
		Chief of Staff			
2.	SEforALL	Operations / Procurement	Retrospective and Forward-looking	08	08
		Human Resources (HR)	Retrospective and Forward-looking		
		Resource Mobilization	Retrospective and Forward-looking		
		Monitoring , Evaluation and Learning (MEL)	Retrospective and Forward-looking		
		Policy and Regulatory Frameworks (PRF)	Retrospective and Forward-looking		
		Powering Healthcare (PHC)	Forward-looking		
		Universal Integrated Energy Plans (UIEP)	Retrospective and Forward-looking		
		Clean Cooking	Forward-looking		
3.	Government Representatives	Rural Electrification Agencies in Benin, and Madagascar	Retrospective and Forward-looking	02	0
		Ministry of Energy – Sierra Leone	Retrospective and Forward-looking	01	
4.	Strategic Partners	Africa Minigrid Developers Association (AMDA)	Retrospective and Forward-looking	02	02
		Nigeria Electrification Project			
5.	Donors/Implementing Partners	Shell Foundation	Retrospective and Forward-looking	04	03
		The Rockefeller Foundation			
		Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)			
		IKEA Foundation			
6.	Developers	Benin	Retrospective and Forward-looking	02-03	01
		Madagascar		02-03	01
		Sierra Leone		02-03	02
	TOTAL			24-27	20

The Evaluation Team has developed detailed interview guide sheets for conducting interviews with the various stakeholder groups identified in the table above. The Interview guide sheets were developed using a semi-structured format to facilitate a guided discussion with various stakeholders and allow for ample room to obtain background information about the Programme and the stakeholders' roles within the Programme. These data collection tools primarily collected qualitative information and in some specific cases quantitative information as well. The data collection tools developed for the different stakeholder groups can be found in Annex 01.

Annex 06 shows specific interview questions developed for various stakeholder groups mapped against the key programmatic questions. The specific interview questions were used to answer the key programmatic evaluation questions for each of the OECD-DAC Criteria.

3.3.2 APPROACH TO DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Prior to the start of the data collection activity, the respondents to be interviewed were identified based on the list of contacts per stakeholder group that SEforALL shared with the Evaluation Team. Upon the selection of respondents, the UEF Team sent an introductory email explaining the context, rationale and objectives of the evaluation and introduce the respondent to the Cynosure Evaluation Team. The introductory email contained a Doodle link, managed by the Evaluation Team, with a list of times and dates which the respondents selected to schedule their interview. Following their selection of a time, the Cynosure Evaluation Team sent a calendar invite containing a Zoom link where the interview was conducted. Prior to the interview, the respondents were provided with the approved and finalized list of questions pertaining to their stakeholder type.

The Evaluation Team conducted the interview in a 90 minute timeframe using the finalized and approved data collection tools. The Evaluation Team took down detailed notes of the responses to interview questions throughout the interview. Upon the completion of data collection activities, the evaluation notes gathered were analyzed across the OECD-DAC Criteria of the Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Coherence by mapping the responses of stakeholders as well as the notes taken from the internal and external documents on to the various key programmatic evaluation questions that compose each OECD-DAC Criteria as outlined in the ToRs.

3.4 LIMITATIONS

The evaluation was designed to include various key stakeholders internal and external to SEforALL including donors, strategic partners, developers, as well as other programme and operational teams within SEforALL. However, the evaluation team was unable to conduct interviews with any government stakeholders in Benin, Madagascar and Sierra Leone and was only able to conduct one interview each with a developer based in Madagascar and Benin. In order to mitigate for this crucial gap, the evaluation team extended its interview period from 23rd December 2021 till 19th January and repeated attempts to engage developers and government officials were made by the evaluation team as well as the UEF to reach out to these key stakeholders. **As a result, a key limitation of the current evaluation is the missing perspectives of government stakeholders regarding the UEF.**

4. EVALUATION FINDINGS

The following sections present the findings of the evaluation across the four OECD-DAC criteria of Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness and Coherence of the UEF in its first Wave of implementation and also presents forward looking considerations for the anticipated scale-up of the UEF and subsequent Waves.

4.1 RELEVANCE

This section presents an assessment of the relevance of the UEF, particularly as it pertains to its overall strategic alignment with the SDG7, donor priorities and government policies as well as with the energy sector in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa. The section also elaborates on the UEF's country selection criteria for implementation of Wave 1.

4.1.1 STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

The Universal Energy Facility (UEF) is a multi-donor results-based financing (RBF) facility launched with the objective of providing a funding mechanism that allows for scale, speed and efficiency to achieve universal energy access by 2030. At a strategic level, the UEF is aligned with the SDG7 which calls for affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all by. In particular, given the fact that the Sub-Saharan Africa region accounts for nearly three-quarters of the global population lacking access to electricity, the UEF is highly relevant to eradicating energy access gaps by targeting the Sub-Saharan Africa region.

Based on discussions with multiple stakeholders, the UEF is equally found to be aligned with the priorities of its donors. For instance, 'Ending Energy Poverty' is one of the four core commitments of the Rockefeller Foundation[16], while development of off-grid utilities is one of the four key focus areas of the Shell Foundation.[17] Moreover, the UEF continues to court donors who are committed to providing energy access through renewable energy, such as the IKEA Foundation.[18]

Interviews with the UEF Team also revealed that the requirements and criteria on the basis of which applicants are evaluated are also aligned with the requirements of the World Bank and similar to those in the World Bank-funded Nigeria Electrification Project (NEP) which would facilitate the identification of qualified developers in any future investment or programming by the World Bank. Furthermore, to ensure that private sector perspectives were incorporated into the design of the UEF, The Rockefeller and Shell Foundation collaborated extensively with the Africa Minigrid Developers Association (AMDA) to design and develop the Programme and also held extensive feedback sessions with investors and funders.

[16] https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/commitment/power/
[17] https://shellfoundation.org/focus-areas/
[18] https://ikeafoundation.org/renewable-energy/

In its first Wave, the UEF focuses on the delivery of electricity connections in three countries of Sub-Saharan Africa – Benin, Madagascar, and Sierra Leone – through mini-grids using solar PV technology. In Benin, the UEF is highly aligned with the Government Action Programme (2016 -2021), in particular with its Pillar 2 pertaining to initiating structural economic change through the development of renewable energy capacity to provide reliable and high quality electricity supply to businesses and households in the country.[19] Similarly for Sierra Leone, the UEF is aligned with the Government of Sierra Leone's Renewable Energy Policy which aims to sustainably supply electric power to 60% of remote off-grid communities.[20] While in Madagascar, the UEF is relevant to the Government of Madagascar's vision to ensure access to affordable, quality, sustainable modern energy.[21]

4.1.2 RELEVANCE TO SECTORAL NEEDS

The UEF was designed and launched with the explicit goal of being a financing vehicle for the increased deployment of mini-grids and other off-grid energy solutions to deliver new connections to households and businesses across Africa. With over 600 million people lacking access to electricity in Africa, the deployment of mini-grids as a source of clean and renewable energy has been widely recognized. According to the World Bank, an estimated 140,000 mini-grids in Africa are needed to solve this massive energy access gap.[22] However, according to World Bank estimates, there are only 1,465 mini-grids installed in Africa which reflects the massive need of scaling up the deployment of mini-grids in the region.[23] With an explicit aim to unlock financing for the energy sector for the increased deployment of mini-grids (and potentially other clean energy solutions), the UEF plays a critical role towards scaling up energy access finance for the sector.

The UEF utilizes an RBF approach wherein direct incentive payments (grants) are provided to mini-grid developers upon the successful independent verification of customer electricity connections installed by the developers based on pre-determined standards. In contrast, traditional approaches to energy financing involve the disbursement of grants to developers up-front, before developers install the mini-grids. Although the use of RBF is relatively novel to the mini-grid sector, across the board multiple stakeholders interviewed during the course of

[19] Presidency of The Republic of Benin. 2016. Government Action Programme (2016-2021) Summary. https://beninrevele.bj/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/The-Summary.pdf

[20] Renewable Energy Policy of Sierra Leone. 2016. http://www.energy.gov.sl/PR_Renewable%20Energy%20policy%20of%20SL_FINAL%20for%20Print.pdf

[21] Assistance pour le Développement d'une Nouvelle Politique de l'Energie et d'une Stratégie pour la République de Madagascar – Phases 2 et 3 Document d'Etude de la Politique et Stratégie de l'Energie. 2015. Ministry of Energy and Hydrocarbons. http://ader.mg/pdf_files/infos/Legislation/Nouvelle_Politique_De_l_Energie.pdf

[22] ESMAP. 2019. Mini Grids for Half a Billion People: Market Outlook and Handbook for Decision Makers. Executive Summary. Energy Sector Management Assistance Program (ESMAP) Technical Report 014/19. Washington, DC: World Bank.

[23] ESMAP. 2019. Mini Grids for Half a Billion People: Market Outlook and Handbook for Decision Makers. Executive Summary. Energy Sector Management Assistance Program (ESMAP) Technical Report 014/19. Washington, DC: World Bank.

the evaluation confirmed that the RBF approach is the best way to close the viability gap for mini-grids.

The evaluation revealed that a number of advantages are associated with the use of RBF approaches to energy financing compared with traditional upfront subsidy grants as the focus shifts away from inputs and processes towards outcomes and results, providing greater flexibility to developers regarding how they want to achieve those results. In particular, the RBF approach utilized by the UEF aims to streamline the process by which developers apply for financing by pre-qualifying applicants once, which enables them to apply for grant funding whenever new application cycles are launched. The UEF also reduces procedural uncertainty by instituting a standardized set of criteria for all the countries it operates in. On the side of funders/donors, the financial risks associated with the non-delivery of the results shifts towards the developers as financial resources of the donors are not expended in the case of non-delivery. In case the developers are unable to meet the conditions of their grant agreement, the funds previously reserved for the developer are released back to the UEF's budget for other projects.

In summary, the evaluation found that the UEF is highly relevant to the needs of the sector through its focus on establishing new electricity connections in the most energy-deficient region of the world through directly incentivizing the implementation of new mini-grids using an RBF mechanism that aims to speed up and scale up the delivery of energy solutions.

4.2 EFFICIENCY

This section assesses the UEF's efficiency in terms of its design, theory of change, stakeholder engagement, monitoring and evaluation, timeliness, staffing, and financial management.

4.2.1 PROJECT DESIGN AND OPERATIONALIZATION

In late 2019, SEforALL was requested to function as the Programme Manager for the UEF and to further develop and complete its design, launch and implementation. Prior to SEforALL's engagement, the UEF primarily existed as an initial concept for nearly two years. However, within a period of just six months in 2020, SEforALL was not only able to develop but also successfully launch the UEF in October 2020 despite the challenges and disruptions presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to operationalize the UEF, SEforALL established the governance structure for the UEF comprising of the Advisory Board, the Investment Committee, and the Taskforce. Moreover, the UEF Team also undertook the necessary financial modeling to establish a viable subsidy amount.[24]

In addition, the UEF also developed and finalized its Operating Manual which functions primarily to detail the UEF Application process and explain the funding provided by, and the

[24] The initial subsidy amount was USD 500. However, prior to launch and based on stakeholder feedback, it was later revised to USD 433.

operating procedures of, the UEF. The Operating Manual specifies the eligibility criteria for applicants and lists the technical and financial requirements at each stage of the application process, establishes the timelines for assessment and protocols for communications between the UEF and applicants, and the requirements and terms and conditions for approved applicants such as claims report submission. While the operating manual provides elaborate procedural guidelines for the application process, it lacks sufficient details on other UEF activities/outputs such as technical assistance, advocacy and outreach to stakeholders, and government engagement.

As part of the pre-launch stage of the Programme, the UEF also undertook the necessary country due diligence by leveraging existing partner resources through AMDA's market assessments as well as contracting a legal firm to undertake detailed country-specific due diligence for Sierra Leone and Madagascar in 2020. Crucially, the UEF also finalized its contracting with Odyssey, the firm operating the UEF online platform used by developers to apply for grant support from the UEF and by the UEF to facilitate ongoing communication with applicants, remotely verify connections and track a number of relevant indicators for the Programme's monitoring and evaluation.

4.2.2 THEORY OF CHANGE

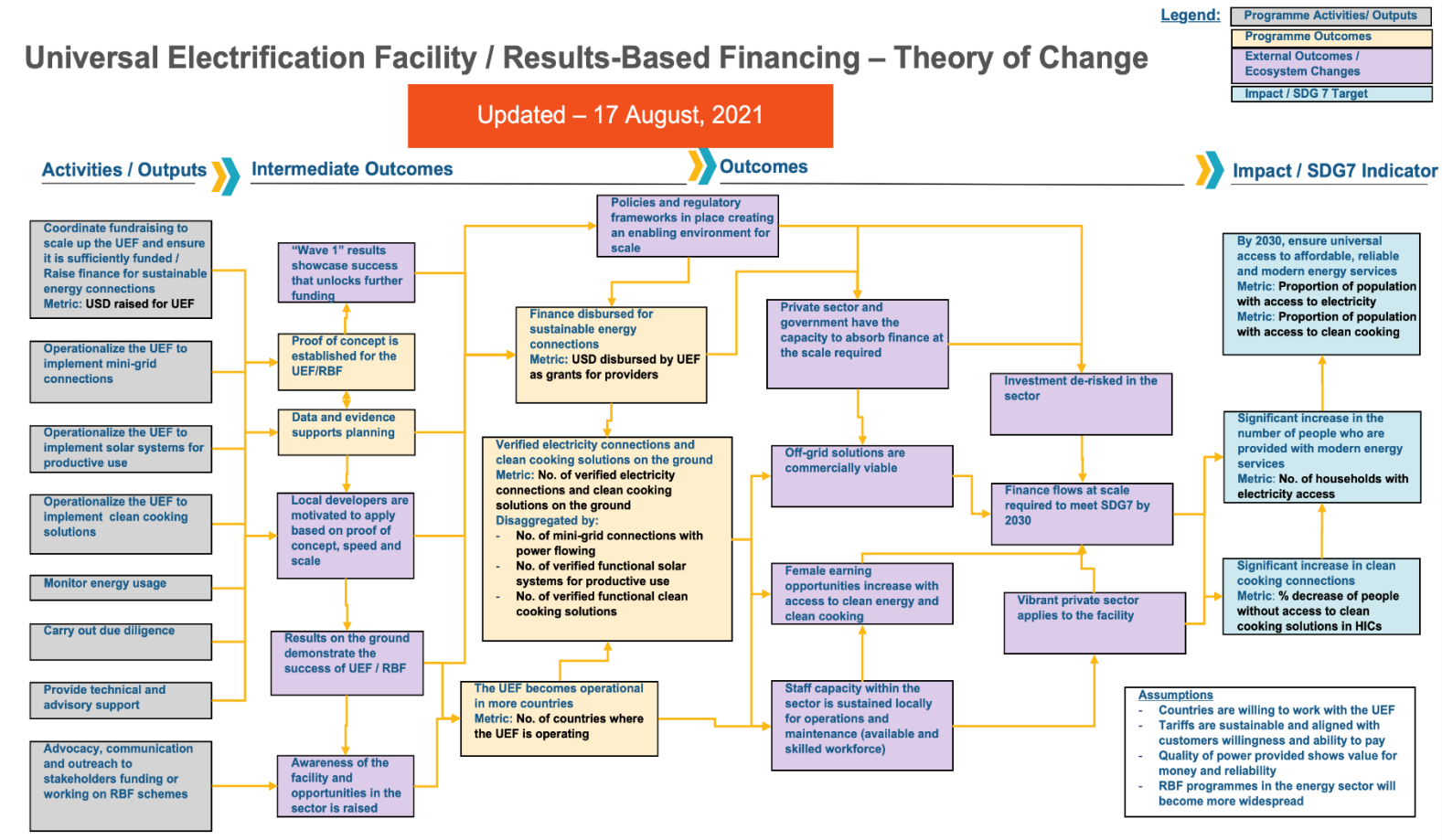
The UEF Theory of Change (ToC) identifies activities and outputs through which the Programme seeks to affect intermediate and longer-term outcomes which lead to high-level impact towards achieving the goals of SDG7. The intermediate outcomes that the UEF aims to realize are establishing proof of concept for the UEF and generating data and evidence to support planning. In order to achieve these outcomes, the UEF raises finance for sustainable energy connections; operationalizes the UEF to implement mini-grids, standalone solar for productive use, and clean cooking solutions; monitors energy usage; carries out due diligence; and provides technical and advisory support.

Moreover, the ToC also bifurcates outcomes immediate to the Programme and outcomes external to it which result from ecosystem changes to which the UEF through its inputs and activities contributes towards achieving. As a result of achieving its intermediate programmatic outcomes, the UEF contributes towards its external outcomes by unlocking further funding and motivating local developers to apply. The ToC identifies that the success of the UEF would be demonstrated by local developers being motivated to apply which would in turn raise awareness of the facility and opportunities in the sector with the help of UEF's advocacy, communication and outreach to stakeholders working on RBF schemes.

The intermediate outcomes, both programmatic and external, contribute towards achieving the UEF's longer-term programmatic outcomes – increased finance disbursed for sustainable energy connections; increased number of verified electricity and clean cooking solutions on the ground; and higher number of countries the UEF operates in. The ToC depicts intricate pathways

through which these programmatic outcomes contribute towards various external outcomes such as commercial viability of off-grid solutions, increased female earning opportunities, de-risked investments in the sector, and increased private sector and government capacity to absorb finance at scale, among others. At the SDG7 impact level, the ToC identifies two key external outcomes – finance flows at scale required to meet SDG7 and a vibrant private sector applying to the facility – in order to contribute towards significant increase in number of people provided with energy services and clean cooking solutions. These in turn contribute towards ensuring universal energy access by 2030.

FIGURE 3: UEF THEORY OF CHANGE



Based on the findings of the evaluation, the current ToC is developed for all current and future components and Waves of the UEF and includes both standalone solar for productive use and clean cooking solutions in addition to mini-grid connections. This does not reflect the actual incremental approach undertaken by the UEF wherein the focus of Wave 1 is on mini-grids, Wave 2 on mini-grids and standalone solar for productive use and Wave 3 on mini-grid, standalone solar for productive use, and clean cooking solutions. Moreover, the ToC starts with operationalization of the UEF to implement mini-grid/SSPU/clean cooking as activities/outputs but does not address any antecedent activities, such as stakeholder engagements and due

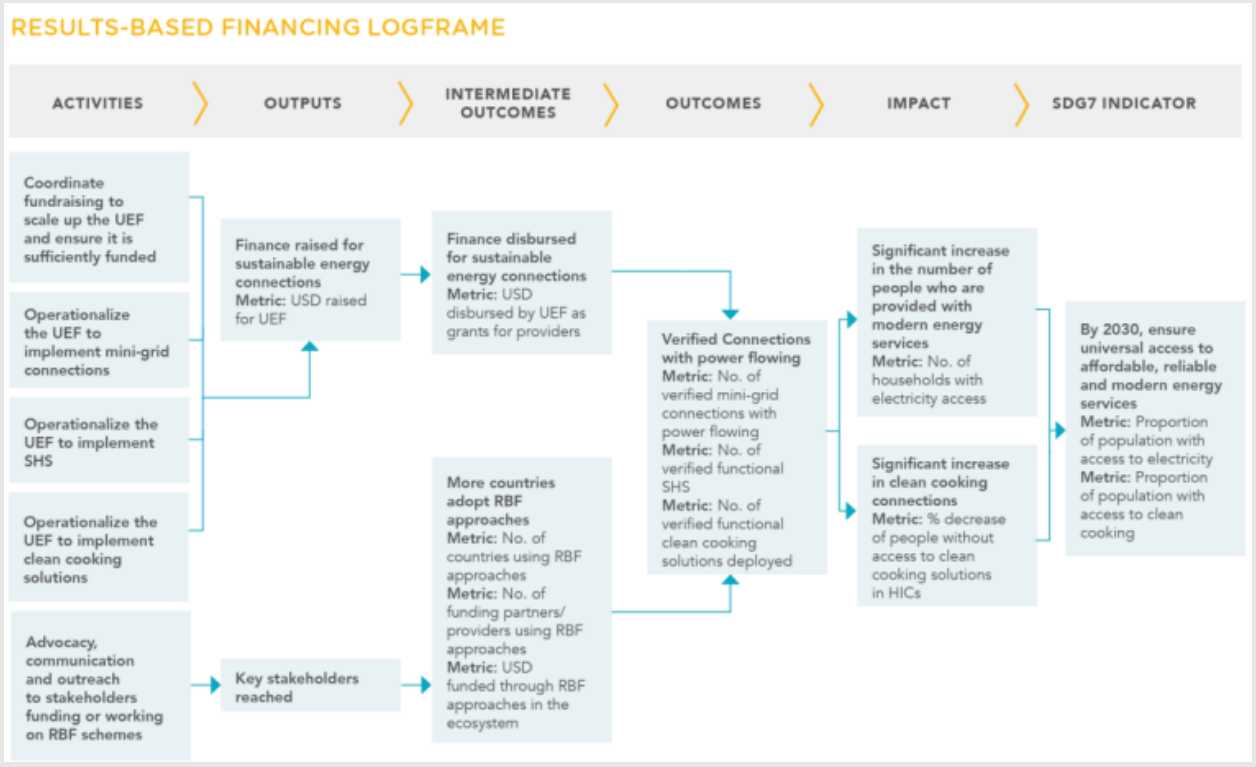
diligence, that may need to be undertaken to enable it to operationalize the abovementioned energy solutions.

An assessment of the ToC further revealed an overreliance on the external outcomes (such as, sufficient governments and private sector capacity to absorb finance at scale, availability of sufficient staff capacity within sector for O&M, and a vibrant private sector engaged with the facility) to achieve impact at the SDG7 level without explicitly demonstrating what role the UEF programmatic outcomes play in achieving those outcomes.

Similarly, the UEF ToC is built on the assumptions that countries are willing to work with the UEF; tariffs are sustainable and aligned with customers' willingness and ability to pay; quality of power provided shows value for money and reliability; and RBF programmes in the sector will become more widespread through the scale-up of the UEF and through facilitation of RBF learning groups across the globe. However, given the operational challenges thus far that have resulted in significant delays as well as stakeholder feedback on the need for significant engagement with government counterparts in order to facilitate the UEF, there is a need to revisit this assumption and identify strategies for deeper and sustained engagement with governments in order to align with their priorities.

Furthermore, although the UEF has developed a Lograme, it is in the shape of a simplified version of the ToC and lacks many of the activities/outputs such as technical and advisory support and due diligence that were listed in the ToC as depicted in the figure below. While the Logframe lists advocacy, outreach and communication to stakeholders as key activities/outputs that the UEF would undertake in order to achieve both intermediate and longer-term outcomes, it is unclear when, how, and in what form such support would be provided. The UEF may benefit from the development of a detailed Logframe that lists the Programme's activities, outputs, and outcomes along with indicators at the output and outcome level, means of verification, as well as risks and assumptions.

FIGURE 4: UEF LOGFRAME



Also, reflected in the ToC are Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that were developed as part of an organization-wide Three Year Business Plan for SEforALL, which the UEF Team uses to track progress towards achieving its ToC. The core KPIs include: a) amount of funding raised; b) amount of funding disbursed; c) number of verified mini-grid connections; d) number of verified functional SHS installed; e) number of verified clean cooking solutions deployed; and f) number of countries where UEF is operating. The table below shows the UEF's core KPIs and their annual targets.

TABLE 2: UEF KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIS)

KPIs	BASELINE	TARGETS			
		2020	2021	2022	2023
Funds (USD million) raised for UEF	0	4.2	100	250	500
Funds (USD million) disbursed by UEF as grants to providers	0	3	99	243	484
No. of verified mini-grids connections with power flowering	0	6,000	159,600	332,400	573,400
No. of verified functional SHS installed	0	0	192,000	624,000	1,347,000
No. of verified functional clean cooking solutions deployed	0	0	0	72,000	313,000
No. of countries using RBF approaches	3	4	8	12	16

These targets were set with an aim to not just be bold and ambitious but to also reflect that the UEF intended to be a rolling fund with sufficient capital for developers to be able to apply on an

ongoing basis. In addition, the targets were also intended for a catalyzing function which would trigger the mini-grid market (and eventually other clean energy solutions) to grow at speed and scale by attracting other investors into the sector.

Overall, the evaluation found the project design to be sound which is based on an RBF modality that is highly relevant and well-suited to the sectoral needs to enable deployment of mini-grids at speed and scale. Moreover, the criteria on the basis of which the UEF assesses applicants are also in line with international standards, particularly those of international multi-lateral banks such as the World Bank. However, as also acknowledged by all key stakeholders, the project design and the targets it has set are overambitious in terms of its own speed and scale of achieving its targets pertaining to raising and disbursing funding, the deployment of the mini-grids and energy connections on the ground and its pan-African outlook within its anticipated timeframe. Progress towards achieving these ambitious targets was negatively impacted from the start of the UEF due to challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic which delayed the launch of the UEF and impacted the speed of implementation on the ground due to disruptions and delays with regulatory processes.

4.2.3 SUBSIDY DESIGN

As part of its streamlined pan-Africa approach, the UEF has set a simplified flat RBF grant amount, based on extensive modelling to estimate the right level of subsidy to catalyze the growth of the mini-grid market across Sub-Saharan Africa. Prior to launch in October 2020, SEforALL received feedback from existing and potential donors and other mini-grid sector actors on the need to re-evaluate the originally proposed USD 500 subsidy amount for the UEF in Q1 and Q2 of 2020. SEforALL, in its role as Programme Manager, carried out this modelling exercise utilizing data collected from mini-grid developers across SSA and validated the inputs to ensure that the UEF subsidy would be the most efficient use of donor funds and would not create a distortion in the market. Based on this modelling and extensive review, the UEF subsidy was set at USD 433 per mini-grid connection for Wave 1. The modelling exercise utilized data on energy consumption, mini-grid tariffs, number of connections per mini-grid and capital and operating expenditures from mini-grid developers in Nigeria and other countries in the SSA region.[25] In addition, assumptions on energy consumption growth, energy losses, oversizing margins, required additional generation capacity, and type of financing were also made and accounted for in the modelling exercise. Based on the inputs from mini-grid developers in Nigeria as well as assumptions, the RBF subsidy was revised to USD 433 per connection on the basis of a UEF model with initial generating capacity of 50.3kWp, USD 924 capex per connection, and 250 number of connections.[26]

[25] SEforALL. 2020. *Overview of Subsidy Amount*
[26] SEforALL. 2020. *Overview of Subsidy Amount*

While the UEF has documented this modelling exercise in a transparent manner, developers revealed a lack of clarity and knowledge regarding how the UEF arrived at the USD 433 per connection amount indicating that this knowledge has not been shared with the developers. Moreover, some large developers also noted that the subsidy amount is only sufficient to the extent where it allows companies to achieve economies of scale by getting approval for multiple sites. This issue is particularly evident from an example shared by a developer in Madagascar, which had initially applied for several sites, but received approval for only one site at the site-specific stage. As a result, the company lost its financier, which did not see it profitable to provide pre-financing to the developer company for the reduced number of sites.

4.2.4 COUNTRY ASSESSMENTS

Prior to its launch in Madagascar and Sierra Leone in October 2020, the UEF Team assessed a list of 14 countries using a data-driven approach examining various factors including the business environment, tariff regimes, regulatory frameworks, financing landscape, and environmental regulations among others. With its first tranche of funding from The Rockefeller Foundation and Shell Foundation, the UEF Team relied on sector intelligence obtained through AMDA to shortlist potential viable countries and understand project pipelines in each of the countries, which led to the selection of Sierra Leone and Madagascar. After identifying Sierra Leone and Madagascar as potential countries to launch in, the UEF also contracted a legal firm to carry out extensive country-specific due diligence in 2020, and later in Benin in 2021. This due diligence covered aspects such as the legal and regulatory framework, anti-bribery and anti-corruption regulatory framework, business regime, taxation regime, corporate governance, foreign exchange control and capital markets, and dispute resolution mechanisms. In addition, SEforALL had also planned to conduct further due diligence in-country through meetings with various stakeholders from the public and private sectors, which however were turned into virtual meetings due to the advent of COVID19 pandemic and related travel restrictions.

In January 2021, the UEF was launched in Benin through funding obtained from the Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ) and with GIZ as its technical implementing partner on the ground. SEforALL was approached by GIZ who was seeking a partner to implement a mini-grid development programme in Benin using funding from the BMZ. The UEF and GIZ Teams carried out a joint situational assessment of Benin and the UEF implementation in Benin was designed as one with GIZ working closely with developers and government stakeholders on the ground, coupled with UEF. This provided holistic support to both the developers and the government stakeholders, with the in-country GIZ Team fulfilling a crucial Technical Assistance (TA) role for the UEF.

The country selection process was based on: a) assessments carried out by AMDA; and b) country-specific due diligence conducted by a legal firm. The AMDA assessments offered details

on country and developer readiness for mini-grid projects. These analyses covered insights on number of sites, connections, as well as on status of Community Agreement (MoU, support letter,) land lease, clearances, tariff approvals and information on sufficiency of funding for the developers. It also included information on country's regulatory framework. However, this information wasn't found to be accurate, in part likely also due to changing context due to COVID-19.

The country assessments conducted by the legal firm sought to provide a detailed picture of the regulatory, legal and corporate landscape of the three countries. However, these country assessments lacked an analytical or critical analysis of challenges and risks to implementation from the UEF's perspective and did not critically examine potential areas of risks that could emerge at various points and stages of the process. In addition, some significant information gaps were observed in the country assessments. In the case of Madagascar, the legal firm was unable to provide information regarding:

- Specific compliance issues experienced by developers in the energy sector (Q1.2);
- Market assessment of local mini-grids (Q4.1);
- Analysis of consumer experience using local mini-grids (Q4.2);
- An assessment of key challenges faced by mini-grid developers (Q4.3);
- Financial constraints encountered by mini-grid developers (Q4.30); and
- Mechanisms for mini-grid developers to recover their investments (Q4.31)

In addition, the legal firm's due diligence also did not provide specific information regarding either expected or actual timeframes for obtaining regulatory permits and licenses in Madagascar and Benin and timeframes for conducting EIA in Sierra Leone and Benin.

4.2.5 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Since its inception in 2020 up until the end of 2021, the UEF has been funded to the tune of USD 8.6 million through contributions from five donors, namely Shell Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, GIZ, Good Energies, and Carbon Trust. Of the USD 8.6 million, USD 6 million was earmarked for disbursements and USD 2.6M was for setup and operational costs. While fundraising exceeded the first year target of USD 4.2 million, the total USD 8.6 million by the end of 2021 did not meet the total targeted fundraising goal nor progress from its 2020 end of year fundraising value. Notably, towards the end of 2021, conversations around a USD 5.8 million contribution from the IKEA Foundation towards the UEF Wave 2 were being finalized, with contract signature targeted for early 2022.

TABLE 3:DONOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE UEF (2020 AND 2021)

Organization Name	Total Contract Value (USD) signed in 2020	Total Contract Value (USD) by donor by end-2021	Percentage of total funding

Carbon Trust	247,831	247,831	2.9%
Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), GmbH	3,807,554	3,807,554	44.52%
Good Energies Foundation	496,689	496,689	5.81%
The Rockefeller Foundation	2,500,000	2,500,000	29.23%
Shell Foundation	1,500,000	1,500,000	17.54%
Total	**8,552,074**	**8,552,074**	**100%**

Based on contracted funding, the UEF has only been able to raise 8.6% of the USD 100 Million targeted for 2021. However, in 2022, there has been a commitment of USD 5.8 million from the IKEA Foundation, and the UEF has also been successful in receiving a verbal commitment from the newly launched Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet (GEAPP) for USD 50 million in new funding which the UEF is currently working to finalize. The GEAPP is recently established by The Rockefeller Foundation in consortium with the Bezos Earth Fund and the IKEA Foundation with the goal of investing a total of USD 10 billion.[27] This presents a unique and substantial potential opportunity for the UEF to court significant funding in addition to the amounts it has already received a verbal commitment for. However, in order to position itself to access such funding, donors find it imperative that the UEF establishes proof of concept by accelerating the deployment of mini-grids and establishing energy connections.

In its first year of operations, the UEF's expenses amounted to a total of USD 431,498 with 67% of total expenses incurred in the form of personnel costs (USD 290,507) followed by legal and professional fees (19%) and support costs (11%). In 2021, the UEF saw a 225% increase in its total expenses from USD 431,498 to USD 970,212, predominantly due to the increase in personnel expenses from USD 290,507 to USD 733,927 which represented 76% of the total expenses in 2021. Going forward, the bigger chunk of USD 5.8 Million from IKEA Foundation is also planned to be spent towards expanding and strengthening the UEF's operations.

TABLE 4: UEF EXPENSES FOR FY 20 AND FY 21

Type of Expenditure	Sum of Expenses in 2020 (USD)	Percentage of expenses in 2020	Sum of Expenses in 2021 (USD)	Percentage of total expenses in 2021
Personnel Expenses	290,507	67%	733,927	76%
Travel	11,882	3%	6,855	1%
Legal and Professional Fees	82,919	19%	151,641	16%

[27] https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/initiative/global-energy-alliance-for-people-and-planet-geapp/

Support Cost/Engagement Service Expense and Others	45,885	11%	59,697	6%
Other Operating Expenses	304.81	-	18,092	2%
Total	431,498	100%	970,212	100%

Note: 2021 figures are subject to slight adjustments due to the forthcoming finalization and audit of the 2021 SEforALL Financial Statements.

4.2.6 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The UEF originated through a process of key stakeholder engagement and collaboration in the form of consultations and workshops with multiple stakeholders. Between 2018 and 2019, the pioneering donors, The Rockefeller Foundation and Shell Foundation, held detailed discussions with AMDA along with representatives of the private sector. These stakeholder engagements and feedback prior to SEforALL's stewardship of the UEF played an important role in the formulation and design of the UEF.

At the pre-launch stage, the UEF Team hosted a 2-day workshop to discuss the design and operationalization of the UEF, as SEforALL envisioned it. It provided an opportunity for partners such as The Rockefeller Foundation, Shell Foundation and AMDA to provide feedback on the process. SEforALL also conducted a handful of virtual engagements through webinars and meetings with key stakeholders to introduce the UEF and obtain feedback in order to develop a better understanding of the complexities, barriers and challenges in the countries prior to roll out. These included donors operating in the selected countries, including the World Bank, GIZ, and USAID; local associations, such as the Renewable Energy Associations across the continent of sub-Saharan Africa, civil society organizations; developers; and government representatives in the 3 countries.

Due to lockdowns and travel restrictions imposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the UEF was unable to undertake field missions and conduct in-person workshops and had to rely on virtual tools for outreach and engagement. Although the UEF Team was not able to conduct in-country workshops, the team conducted webinars - the webinar held in August 2020 for local developers was well attended with more than 80 participants and speakers from various national renewable energy associations across Africa. During this stage, the UEF also conducted country assessments for Madagascar and Sierra Leone in 2020 and for Benin in 2021 through a legal firm which also facilitated some stakeholder engagement as part of the due diligence process.

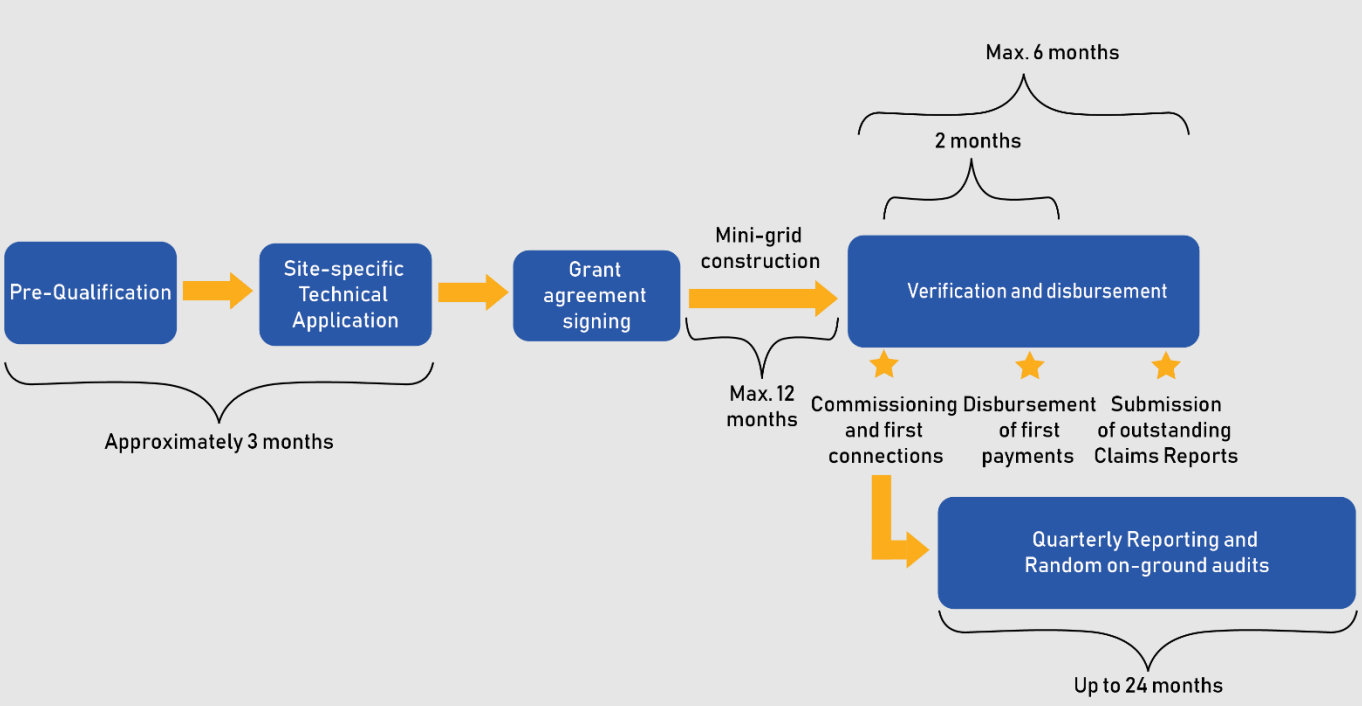
Similarly, during implementation of Wave 1, the UEF has conducted a series of workshops with potential applicants. These workshops were conducted to better understand the opportunities and challenges faced by developers in order to facilitate UEF's development of more streamlined and efficient processes in the future.

Specifically for **Benin**, the presence of GIZ as a technical partner has been beneficial for the Programme and the UEF has recognized the importance of having a robust on the ground presence in the country it operates in to mitigate challenges around government engagement and communication with various stakeholders. In particular, GIZ being a technical assistance provider to the two main regulatory agencies in Benin, the Agence Béninoise d'Electrification Rurale et de Maîtrise d'Énergie (*Beninese Rural Electrification and Energy Management Agency*, henceforth (ABERME) and the Autorité de Régulation de l'Électricité (*Electricity Regulatory Authority* (ARE), can bridge the gap in communication and coordination to streamline the regulatory processes. Another key challenge that the UEF faced in Benin and Madagascar was language and communication barriers due to the lack of a French-speaking resource within the UEF Team, which, in the case of Benin, the GIZ Team was able to bridge by providing French language skills.

Similarly, in **Sierra Leone** while there is an effective regulatory framework in place, the key challenge faced by developers in their interaction with the Ministry of Energy (MoE) emerges as a result of the limited engagement of the UEF with the government counterparts. Since the UEF has not had significant engagement with the government, developers in Sierra Leone have reported that the UEF does not rank at the top of its list of priorities to fast-track regulatory processes for developers involved with the UEF. Developers have reported that their applications are not fast-tracked or given priority because of limited knowledge and awareness of the UEF within the MoE. In some instances, developers who are larger, more well-established and have clout with the MoE based on their involvement in the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) Rural Renewable Energy Project (RREP) have been able to leverage their prior working relationship with the government to mitigate the regulatory delays and hurdles that most other developers have had challenges navigating.

While the UEF strived to reach multiple stakeholders at various stages of the Programme, the evaluation found critical engagement gaps between the UEF, respective country governments, and regulatory agencies. Although the UEF reached out to the respective ministries and regulators in the three countries via the CEO's office and conducted virtual meetings, stakeholders have expressed a need for enhanced and continued engagement with government counterparts to ensure that effective enabling environments are created and maintained to ensure success of the Programme

FIGURE 5: UEF APPLICATION, APPROVAL AND GRANT AGREEMENT TIMELINE



However, the UEF has faced significant delays particularly in the site-specific application stage due to challenges faced by the developers in obtaining required regulatory permits, and fulfilling the financial requirements or technical requirements which are elaborated in the Effectiveness section below.

4.2.8 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

I. TECHNICAL OVERSIGHT AND MONITORING

Prior to the launch of Wave 1, the UEF successfully established its governance structure, comprised of the Program Manager (SEforALL), an Advisory Board, an Investment Committee, and a Taskforce. Based on the review of documents, the roles and responsibilities for the Advisory Board, Investment Committee, and the Taskforce were found to be clear and sufficiently differentiated.

Interviews with key stakeholders comprising the Advisory Board and Investment Committee revealed that the UEF was successful in convening these bodies on a need-basis to fulfil their roles in monitoring progress against KPIs and assessing applicants at site-specific stages, respectively. However, some challenges and gaps in implementation were also observed. The Taskforce, with AMDA, The Rockefeller Foundation, and Shell Foundation, was set up at the time of the UEF's inception to provide oversight and technical advisory to the structure of the facility including market intelligence as necessary for the design and operationalization of the UEF. Prior to its launch in August 2020, the UEF team shared the details of the UEF Application including the pre-qualification criteria with key stakeholders including donors and partners on

the Taskforce. However, the Taskforce faced challenges in convening to provide timely feedback on the pre-qualification criteria. As a result, the launch was pushed to October 2020, to give additional time to the Taskforce for consultations with the UEF Team on modifying and resolving technical issues with the criteria. While there were meetings held with The Rockefeller Foundation and Shell Foundation (both part of the Taskforce), there have been no meetings held with the Taskforce since March 2021, which deprives the UEF of continuous technical advisory through these partners and donors. In addition, although originally planned to be a member of the Investment Committee for the application cycle in Benin, GIZ has not been involved in evaluating applicants at the site-specific stage.

Similarly, the UEF Team has institutionalized various mechanisms to obtain feedback from key stakeholders, such as donors and developers at various stages of the UEF process. With developers, the UEF conducted surveys with applicants at the end of the pre-qualification stage and the site-specific stages for both application cycles in Madagascar and Sierra Leone and in Benin. Currently, due to the low number of applicants at each stage of the application, the surveys do not easily or reliably translate into insights for the UEF Team. In addition to the surveys, the UEF Team also collected the list of questions asked by developers throughout the UEF application process in order to undertake an analysis of which areas of the application process were confusing for the developers and could be clarified further for subsequent application cycles. The UEF has also held multiple detailed feedback sessions and workshops with the developers to gather more in-depth data and information about the perceptions, challenges and overall experience of the developers.

Overall, the UEF Team has demonstrated an active approach in order to gain key insights from developers early on in its pilot phase in order to prepare for the upcoming scale-up. However, there has been no such feedback obtained from the country governments as key stakeholders in the process. Furthermore, in the absence of a Task Force, the UEF lacks a technical advisory body to guide the design elements. While, at the country-level, the absence of GIZ as a member of the Investment Committee limits the support available to UEF for evaluating applicants at the site-specific stage.

II. PROGRESS MONITORING

Tracking and monitoring progress against the UEF's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) is currently undertaken by the MEL Team which is also responsible for developing KPI tools for 13 other Programmes across SEforALL. The MEL Team was also responsible for developing the current MEL framework and the Theory of Change for the UEF, however, this occurred only after the UEF had been designed. The design of the UEF occurred in parallel with the development of the SEforALL Business Plan in 2020 that established the core KPIs for the UEF. As a result, the MEL Team was only able to negotiate for some adjustments as the KPIs were mostly set before

the MEL Team's involvement through existing contracts with donors and early conceptualization of the programme prior to being more fully integrated into SEforALL.

The evaluation determined that a key challenge for the monitoring and reporting on progress for the KPIs was encountered by the limited engagement of the MEL Team at the initial contracting stage with donors, as this process could have benefited from the input of the MEL Team to streamline the KPIs that the UEF commits towards reporting. Consequently, in addition to the 6 core KPIs for the UEF identified as part of the SEforALL Business Plan, the MEL Team also reports on other KPIs that were agreed with donors on which the UEF reports on. In mid-2020, the MEL Team undertook an extensive analysis of around 100 KPIs that were part of reporting requirements under contracts signed with donors for funding the UEF and synthesized them down to 28 KPIs. This extensive number of KPIs (~100) was a result of many of the contracts being developed before the MEL framework was set up, and the fact many contracts were developed in parallel with donors, not being streamlined by the MEL Team at the time, which is part of their process now. Therefore, a key lesson learned for the UEF has been the need for greater involvement of the MEL Team at various stages of the UEF. As a result, the MEL Team now reviews and contributes towards proposals sent out by the UEF to donors for fundraising to ensure that M&E related aspects such as reporting and KPIs are streamlined.

Furthermore, the data for monitoring progress on the KPIs is intended to be obtained primarily through Odyssey but other tools such as SharePoint and Salesforce are also used to obtain various data points that feed into the UEF's reporting on its KPIs, to fill current Odyssey constraints that have not been set up as of yet. Based on estimates of the MEL Team, roughly 10% – 20% of the data needed to report on KPIs is available in the form of automated dashboards and reports from Odyssey. While most of the remaining data is currently available in CSV and other formats which require manual tabulation and analysis. This results in cumbersome, inefficient, and time-consuming monitoring and reporting, especially considering that the scale-up of the UEF would result in an exponential increase of data points generated. These challenges with data management have been recognized by the UEF Team and MEL Team, which is why they are further developing Odyssey, as well as Salesforce, to enable it to better manage monitoring and reporting, and has prioritized streamlining this process in parallel with designing the scale-up.

4.2.9 STAFFING

The core UEF Team has a lean structure currently composed of only three staff members: Program Manager, Senior Energy Specialist, and a Program Associate. The UEF Management Team was originally composed of five members including two additional staff members, an Energy Specialist and a consultant responsible for donor reporting, who left SEforALL in mid-2021.

In view of this limited staffing, SEforALL has been instrumental in supporting the UEF Team which relies on significant input and resources from SEforALL management and other SEforALL programs for various functions and needs such as the MEL Team, Resource Mobilization Team, the Policy and Regulatory Framework Team, Operations, Communications and Human Resources, among others. Similarly, the UEF team has been able to leverage internal SEforALL staff to cover the functions performed by the two staff members who have departed, namely from the Universal Integrated Energy Planning (UIEP) and MEL Teams.

Although other Programmes within SEforALL are supporting the UEF, discussion with multiple stakeholders including the UEF Team, SEforALL Programs, and developers revealed that there is a critical need for the UEF to expand its staffing size for more efficient operations. For instance, the UEF application process has involved significant communication with developers in the form of emails, which only two staff members were available to undertake, resulting in increased workload. Similarly, due to the departure of a key staff member responsible for donor reporting, resources of the MEL Team were leveraged to cover for this crucial function. In addition to monitoring UEF's KPIs and reporting to its multiple donors, the MEL team at SEforALL is also responsible for developing KPI tools for 13 other Programmes across SEforALL as well as developing an organization-wide annual monitoring report of SEforALL. The MEL Team, being comprised of three staff members, has plans to expand through the addition of two new personnel in order to meet this high workload. As a result of limited staffing, there has been an increased burden on existing UEF staff as well as other SEforALL staff at the risk of timely and effective implementation of the UEF. Having said that, the UEF is in the final stages of recruiting a dedicated MEL resource embedded within the UEF team who will report to the UEF Programme Manager and the MEL Lead in order to serve as a crucial bridge between the UEF and MEL.

In addition to limited staff, the UEF has also faced challenges due to lacking French skills within the team. Despite working in the SSA region including two Francophone countries, the UEF Team lacks the requisite French language skills as well as local presence to form relationships and undertake engagements with government stakeholders. While in the case of Benin, the in-country presence of the GIZ Team mitigated the challenges around engagement with government counterparts, the absence of a francophone team member within the UEF has been felt in Madagascar, as well. Moreover, based on interviews with multiple stakeholders, UEF's lack of in-country presence in Madagascar and Sierra Leone is equally believed to have caused gaps in facilitating engagement with government counterparts and ensuring effective communications with private sector stakeholders, which is considered essential to push the UEF agenda forward. For instance, developers have indicated that in-country presence of the UEF would significantly facilitate the UEF in improving its understanding and awareness of existing

and emerging country-specific contexts as well as improving its effectiveness in addressing specific queries and questions posed by developers.

Cognizant of the key staffing gaps highlighted above, with a new tranche of funding from the IKEA Foundation (USD 5.8 million), the UEF is planning to expand its team in preparation for its scale up by hiring around 14-18 additional staff members in a phased approach and increasing its capacity and skill functions within the UEF as part of its long term plans of spin off as a separate independent entity from SEforALL.

4.2.10 RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

Fundraising for the UEF is conducted through two main pathways: a) through the Resource Mobilization (RM) team within SEforALL; and b) the Executive Office of SEforALL. Although the UEF was unable to meet its fundraising KPIs for 2021 (USD 100 million), the UEF was successful in securing operational funding for the next year as well as a verbal commitment from the GEAPP for the full USD 50 million in addition to the USD 5.8 million (11.6%) in funding provided by the IKEA Foundation to support the scale-up in Wave 2. The RM team plays a crucial role in securing funding for the UEF as it engages with potential donors, supports and coordinates the contracting phase, and reviews the contracts before final sign off, along with the MEL Team; this role is played by the RM Team during both fundraising pathways.

The key function of the Resource Mobilization team is to meet and secure funds for the core SEforALL organizational functions as well as SEforALL's external programmes, such as the UEF. However, interview with the RM Team revealed that, in the past, the UEF Team or the Executive Office had sought donors for the UEF Programme with limited involvement of the RM Team. A key concern for the RM Team is to cultivate sustainable relationships with donors that are mutually beneficial for not just the UEF but also the core organizational functions of SEforALL. Hence, various SEforALL Programme Leads (including the RM Team) have pointed to the need for a more coordinated and unified approach between the UEF and other SEforALL Programmes towards fundraising to ensure that other Programmes and the UEF are not at odds with one another over potential donors and that there is room for mutual benefit of both entities. This is especially pertinent given that the UEF currently leverages key resources of SEforALL as well as other Programmes and that the UEF is unlikely to spin off into a separate independent entity at least in the near future.

Some of the initial challenges experienced during the first year of operations included coordination and communication challenges between the UEF and the RM Team primarily as some of the initial donor contracts were signed without much involvement of the RM Team. However, these issues have since been resolved as the UEF Team has institutionalized a mechanism where multiple SEforALL Teams, including the RM, MEL, and Operations, provide input and review during the contracting stage with donors to ensure that the process is

streamlined. In terms of donor engagement, a key challenge encountered by the RM Team when approaching potential funders interested in supporting RBF programmes such as the UEF is around managing donor expectations as funders reportedly have their own conceptions and ideas around the specifics of the RBF modality. This is where a strong and unified RM Team, supported by the MEL Team, to streamline commitments and manage expectations is critical. Which has been a priority for both teams in response to learnings. There is a need felt by internal stakeholders for strengthening communications about the UEF's approach to RBF in order to be able to address and speak to learnings from other RBF Programmes and facilities and respond to donors' queries about how and why those learnings have or have not been incorporated into the UEF.

Overall, the RM Team indicated that the UEF fundraising targets are achievable as the scale of funding that the UEF aims to raise is available, especially through the newly established GEAPP. However, the extent to which the UEF will be able to tap into these sources is highly dependent on the kind of results it is able to demonstrate as well as the UEF's ability to aggregate the funders and align with their interests and priorities.

4.2.11 GENDER MAINSTREAMING

The evaluation team found that Gender is integrated at multiple levels across the UEF design. At the level of the UEF structure, a minimum target of 70% women was set for the program management team[28] which has been exceeded as all (100%) of the program team are women. In addition, minimum level of female representation was set for UEF's governance bodies – advisory board, investment committee and technical task force. Currently, the UEF core team is comprised of 100% women. In the future, the UEF plans to have minimum level of female representation as a requirement in its selection of a Fund Manager and Verification Agents. The UEF also aims to collect gender-disaggregated data on how the program improves women's earning opportunities through increased access to clean energy solutions.

Gender is also integrated at the level of implementation. As part of its pre-qualification, applicants are required to meet a minimum of 30% women's representation within their staff at both the administrative and operational levels in order to be certified. However, the evaluation found that meeting this criteria posed a challenge for developers, especially local developers, given the low labor force participation rates in the energy sector among women in Africa (16% - 20%).[29] The UEF Team acknowledged that its gender inclusion requirements were a challenge for developers especially those in countries with lower female labor participation in the energy sector. To facilitate the developers in meeting these requirements, the UEF offered to support developers by developing a Gender Action Plan to help developers achieve the targets.

[28] SEforALL. September 2021. *UEF Information Deck*. p 30.

[29] IUCN. 2019. Energizing Equality: Unlocking the potential of women's participation in Sub-Saharan African energy utilities. Available at: https://portals.iucn.org/union/sites/union/files/doc/iucn-egi-utilities-brief-web-final.pdf

Overall, while gender is adequately reflected throughout the design of the UEF, the UEF may need to consider the challenges encountered by developers in adhering to the gender requirements as part of the UEF application process to ensure that the Programme is accessible to local developers who may have difficulty in meeting those requirements.

CONCLUSIONS ON EFFICIENCY

SEforALL demonstrated agility during the pre-launch and set up phase of the UEF in its ability to operationalize the UEF in a period of less than one year, and begin implementation in October 2020. SEforALL's involvement as the Programme Manager for the UEF has ensured the transformation of the initial concept formulated by key donors and partners in 2018 into a functional Facility.

The efficiency of the UEF was impacted by various factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic which delayed the launch of the UEF by two quarters and prevented the UEF Team to conduct in-country engagements and relationship building with key stakeholders including the government and private sector. Although the UEF sought to engage these stakeholders, a cohesive engagement strategy was found to be lacking as these engagements were limited in number and scope to only introducing the Programme and providing an overview of the application process.

Crucially, although country-specific due diligence was conducted through the use of a legal firm, the country assessments were found to lack a critical focus and analysis from the specific viewpoint of the UEF and did not identify risks to the UEF at various stages of the application. Nevertheless, the UEF team conducted a risk assessment in the summer of 2020 in light of the COVID-19 pandemic which sought to capture risks in each country of operation.

Further impacting the efficiency of the UEF was the limited number of staff internal to the UEF which led to a reliance on SEForALL staff to cover key functions and the lack of key language skills within the team that further precluded effective communication with stakeholders based in Francophonic countries (Benin and Madagascar) and delayed assessment of applications with documentation in French.

Although the UEF has demonstrated an active approach to gain key insights from developers early on in its pilot phase, there has been no such feedback obtained from the country governments as key stakeholders in the process. Furthermore, since the disbanding of its Task Force, the UEF lacks a technical advisory body to guide the design elements of the UEF.

4.3 EFFECTIVENESS

The following section assesses the overall effectiveness of the UEF by examining the progress made towards achieving KPI targets, presenting an overview of the UEF application process, and highlighting the successes and challenges that emerged during operations, in particular, the section provides an analysis of the UEF application criteria and applicants' experience with the Odyssey platform, the subsidy amount and disbursement mechanisms, while presenting opportunities for the UEF to enhance effectiveness through greater advocacy and technical support.

4.3.1 PROGRESS AGAINST KPIs

As of 31st December 2021, the UEF has not met the targets set for its core KPIs. Despite overachieving its target for raising funds in 2020 (USD 8.6 million against a target of USD 4.2 million) by over two times, the UEF has not been able to accelerate financing in 2021. This is

primarily because of the Programme's inability thus far to establish proof of concept and sustainability of mini-grids which is essentially dependent upon the disbursement of funds as grants to developers upon the delivery of verified mini-grid connections, currently pending implementation. Having said that, the UEF has obtained a verbal commitment from the GEAPP to receive the full USD 50 million in financing, contingent on its ability to establish its proof of concept through demonstrating results of Wave 1.

The table below shows the progress made against the established targets for the main KPIs of the UEF in 2020 and 2021.

TABLE 5: KPI TARGETS AND ACHIEVEMENTS AGAINST TARGET IN 2020 AND 2021

KPI	2020 Target	2020 End-of-Year Value	2021 Target	2021 End-Year Value
Funds (USD million) raised for UEF	4.20	8.6[30]	100	8.6
Funds (USD million) disbursed by UEF as grants to providers	03	0	99	0
No. of verified mini-grid connections with power flowing	6,000	0	159,600	0
No. of verified functional SHS installed	N/A[31]	N/A	192,000	0
No. of countries using RBF approaches	04	02	08	03

An early key challenge for the UEF was the COVID-19 pandemic which negatively impacted progress towards its KPIs. The pandemic saw a shift in donor priorities and redirection of funding towards healthcare and other issues which slowed the funding raised by the UEF. In addition, the resultant supply chain disruptions, lockdowns and travel restrictions also impacted the abilities of developers, government agencies, and the UEF to work seamlessly and make progress towards the implementation of mini-grids. Notably, the pandemic affected the government agencies' regulatory processes, especially in Benin, which have led to significant delays in developers obtaining the required regulatory permits and approvals to secure grant agreements with the UEF.

In response to the COVID-19 situation, the UEF Team prepared a risk assessment matrix examining how the pandemic affected country selection, project development documentation, funding, procurement and overall workplan. However, gaps and operational challenges from the limited engagement with government authorities, lack of in-country presence to streamline and obtain buy-in, and alignment at the government-level impeded progress on regulatory

[30] Revised figure as of the KPI Management Tool, February 2022
[31] Operationalization of SHS component was not expected until 2021

approvals to the developers, which in turn caused significant delays in the UEF application process.

Based on discussions with the UEF team, the KPIs are slated to undergo a review in light of the emergent challenges around progress towards its ambitious targets as well as to reflect changing priorities for the Fund such as the prioritization of SSPUs over Solar Home Systems (SHS) in the subsequent Wave.

4.3.2 UEF APPLICATION PROCESS

Following the launch of Wave 1 in Madagascar and Sierra Leone in October 2020, a total of 53 developers **registered** on the Odyssey platform, of which 09 developers (17%) – 06 from Sierra Leone and 03 from Madagascar – applied based on the qualification criteria such as regulatory compliance, previous mini-grid development experience, financial ability, gender representation, and environmental and social compliance. Of these 09 applicants, 06 (67%) developers – 03 from Sierra Leone and 03 from Madagascar – received pre-qualification approval.[32]

With the GIZ as an implementing partner committing USD 3.28 million, the UEF launched in Benin on 21st January 2021 with the aim of delivering over 7,000 energy connections in the country. Upon the launch in Benin, 50 developers registered on to the UEF Odyssey platform and of these, 07 (14%) applied for pre-qualification. From these 07 developers, 06 (86%) were approved at the pre-qualification stage.[33]

Hence, only a small proportion of registered developers applied in both UEF **application** cycles Potential reasons for this low application rate include: a) extent of developer interest in the UEF; b) ability of developers to meet the pre-qualification criteria; and c) level of available funding amount at this pilot stage for the countries – around USD 3 million for the first cycle covering Madagascar and Sierra Leone and USD 3 million for Benin. At the pre-qualification stages, frequent reasons for rejections included submission of incomplete documentation crucial to the assessment and lack of registration of developers in the country of operation.

In terms of timeline, the **pre-qualification** stage in Madagascar and Sierra Leone saw the timeframe extended from the planned four weeks to an actual six weeks, mostly due to lengthier than expected processes for developers to obtain the requisite documentation required under the technical and financial requirements. Based on this experience, the UEF launched the pre-qualification stage in Benin with a six-week timeframe from the start. Another key challenge for the UEF Team in processing applications in Madagascar and Benin emerged as a result of submission of documents in French which required translation and caused some delays since the UEF Team did not possess a French-speaking resource. This challenge was faced by the UEF during both the pre-qualification and site-specific stages of the UEF Application.

[32] SEforALL. 2020. *KPIs for "Results-Based Financing Facility" Results Offer*.
[33] SEforALL. 2021. *Semi-Annual Programme Progress Report 2021*.

The **site-specific stage** for the round of applications received in October 2020 from **Madagascar and Sierra Leone** was closed by the end of Q2 2021 and the UEF signed Grant Agreements and Conditional Offer Letters with successful applicants, with one developer from Madagascar already initiating mini-grid construction. At the site-specific stage, there was a significant amount of back and forth between the applicants and the UEF due to incomplete or missing documents. Delays were encountered in the form of extensions given to the developers so they have the opportunity to submit all documents in time. The issue of documentation in French also required additional processing time in order to get the documents translated.

Furthermore, since the Operating Manual stipulates that no developers can receive more than 20% of the UEF total disbursed funds, the UEF re-opened the site-specific stage of the UEF in Madagascar and Sierra Leone and invited pre-qualified developers applying for projects in Sierra Leone and Madagascar to apply for any unutilized funds on a first-come-first-serve basis. As of Q2 2021, the UEF received 28 project applications from 05 developers (02 for Sierra Leone and 03 for Madagascar). Factors that influenced rejections were varying. In some instances, applicants were rejected because they lacked regulatory approvals from their country's regulatory authority, or they did not possess sufficient funding to actually fund the project.

With regards to **Benin**, the site-specific stage was opened to successful pre-qualified developers in April 2021. However, the site-specific stage in Benin faced challenges in the form of prolonged processes and timelines for developers to obtain approvals from regulatory agencies and provide the requisite documentation such as generation licenses and distribution licenses as part of their UEF applications. These operational challenges, specific to Benin, are elaborated in the Table below.

OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES IN BENIN

As the site-specific process took six months in Benin, significantly higher than the eight weeks planned, mainly due to regulatory challenge, this section elaborates the main challenges encountered by the UEF despite partnering with GIZ.

Developers in Benin face a catch-22 situation as public sector entities have put the regulatory process on hold until the developers obtain either grant agreements, certain commitments or offer letters from the UEF, while the UEF requires that developers receive the necessary regulatory approvals, permits and licenses before becoming eligible for grant agreements. As the developers at the site-specific stage of the application process are in the process of surveying, leasing, and undertaking environmental and social impact assessment (ESIA), which are expensive, the lack of clarity and uncertainty regarding the way forward has been challenging for the developers to navigate. This uncertainty poses the risk of multiple developers vying for the same sites which potentially lead to additional delays in processing and impact the developers financially.

Moreover, as elaborated in the section below, developers faced challenges with meeting UEF's minimum criteria of 200 connections per site due to a shift in government criteria for eligible sites (from 7 km away from the grid to 10 km). The UEF was able to navigate this challenge by reviewing this criteria specifically for Benin and providing exemptions to developers if they are able to provide sufficient justification.

In addition, site selection of localities is a key area in which the GIZ facilitates the developers and the public sector institutions. A list of 275 eligible localities was obtained from the Rural Electrification Agency to facilitate the process of site-selection. Although the UEF lays out its own mechanism for assessing and awarding grants to applicants who submit the same sites, GIZ has been facilitating developers to navigate the site selection process and resolving issues around multiple developers selecting the same sites. However, a key challenge encountered by GIZ is in the form of disagreements with some developers on whether such an organized pre-allocation process is the right approach to resolving any issues of overlap, which affects GIZ's ability to effectively navigate the site-selection process in the country.

As a result, the Site-Specific stage timeline had to be further prolonged to 5 months to 29 October 2021 in order to accommodate the applicants and at the recommendation of GIZ. Due to the lengthy regulatory processes, the UEF has considered the use of conditional offers for site approvals with the expectation that all requirements would be met by Q3 2021. Upon the closure of the site-specific stage window, the submitted applications will be assessed by the UEF Team, and the UEF Investment Committee will provide final approval for projects to receive funding.

The following table shows the number of applicants who registered and received approvals at the pre-qualification and site-specific stages of the UEF in Madagascar, Benin and Sierra Leone.

TABLE 6: APPLICANTS AT THE PRE-QUALIFICATION AND SITE-SPECIFIC STAGES OF THE UEF

Country	Registered Applicants	Pre-Qualification Stage		Site-Specific Stage	
		No. of Applicants who Applied	No. of Applicants Approved	No. of Applicants who Applied	No. of Applicants Approved
Madagascar	53	03 *(6%)*	03 *(100%)*	3 *(100%)*	3 *(100%)*
Sierra Leone		06 (11%)	03 *(50%)*	02 *(67%)*	1 *(50%)*
Benin	50	07 *(14%)*	06 *(86%)*	06 *(100%)*	Ongoing

The UEF has been able to sign Grant Agreements and conditional offer letters with developers in Madagascar and Sierra Leone, towards the end of 2021 which signifies an important achievement for the Facility, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. As of 31st December 2021, two out of four developers who completed the site-specific stage in Sierra Leone and Madagascar were able to sign Grant Agreements while two developers could only sign conditional offer letters due to outstanding requirements. More precisely, 9 grant agreements with two developers have been signed in Madagascar totaling 2,496 connections, and 2 conditional offer letters have been signed for 8 sites totaling 2,585 connections. Whereas, in Sierra Leone, the UEF has signed only one conditional offer letter with one developer for 07 sites totaling 1,385 connections. In Benin, the applications in the Site-Specific stage are currently being evaluated.

4.3.3 APPLICATION CRITERIA AND REQUIREMENTS

The UEF was initially envisioned to create and streamline the application process such that it would not duplicate regulatory oversight whilst also aiming to unlock financing at scale. In order to do so, the UEF drew on the experience of the NEP to design criteria aligned with the World Bank in order to facilitate a potential future transition of these developers to larger scale financing. However, interviews with key donors and developers involved in the initial conception of the UEF revealed that the UEF in its current form deviated significantly from the original input of stakeholders in certain design elements such as its criteria and level of documentation required.

In addition, the evaluation revealed that a certain redundancy is built into the UEF process. As part of the regulatory process, developers already have to undergo the design process, building a financial model, and adherence to and compliance with the technical specificities laid out by the regulator and the rural electrification agency. This would then provide the green-light for the developer to carryout implementation of the mini-grid, electricity generation, and distribution. However, having to then follow the UEF's own technical and financial specifications

and requirements duplicates this process which requires time, effort, and resources on the part of both the developers as well as the UEF. For example, since obtaining a land lease is a requirement to be compliant under the regulations of Sierra Leone, some developers have recommended that the UEF consider the submission of a conditional land agreement with the community as part of the site-specific application to obtain a conditional offer letter from the UEF more quickly, which would not only facilitate in speeding up other aspects of the regulatory process but also align better with the developers' own internal timelines pertaining to securing funding and beginning the procurement process during which time the formal land leases can be obtained.

Some developers pointed out that the ESMS requirement template at the site-specific stage seemed to be set up for developers who did not have an ESMS policy in place. Larger and more well-established developers found that the process could be more streamlined if there was an option for them to submit their own ESMS policy in lieu of filling out detailed appendices which took time and effort. In addition, the requirement to submit a notarized letter for every site stating that no other grant funding is being received to develop those sites was also considered as unnecessary because that can be put in as a representation in the grant agreement. The evaluation also found that the site-specific stage of the application could benefit from a reassessment of some of the more in-depth technical requirements such the minutiae of components listing for the distribution networks.

Furthermore, it may take developers between three and six months to obtain audited financial statements. In lieu of these, it was proposed that the UEF may want to consider the submission of management accounts at the pre-qualification stage and shift the requirement to submit audited financial statements to the site-specific stage instead.

While the UEF has been designed with pre-determined standardized criteria across the board in all three countries, these criteria can come into friction with ground realities which has often necessitated flexibility or modification. For instance, the UEF stipulates a minimum of 200 connections per site for developers. However, in Benin, of the list of 275 eligible localities published by the Rural Electrification Agency, a significant proportion of such sites were found to include much fewer than 200 connections per site, particularly because the government changed its eligibility criteria from localities 7 km away from the grid to localities more than 10 km away from the grid. After discussions with the GIZ Team and the developers, the UEF amended this criterion such that the requirement could be waived if the applicant was able to provide justification for not having the 200 minimum connections per site.

At the site-specific stage, the UEF requires the submission of technical and financial specifications such as bank statements, demand assessment, and technical design for each site individually rather than one proposal for multiple sites. However, a developer in Madagascar reported that this requirement to submit an application for each individual site hinders the prospects of developers from leveraging economies of scale and better positioning themselves to receive pre-financing from financial institutions.

Further, while the UEF design aims to fund at least some local developers (25% of applicants), there are currently no local developers who have signed a grant agreement or a conditional offer letter with the UEF. The UEF has encouraged the participation of local developers by easing certain requirements such as removing the condition that sites for which they are applying for with the UEF are not being funded by any other concessional funding for capital costs, and not requiring local applicants to demonstrate that their available pre-financing has a primarily commercial nature. However, in the case where no local developers qualify for the grant, the funding is opened to other developers. To encourage participation by locally-owned developers, the UEF has been actively engaging with Renewable Energy Associations in the countries to assess how best to support them and possibly provide training to apply for programmes such as the UEF for instance through support in development of business plans or development of financial models.

The evaluation found that the UEF application process was harder to navigate for local developers, particularly those new to the mini-grid sector. These developers found it challenging to adapt their own internal standards of operations to the UEF's design methodology and also found the technical specifications of the mini-grid design (such as inverters) to be more inflexible as compared to more established developers, due to unfamiliarity with and lack of prior exposure to implementing mini-grids under those specifications, particularly in the context of rural environments. Indeed, even larger and more well-established developers voiced wariness towards highly specific technical specifications for mini-grids because it has the potential to stifle innovation and adaptability to varying local contexts.

As a result of these challenges, local developers revealed that additional in-depth training or workshop sessions explaining the parameters and methodology for designing mini-grids would significantly facilitate their understanding and help them navigate the challenges they encountered around the design of the mini-grid and validate their calculations and results. For instance, multiple local developers, in Madagascar and Sierra Leone, expressed challenges around understanding why there was a mismatch between the output and outcomes generated using the financial modelling tools they had to use as part of the UEF Application and the ones that they use and indicated the need for support to align the diverging outcomes between the two models.

Another challenge encountered by some developers during the course of the application process was in communications with the UEF. In the case of Benin, some developers reported that the UEF took longer than expected to respond to queries. In the case of Benin and Sierra Leone, some developers also reported receiving unclear or imprecise responses to specific queries which they attributed to knowledge gaps in the UEF's understanding of country-specific challenges and contexts.

In summary, the UEF application structure was found to deviate from the initial formulation undertaken by pioneering donors and strategic partners with certain redundancies in the form of duplicating regulatory processes. Additionally, certain application criteria such as the ESMS

requirement, along with the volume of documentation and level of details required also posed challenges for developers. Local developers faced additional challenges, particularly in their understanding of UEF's technical and financial specifications. Despite UEF's incentives for the participation of local developers, no local developers, in any of the three countries, have been approved thus far. Despite these challenges, the UEF has demonstrated an ability to be flexible and adaptable to local conditions by granting extensions to applicants in all three countries, improving comprehensibility of certain application criteria based on lessons learned from the first application window in Madagascar and Sierra Leone (2020), and amending certain criteria to align with the government's priorities as demonstrated in the case of Benin.

LESSONS LEARNED

Based on the lessons learned from the launch in Madagascar and Sierra Leone, the UEF incorporated some of the feedback obtained to better streamline and clarify the UEF application process particularly with regards to the language of the ESMS requirements to make them more understandable for the developers in Benin. In some instances, developers faced rejections at the pre-qualification stage due to incomplete documentation such as latest audit reports. A key lesson learned by the UEF from its launch in Madagascar and Sierra Leone was to strike a better balance between its due diligence of applicants and its goal to implement mini-grids rapidly across SSA by granting extensions to applicants at the pre-qualification stage in Benin so that they could submit any missing documents without facing rejection

4.3.4 ODYSSEY EXPERIENCE

The UEF's administrative processes take place through Odyssey which is a secure, web-based IT project platform that enables transparent application processing, project monitoring, remote connection verification, and data aggregation. Odyssey enables applicants to submit pre-qualification and site-specific project applications online and approved developers to submit claims reports, view project status, payment status, and other details on their UEF award. The UEF also uses Odyssey in its communication and outreach to developers to obtain and respond to feedback and questions as well as to advertise launch of UEF application cycles. Most developers first became aware of the UEF through the Odyssey platform through which applicants had used to apply to other funding programmes.

Some developers also indicated challenges with the usability and user-friendliness of the Odyssey platform in the form of poor visibility around a deadline for the submission of applications for the site-specific stage. In addition, developers were also uncertain in their knowledge and awareness about when new application windows are launched or additional training sessions offered. Although Odyssey is a platform that developers are widely familiar with and use, there may be a need to diversify the communications mechanisms in use in addition to Odyssey to announce new rounds of application windows and trainings offered. Although the second application window was launched for Madagascar and Sierra Leone in 2021, it was only opened to developers who had successfully completed the pre-qualification

stage of the first window in October 2020 and was thus not open for applicants who were rejected at the pre-qualification stage in the first window or for new applicants. Nevertheless, in the future, according to the Operating Manual, applicants who are rejected at the pre-qualification stage are eligible to apply for the UEF after a 3 month period. In order to retain interest among developers who are likely to proceed to the site-specific stage in future application windows or to seek new pools of applicants for subsequent windows, the UEF should seek to improve its visibility and outreach.

Moreover, a significant amount of documentation and information required for each site is the same but developers have reported significant difficulties around understanding and using an effective mechanism within Odyssey to link specific documents across all sites that are under submission which requires the applicant to re-upload or re-enter the same input for all of their sites.

Conversely, challenges with Odyssey that hinder efficient and effective progress monitoring and donor reporting of the UEF were also reported. As detailed in the Progress Monitoring section above, a majority of the data (80% to 90%) available through Odyssey is currently not automated and requires manual tabulation and analysis which is a time-intensive process and has the potential to negatively impact the UEF's responsiveness and ability to manage frequent donor reporting with increasing data as the facility scales up.

4.3.5 ADVOCACY AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

As detailed in the sections above, key challenges encountered during the course of the implementation of the first Wave resulted from limited engagements with the government, lack of in-country presence, and the need for additional technical support to developers navigating the UEF application and the Odyssey platform. While the UEF has engaged with stakeholders, such engagements were primarily in the form of webinars to introduce the Programme to stakeholders and, in the case of developers, to provide an overview of the Odyssey platform and the application process. In addition to being limited in number, these engagements have also lacked sufficient depth and alignment as developers have expressed challenges in understanding the UEF application process as well navigating the Odyssey platform. However, the orientation workshops that were conducted did not include explanations of the particulars of the UEF's financial models to facilitate and build the capacity of developers to apply for the UEF.

Nevertheless, the UEF has undertaken some prominent activities as part of its advocacy efforts such as convening the RBF Leadership Group in September 2020 which brought together industry leaders and funders of RBF programmes to identify solutions for shared challenges, promote sector collaboration and coordination between RBF programmes and advocate for increased RBF commitments to the sector. In August 2021, SEforALL also published the Mini-Grid Carbon Emissions Tool in partnership with United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as a methodology to calculate carbon emissions from mini-grids in countries in SSA. As there are no sector standards to calculate carbon emissions from mini-grids,

this unique contribution to the sector has garnered significant interest from the sector including from donors and private sector players.

While the UEF envisions providing technical advisory support to governments on best practices on energy access financing, the evaluation revealed that such support has not been provided so far in the UEF's operations. Various stakeholders interviewed have stressed the importance of technical assistance to the Governments of countries the UEF may want to launch in order to increase the facility's chances of success. Government agencies and regulators in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa face significant challenges in the form of capacity and technical skill gaps and staffing shortages which pose a hindrance for the scale up of mini-grid development in their country. In particular, a key component attributed by partners to the success of existing mini-grid development projects such as the UNOPS RREP in Sierra Leone and Beyond the Grid Fund Africa (BGFA) Programmes is the robust in-country presence of the Programmes aimed towards bridging the gap between government agencies and the private sector and facilitating government buy-in through its participation in decision making processes, while ensuring that those processes are reflective of the operational realities for the developers.

In addition to bridging the gap, UNOPS in Sierra Leone also provided the Sierra Leone Electricity and Water Regulatory Commission (SLEWRC) with technical and capacity building assistance through consultants who could prepare and assess financial models to ensure that the regulatory processes do not suffer delays and breakdowns due to limited technical capacities of the regulatory agency. In addition to benefitting the UEF by providing technical support, the GIZ is also providing Technical Assistance (TA) to the Beninese regulator and rural electrification agency. For the future, the UEF may need to consider what role it can play either directly or indirectly in building such public and private sector capacity to bridge technical skills gaps in the countries it operates in to ensure that the goal of upscaling of mini-grid deployment is facilitated.

CONCLUSIONS ON EFFECTIVENESS

The evaluation revealed that the UEF application process and structure deviated from its initial formulation under key pioneering donors and partners. Moreover, the UEF application process was found to duplicate the regulatory processes as many of the requirements of the UEF are already required as part of the process of obtaining regulatory approvals from government entities. Interviews also revealed opportunities for further streamlining the application process to facilitate qualified developers in obtaining grant approvals.

The UEF has been able to sign Grant Agreements and conditional offer letters with developers in Madagascar and Sierra Leone which represents a key achievement for the UEF. The effectiveness of the UEF has been hampered by delays faced in the regulatory process, particularly in Benin and Sierra Leone. Despite partnering with GIZ in Benin, these challenges have persisted. Currently in Benin, developers face a catch-22 situation as regulators await the submission of a grant agreement with the UEF before proceeding with the regulatory process while the UEF requires obtaining regulatory permits and approvals prior to the award of a grant agreement. The UEF has awarded conditional offer letters to some developers on a case-by-case basis in order to mitigate the current procedural deadlock.

Specific application criteria, volume of documentation required, along with the usability of the Odyssey platform have also contributed to challenges, particularly for local developers who have indicated the need for more in-depth training and workshops to strengthen their understanding of the technical and financial specifications of the UEF.

Having said that, the UEF has attempted to adapt and amend its criteria in light of country-specific challenges. In Benin, since a significant proportion of sites deemed eligible by the government authority have fewer than 200 connections per site, this requirement has been relaxed by the UEF. Similarly in all three countries of operations, the UEF has granted extensions to applicants in need of additional time to submit the required documentation.

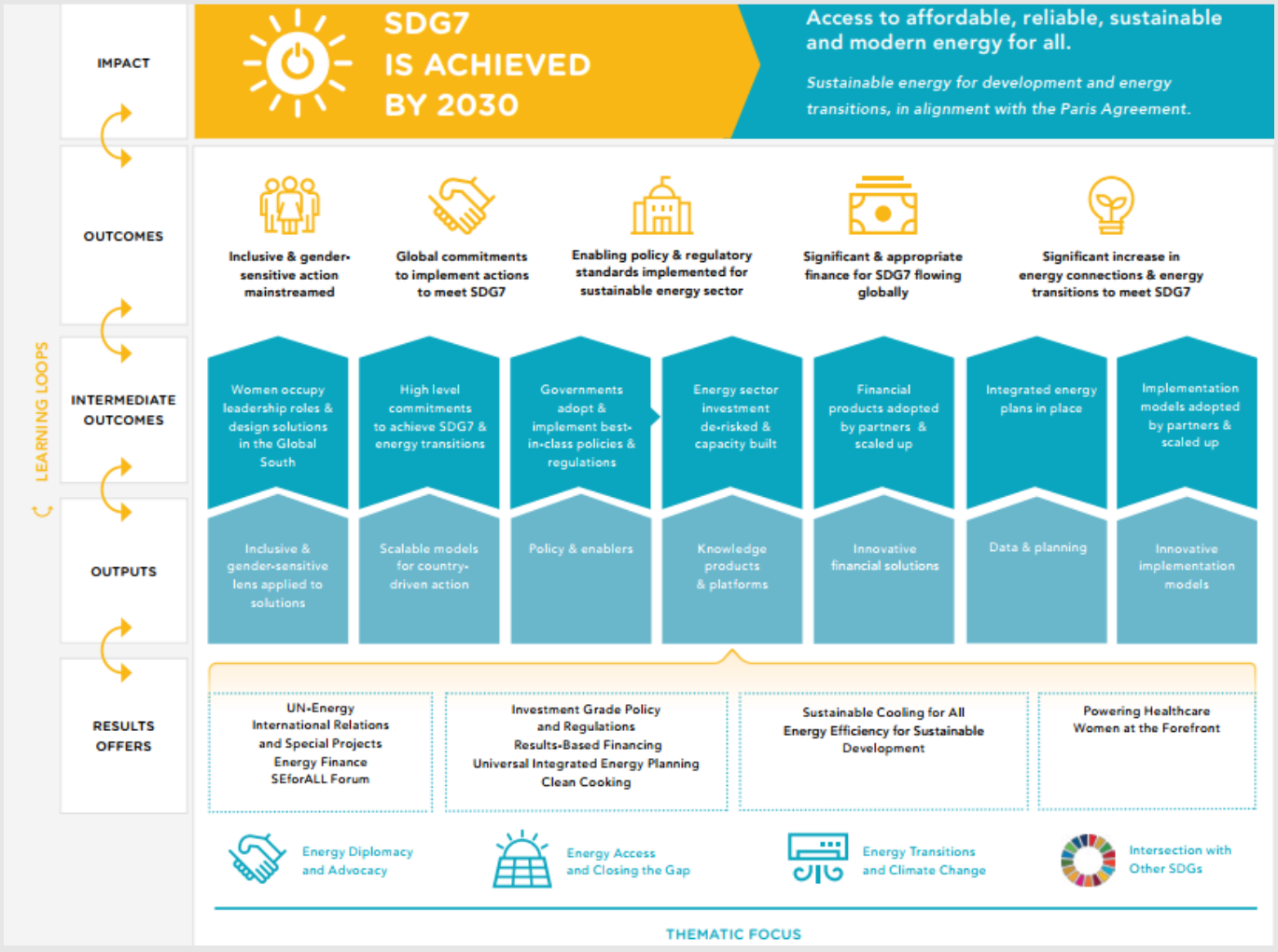
4.4 COHERENCE

The following section assesses the coherence of the UEF and its functions within SEforALL as an organization by examining its alignment with the SEforALL Business Plan and synergies with other SEforALL Programs.

4.4.1 ALIGNMENT WITH SEFORALL BUSINESS PLAN

The UEF is the cornerstone of the new iteration of SEforALL, SEforALL 3.0, which seeks to bridge advocacy and influence with targeted country-specific interventions. As depicted in the figure below, the UEF sits in the Energy Access and Closing the Gap thematic focus of the organization under its new ToC for 2020 to 2023, outlining the pathways of change needed to achieve SDG7 by 2030.

FIGURE 6: SEFORALL 3.0 THEORY OF CHANGE



Prior versions of SEforALL focused entirely on global awareness raising and agenda setting on SDG7 through advocacy and thought leadership. Under SEforALL 3.0, the organization has sought to expand on its knowledge and experience to an engagement model that also prioritizes data-driven decision-making, partnerships with high-impact countries and implementation on the ground. Under this new direction, the UEF directly works towards achieving three of the five main organizational outcomes of SEforALL – a) significant and appropriate finance for SDG7 flowing globally; b) significant increase in energy connections and energy transitions to meet SDG7; and c) enabling policy and regulatory standards implemented for sustainable energy sector (through its collaboration with other Programmes such as the PRF). Crucially, the UEF is the largest and the only other Programme (with the exception of Powering Health Care (PHC)) within the organization that is focused towards implementation of

energy connections and increasing energy access by unlocking financing towards the implementation of clean energy access solutions such as the mini-grids (and in the future, SSPUs and clean cooking solutions). Therefore, the evaluation found that the UEF was highly aligned and relevant to the current direction of SEforALL as an organization geared towards implementation and strategic interventions.

4.4.2 SYNERGIES WITHIN SEFORALL PROGRAMMES

Interviews with various Programmes within SEforALL confirmed that individual Programmes have a tendency to predominantly work in silos. However, there is significant scope as well as interest within SEforALL Programmes to leverage the synergies that exist within the organization to enhance the overall effectiveness of the organization. Moreover, there are indications of a trend towards the utilization of a more synergistic and collaborative approach in recent years. For instance, there are active collaborations between the Powering Healthcare (PHC) and the Policy and Regulatory Frameworks (PRF) Programmes on projects in Sierra Leone pertaining to mapping of healthcare facilities for electrification. Similarly, the Clean Cooking Program has been involved in the programmes of Universal Integrated Energy Planning (UIEP) as integrated energy plans also encompass clean cooking solutions as a key component.

However, there are few mechanisms currently in place to allow for a deeper and strategic level of collaboration between different Programs. The main mechanism that currently exists is in the form of a bi-weekly SEforALL Programmes' meeting where each Programme lead provides other teams with bullet point updates about the status of their particular Programme. Various Programmes have pointed out that while the intent behind these meetings was to foster dialogue between different Programs within SEforALL, this particular format does not lend itself to a deeper technical engagement and brainstorming with other SEforALL Programmes on how different Programmes can leverage each other's skillsets, technical expertise as well as knowledge generated to feed into their own programming. In recognition of these important missing linkages between various Programmes, SEforALL has recently named a new Head of Energy Access whose explicit role is to provide a strategic bridge between various SEforALL Programmes.

Between the UIEP, PRF, and the UEF, there exist a natural untapped synergy in constructing a value chain of services that SEforALL can offer to donors. The UIEP and the PRF can play a crucial role at the planning and strategizing stage prior to implementation in a country. For instance, the UIEP, in collaboration with the Clean Cooking Programme on clean cooking access, can support the country implementation strategy, during both country selection as well as technology selection, by highlighting key gaps and opportunities in terms of locations and technology use. This can then be followed up with a deeper engagement through the PRF to understand the policy and regulatory framework and determine the extent to which an enabling environment exists for the success of the UEF.

To an extent, there has been increasing collaboration between the UIEP and the PRF in the context of PRF's recently initiated engagement in Rwanda through funding from the Shell Foundation which includes an integrated energy component. However, there is scope and opportunity for the UEF to utilize the expertise of the UIEP and PRF programmes as precursors or complements to its implementation and launch in countries as part of Waves 2 and 3. As many of the existing donors such as the Shell Foundation and The Rockefeller Foundation are funding the work of UIEP, PRF as well as the UEF, there may be an opportunity to test a more coordinated and strategic approach in implementation in existing and future countries through engaging such donors.

CONCLUSIONS ON COHERENCE

Overall, the UEF is highly aligned and relevant to the new strategic direction of SEforALL as it positions itself to be an organization geared towards implementation and strategic interventions. Within SEforALL, while there is a tendency for Programmes to work in silos, recent trends indicate that this is changing as more Programmes formulate active collaborations on specific projects and in specific countries. Moreover, in recognition of the need to leverage synergies between various Programmes, SEforALL has undertaken concrete steps to foster a culture shift towards more active collaboration by creating a new Head of Energy Access position filled by a highly esteemed SEforALL senior leader, whose explicit role is to provide a strategic bridge between various SEforALL Programmes.

With regards to collaboration between the UEF and other Programmes, there are opportunities for the UEF to leverage the knowledge and expertise of the UIEP, Clean Cooking, and PRF Programmes at the planning and strategizing stage prior to the UEF being deployed in a given country. In addition, given that the UEF shares some of the same donors who are also supporting the work of these programmes, there may be an opportunity for SEforALL to engage such donors for a more coordinated and strategic approach in current and future countries that the UEF plans to launch in.

4.5 FORWARD LOOKING CONSIDERATIONS

4.5.1 SUBSIDY AMOUNT/DISBURSEMENT

Currently, the UEF is designed to offer developers a standard grant amount of USD 433 per verified connection across all the countries it operates in. In line with the RBF approach, this subsidy is awarded to the developers after the remote and on-site verification of connections and the supply of electricity to consumers for at least 60 days.

Since this approach puts the onus of pre-financing the construction and establishment of the mini-grids on developers, the issue of raising financing has been stressed by developers to have potential for causing significant delays in the process. For instance, one developer involved in other mini-grid development programmes in Sierra Leone took nine months to secure financing for implementing their mini-grids. Securing funding is also a bigger challenge for smaller and less-well established developers who can take even longer to secure the requisite pre-financing.

These challenges pose significant implications for the UEF and its goal of speedy deployment of mini-grids across Africa. The UEF may want to consider the lessons learned from the NEP and in a similar vein, use a modified RBF approach wherein the "results" are broken down into key milestones and the subsidy amount disbursed in stages as milestones are met to ease the pressure on developers to fully pre-finance all expenses.

Another key challenge that electrification programmes encounter is that more remote and sparsely populated communities are more expensive to connect either through the grid or even through mini-grids. To ensure that no one is left behind and to encourage developers to consider such communities, the UEF may in the future want to consider segmenting its subsidy by type of community. For instance, a lower subsidy amount may be attributed to connecting communities closer to the grid and/or larger in size compared to those farther from the grid and/or smaller in size respectively.

4.5.2 SSPUs AND CLEAN COOKING

Wave 2 of the UEF envisions the expansion of the technologies offered by the UEF to include not only mini-grids, but also operationalize the Standalone Solar for Productive Use (SSPU) component. The clean cooking component of the UEF is envisioned to be potentially operationalized as Wave 3 of the UEF for 2023 or beyond, contingent on donor interest and availability of funding.

An area of concern for various stakeholders regarding the UEF's proposed expansion into clean cooking and SSPU is the issue of sustainability and fit. The local markets in the majority of SSA countries are small and undeveloped comprised of few and small developers with small volumes. Learnings from EnDev's RBF programmes for improved cook stoves and clean cooking solutions reveal that developers of clean cooking solutions require significant assistance in formalizing the market, matching developers with manufacturers, and supporting developers in importing and marketing.

Interviews with donors as well as internal SEforALL Programmes also revealed that an RBF approach deployed in isolation and without taking into account the significant barriers is unlikely to be effective and successful. **Stakeholders envisage that significant government engagement and prioritization of the sector through policies and regulatory frameworks that incentivize investments in the sector and create the necessary enabling environment would be an essential prerequisite for an RBF mechanism to be successful in a given country context**. Moreover, to enable success, a strong capacity building support to local developers would also be needed to facilitate growth and increase opportunities. Such issues of scale-up and need for significant technical assistance indicate that the majority of SSA countries may not be suitable for the UEF for clean cooking solutions as the UEF is currently structured and designed.

Conversely, there may be opportunities that the UEF might want to explore in integrating a clean cooking component within the context of SSPUs through the use of electric cooking in the form of induction stoves and electric pressure cookers. As demand generation and energy

consumptions are key consideration in electrification, electricity for cooking can be an opportunity to complement the electrification process by providing an opportunity for increased energy consumption. There may also be scope for the cooking appliances such as electric pressure cookers to use existing SSPU financial models such as the Pay As You Go (PAYGO) models. From a strategic impact perspective, electricity for cooking also provides opportunities to cover a lot of ground on the SDG7 indicators such as clean cooking, electricity access, renewables, and energy efficiency along with other SDGs through food access and increased economic opportunities, particularly for women.

Overall, the provision of energy access through SSPUs stems from donor interest in not just seeing more energy connections on the ground but also to influence how and to what extent these connections are utilized and in turn what impact they are generating in terms of economic opportunities and productivity for the localities electrified under the UEF. SSPUs, especially those owned and operated by small businesses, can be a component towards the success of mini-grids deployed in a community as they come with an incentive for increased incomes for businesses through increased utilization.

As mentioned above, technical assistance and capacity building may also need to be strongly considered which is geared towards financing assets and also forming market linkages to support developers and beneficiaries to utilize the assets. However, donors as well as other stakeholders such as strategic partners and other SEforALL internal and external programmes are unanimous in that the UEF needs to strengthen and solidify Wave 1 and establish its proof of concept by showing results on the ground in 2022 to be able to position itself to not just attract financing from donors but also operationalize other technologies such as the SSPUs, and potentially clean cooking solutions in the future. Moreover, there may also be significant implications of concurrently operationalizing and deploying SSPUs in addition to mini-grids on the progress towards achieving results in either or both domains. This is especially pertinent in the current context of the UEF's limited financial and human resources.

CONCLUSIONS ON FORWARD-LOOKING CONSIDERATIONS

Subsidy Amount/Disbursement: The UEF has currently set a standard subsidy amount of USD 433 per connection which will be disbursed to developers who have successfully established verified electricity connections and supply of electricity to consumers for at least 60 days. Since developers, especially local developers, have stressed that the issue of raising the requisite financing has the potential for causing delays, the UEF may in the future want to break down results into key milestones and disburse the subsidy amount in stages as milestones are met to ease the pressure on developers to fully pre-finance all expenses and improve their positions vis-à-vis financial institutions.

Electrification programmes often encounter challenges around connecting more remote and sparsely populated communities due to higher costs. To encourage developers to consider such communities, the UEF may in the future want to consider segmenting its subsidy by type of community with a higher subsidy amount for communities farther from the grid or smaller in size.

SSPUs and Clean Cooking Components: Sustainability and fit are two main areas of concern for donors regarding the UEF's proposed expansion to these technologies in future Waves. As local markets for clean cooking and SSPUs in SSA countries are relatively underdeveloped and small, an RBF approach in combination with significant government engagement and prioritization of the sector through policies and regulatory frameworks that encourage investment, as well as a strong capacity building component, especially for local developers, is more likely to enable an RBF mechanism to be successful in such contexts as opposed to an RBF programme launched in isolation.

There may be opportunities for the UEF to explore integrating clean cooking within SSPUs through electric cooking using induction stoves and electric pressure cookers. These may serve the dual purposes of the UEF operationalizing clean cooking and complementing the electrification process by providing an opportunity for increased energy consumption. In addition, such an approach will also align with donor interests to not just see more connections on the ground but to also generate impact in terms of economic opportunities and increase productivity.

5. CONCLUSIONS, KEY LEARNINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents the conclusions of the findings of the evaluation of the UEF based on the retrospective assessment of implementation during its first Wave and presents key lessons learned and recommendations for its subsequent scale-up for Waves 2 and 3.

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion**, the UEF was found to be highly relevant to the international development agenda, the needs of the renewable energy sector, as well as donors operating in the arena of ending energy access gaps**. With its focus on unlocking energy finance and enabling speedy implementation of mini-grids to establish new clean energy connections to previously energy-deprived communities in the most energy-deficient region of the world, the UEF:

- a) contributes directly to achieving universal energy access (SDG7);
- b) meets the needs of mini-grid developers through the provision of concessional funding to cover the viability gap; and
- c) aligns with donor priorities who seek to end energy poverty through a financing vehicle for deploying clean energy solutions.

SEforALL **showed agility during the pre-launch and set up phase of the UEF in its ability to operationalize the UEF in a period of less than one year, and begin implementation in October 2020**. During a period of six months, SEforALL as successful in:

a) Developing its Operating Manual which sets out the Application criteria at the pre-qualification and site-specific stages and covers other points in the UEF process;
b) Establishing a governance structure for the UEF;
c) Undertaking extensive financial modeling to establish a viable subsidy amount;
d) Establishing a RBF Leadership Group for greater advocacy in the sector; and
e) Developing a tool for calculating mini-grid carbon emissions as a sector good

While the overall design and structure of the UEF is sound because of its RBF modality, its alignment with World Bank standards in order to facilitate a potential transition of developers to large-scale financing, and its basis in the NEP, **the UEF was found to have overambitious KPI targets and a highly accelerated timeframe** that did not sufficiently consider country-specific implementation challenges and put in place risk mitigation strategies to overcome those challenges. Moreover, interviews with key stakeholders involved in the formative stage of the UEF's conception confirmed that **the actual UEF design deviated from its initial conception** in the form of duplicating regulatory processes and requiring a high volume of documentation required from applicants. **The evaluation revealed that there are opportunities for the UEF to**

better streamline its assessment criteria, such as the ESMS requirements and components listing for the distribution network, based on feedback from developers and partners.

As of 31st December 2021, **the UEF has not met the targets set for its core KPIs** due to various operational and country-specific challenges and has not been able to deploy any mini-grids since its inception in October 2020. However, **the UEF has been able to show progress towards results by successfully signing Grant Agreements** and conditional offer letters with developers in Madagascar and Sierra Leone on an accelerated schedule of year from launch, despite operating in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Country-specific operational challenges emerged primarily in the form of delays in processing developers' applications by the regulatory authorities due to limited engagement of the UEF with government counterparts and capacity issues within government agencies, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic which saw lockdowns and disruptions in work for government stakeholders as well as developers.

The lack of in-country presence of the UEF, especially in Madagascar and Sierra Leone, along with the travel restrictions because of the COVID-19 pandemic, hampered the UEF's ability to effectively engage with the government stakeholders and respond to these challenges. In contrast to Madagascar and Sierra Leone, the UEF through GIZ as its technical implementing partner has in-country presence in Benin. The GIZ Team has attempted to mitigate challenges encountered by developers in Benin by providing technical support to the Beninese REA and regulatory authority and assist the developers in site selection. However, in spite of these efforts, developers are facing challenges in the form of stalled regulatory processes, as authorities are seeking grant agreements with the UEF as a requisite to moving forward in granting regulatory approvals and permits to developers.

In terms of the UEF application, as compared to international developers, local developers were found to face more challenges in the form of difficulty in adapting their internal standards of operations to the UEF's technical and financial parameters and specifications. **The evaluation revealed the need for deeper level of engagement and training for developers, on specific aspects of the UEF Application such as the financial modelling tools, to facilitate their understanding of the UEF application process** and enable them to navigate the process efficiently.

Internally**, the UEF faced challenges in the form of limited staffing and lack of requisite French-speaking resources within the Team to communicate with developers and government stakeholders effectively**. Staffing resources of SEforAll have been used to support processes such as monitoring and resource mobilization. Interviews with developers and internal SEforALL Programmes revealed technical and functional issues with the Odyssey platform in the form of challenges with effectively using mechanisms for linking documents across various sites for submission as well as limitations in provision of automated data for efficient and streamlined reporting.

It is imperative that the UEF address the various barriers and challenges that have hindered progress towards the deployment of mini-grids and establishment of connections in order to establish its proof of concept and position itself to secure donor funding for the subsequent scale-up and operationalization of additional technologies.

5.2 KEY LEARNINGS

The current evaluation assessed the UEF's various stages from its formation, set up and operationalization, to the implementation of its first Wave, focusing on the deployment of mini-grids. Overall, the following key learnings emerged as a result of the current evaluation which are summarily presented below:

- While ambitious targets for core KPIs were set with the intention to serve a catalyzing function to unlock finance into the renewable energy sector (specifically mini-grids), there is a strong need for revisiting core KPI targets due to the UEF's challenges in fundraising, disbursement, operationalization of mini-grids, and establishment of connections in its first Wave of implementation.
- Continuous, sustained, and deeper level of engagements with government counterparts in the regulatory agencies and/or rural electrification agencies are key to creating the requisite enabling environment for programmes such as the UEF to succeed. In addition, lessons learned from other successful mini-grid programs in the SSA region such as the FCDO-funded and UNOPS-implemented Rural Renewable Energy Project (RREP) in Sierra Leone have showcased that the provision of technical assistance and greater government buy-in through capacity building and engagement are key components for the success of such programmes.
- The evaluation revealed the need for the UEF to establish in-country presence to conduct sustained engagement with government counterparts and stakeholders, to streamline the regulatory hurdles, and enable qualified developers to enter into grant agreements with the UEF and initiate the development of mini-grids on their selected sites.
- The current UEF structure has limitations in its applicability to other clean energy solutions, namely SSPUs and Clean Cooking, as local markets for these technologies are underdeveloped and small in the context of SSA and solution-providers require significant technical assistance.
- The UEF sought to use a detailed approach to its country selection assessment using information from multiple resources including in-house expertise, AMDA's assessment, and its own assessment conducted through a legal firm. However, despite its efforts, the following crucial information gaps were found in at least one of the three country assessments:

- Specific compliance issues experienced by developers in the energy sector;
- Market assessment of local mini-grids;
- Analysis of consumer experience using local mini-grids;
- An assessment of key challenges faced by mini-grid developers;
- Financial constraints encountered by mini-grid developers;
- Mechanisms for mini-grid developers to recover their investments;
- Specific information regarding either expected or actual timeframes for obtaining regulatory permits and licenses; and
- Timeframes for conducting EIAs

- Developers and strategic partners have indicated that there are untapped opportunities for the UEF to better streamline its application process, with particular reference to the following areas for review:
  - ESMS requirements;
  - components listing of distribution network;
  - provision of notarized letters for each site attesting that no other concession funding is utilized to develop the site; and
  - audited financial statements
- Developers, especially local developers, have highlighted the need for additional and ongoing training sessions in not just utilizing the Odyssey platform but also in facilitating their understanding of the specific aspects of the UEF Application process, such as the UEF's financial modelling tools.
- Between the UIEP, PRF, and the UEF, there exist a natural untapped synergy in constructing a value chain of services that SEforALL can offer to donors. The UIEP, Clean Cooking, and the PRF can play a crucial role at not just the planning and strategizing stage during country selection, but also a more integrated and phased-approach to implementation in country alongside the UEF

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the in-depth evaluation of the UEF, the following recommendations are presented to the UEF Team to enhance the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and coherence of the UEF and address key challenges encountered during the first Wave in order to better position itself to scale-up in the future.

1. **Review of KPIs and targets in light of implementation challenges:** In light of the various operational and country-specific challenges highlighted by the evaluation, it is recommended that the UEF undertake a review of its core KPI targets to better manage expectations around fundraising, disbursement, and operationalization of mini-grids and establishment of connections. In addition to the review of targets, it is also

recommended that the UEF establish a more detailed Logframe that further lists the program's activities, outputs, and outcomes along with indicators across all preconditions at the output and outcome level, means of verification, as well as risks and further assumptions that take into consideration the various opportunities and challenges encountered in its first Wave. It is recommended that insights from this evaluation are integrated into the more detailed Logframe.

2. **Establish Robust In-Country Presence**: The evaluation revealed the need for the UEF to establish in-country presence to conduct sustained engagement with government counterparts and stakeholders to streamline the regulatory hurdles and enable qualified developers to enter into grant agreements with the UEF and initiate the development of mini-grids on their selected sites. This need is echoed by virtually all stakeholders consulted as part of the evaluation who have underscored the need for greater coordination with government authorities and integration of the UEF into the national priorities so that the UEF remains relevant for decision-makers. It is therefore recommended that the UEF prioritize the hiring of senior local staff to coordinate and liaise with government counterparts and overcome process hurdles, troubleshoot with developers, and ensure that the regulatory process to obtain permits is carried smoothly. In light of this, SEforALL is currently hiring for country manager in Sierra Leone, with one of the focus areas on UEF.

3. **Prioritize operationalization of mini-grids**: It is highly recommended that the UEF first establish its proof of concept through the deployment of mini-grids and establishing electricity connections prior to operationalizing other energy access solutions such as SSPUs or clean cooking solutions. By showing results in the domain of mini-grids, the UEF will position itself to access higher tranches of funding from existing and new donors that could in turn support its efforts to operationalize other energy access solutions.

   Moreover, there may also be significant implications of concurrently operationalizing and deploying more than one technology (in this case, SSPUs) on the progress towards achieving results in both the existing technology (mini-grids) as well as the newer SSPUs in the current context of the UEF's limited financial and human resources. Therefore, a staggered deployment approach is recommended to ensure that the UEF first enables its mini-grid operations to reach a point where proof of concept is established through not just raising funding for mini-grid deployment but also disbursing funds to developers and establishing energy connections, before operationalization of an RBF mechanism for SSPUs commences.

4. **Review the Country Selection Process**: Due to the pandemic, the UEF relied on the assessment carried out by AMDA that offered details on country and developer readiness for mini-grid projects. This analyses covered insights on number of sites, connections, as well as on status of Community Agreement (MoU, support letter,) land lease, clearances, tariff approvals and information on sufficiency of funding for the developers. It also included information on country's regulatory framework. However, this information wasn't found to be accurate, in part likely also due to changing context due to COVID-19. In addition, the UEF hired a legal firm to conduct country-specific due diligence which primarily provided an overview of the legal, regulatory and corporate landscape of each country but lacked critical analyses of how and where the country-specific processes could impact and pose challenges for the UEF at all possible points in the application process. It is therefore recommended that the UEF undertake a review of its country selection process and incorporate a thorough analysis of potential risks as well as mitigation measures to ensure that the UEF remains adaptable and flexible to country-specific conditions and challenges.

   In addition, in at least one country assessment, the following crucial information gaps were found, such as: specific compliance issues experienced by developers, a market assessment of local mini-grids, analysis of consumer experience with mini-grids, assessment of key challenges faced by developers, financial constraints encountered by developers, mechanisms for developers to recover investments, and expected and actual timeframes for obtaining regulatory permits and conducting EIAs. Therefore, it is also recommended that crucial information gaps in the country assessment be filled. In order to do so, the UEF may want to utilize multi-pronged approach comprised of Desk Review and In-country expert consultations to obtain a holistic and up-to-date picture of on-ground realities.

5. **Review the UEF Application Criteria and Requirements**: The evaluation revealed several opportunities for the UEF to further streamline its application process by pointing to specific application areas such as the ESMS requirements, components listing of distribution networks, provision of notarized letters for each site attesting that no other concession funding is utilized to develop the site, and audited financial statements that could be reviewed. While the UEF has made amendments and updates to some of these criteria based on lessons learned in its first application window in Madagascar and Sierra Leone, it is recommended that the UEF continue the review on an ongoing basis.

Challenges with regulatory processes have stalled developers' progress on obtaining the requisite approvals and permits as the regulatory authorities await the submission of a grant agreement with the UEF before proceeding with the process. One potential way to mitigate challenges around delays in the provision of documentation as well as overcoming hurdles in the regulatory processes may be to provide conditional offer letters to the developers. The developers can use these conditional offer letters for bolstering their position vis-à-vis the regulatory authorities as well as the financial institutions. The UEF has tried to resolve this by providing conditional approvals as well as conditional approvals at the pre-qualification stage in order to be flexible to the developers' circumstances on a case-by-case basis. There may be a need for establishing a more formalized approach internally within the UEF around the minimum threshold an applicant has to reach to be able to obtain conditional approvals at the pre-qualification and grant award stages to ease uncertainty and help move the regulatory process onwards.

6. **Technical Assistance to Governments**: It is also recommended that the UEF consider the provision of technical assistance to government agencies and/or regulatory authorities to build their capacity to ensure government buy-in and smooth operation of the regulatory process to position the UEF for success. Lessons learned from other successful mini-grid programs in the SSA region such as the FCDO-funded and UNOPS-implemented Rural Renewable Energy Project (RREP) in Sierra Leone have showcased that the provision of technical assistance and greater government buy-in through capacity building and engagement are key components for the success of such programmes. The UEF may want to consider partnering with or engaging other donor agencies working in countries with a focus on providing technical assistance and capacity building to either the private sector or the public sector in order to facilitate an enabling environment in the country for the scale-up of the UEF.

7. **Provision of Additional Trainings on Odyssey Platform:** Stakeholders internal and external to the UEF have highlighted ongoing technical and functional issues faced on the Odyssey platform. Interviews with developers have revealed the need for a more streamlined and efficient mechanism to link documents and data across the different sites proposed by applicants, improve the visibility around key information such as deadlines for the various stages, and improved outreach methods alerting to the opening of new application windows and trainings. It is therefore recommended that the UEF facilitate applicants by providing additional and ongoing trainings to help developers navigate the UEF application process and improve their capacity to effectively use the Odyssey platform. For instance, some developers have reported difficulty in navigating

the financial modeling aspect of the UEF site-specific application due to divergences between the models on Odyssey and developers' own internal models.

8. **Develop an Integrated Approach to Data Management**: Interviews also highlighted the need for a more consolidated and integrated approach to management of data available on Odyssey that allows efficient and streamlined reporting through automation. Therefore, there is a need for a consolidated data management approach that enables the UEF to leverage automation tools to enable a more efficient and streamlined data analytics approach in order to meet its various quarterly, semi-annual and annual reporting requirements to donors. This is also pertinent since the data will be supplied by various actors such as developers, independent verification agents, and independent evaluators and auditors among others. Therefore, it is incumbent for the UEF to ensure that the Programme make expectations around the provision of data from various sources explicit and clear during the contracting stage so that developers and other providers of data commit to providing the data needed for the UEF to report on its KPIs.

9. **Overcome key skill gaps in the upcoming expansion of UEF Team**: Currently the UEF Team comprises just three personnel and has leveraged significant support from other Programmes such as the MEL Team and UIEP to cover functions that were previously undertaken internally by the UEF Team. Moreover, the UEF Team also lacks the requisite language-skills to communicate with developers and government stakeholders based in Francophone countries. Therefore, in the upcoming expansion of its Team, it is imperative that the UEF cover the language gaps by hiring personnel with French language skills. It is also recommended that the UEF onboard staff based in SSA who have a better understanding of the regulatory and policy environments, which will enable it to better guide developers and address concerns stemming from local contexts.

10. **Leverage Synergies with Internal SEforALL Programmes:** The evaluation revealed that there are potential points of synergy between particular SEforALL Programmes such as the UIEP, Clean Cooking, PRF and the UEF which may be leveraged for a more integrated and phased approach to country implementation by the UEF. In addition to stronger internal communication between SEforALL Programs, there may be value in institutionalizing internal coordination mechanisms within SEforALL that would allow these Programmes to better leverage synergies that exist, for instance, through joint workplans that outline time-bound activities, outputs, and outcomes of collaborations between Programs, or a jointly developed theory of change on how these programs work together to support energy access as a whole.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

CYNOSURE

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW (KII) SHEET

UEF/RBF PROGRAMME EVALUATION

KII – PMU

1. Name of the Respondent	
2. Designation	
3. Contact Details	
4. Date of KII	
5. Start Time of KII	
6. Finishing Time of KII	

Background

1. What is the organizational structure of the UEF Team? What is the team composition and roles of members? What regional and in-country presence does the UEF Team have?

2. What challenges have you encountered with regards to: a) staffing and recruitment; and b) procurement in the first Wave of the UEF? What have been the other challenges you faced during this Wave?

3. Can you please provide an estimated number of off-grid mini grid developers in each country of operation? What percent of these are locally-owned companies?

4. What is the total amount committed to UEF by each donor? Are donor funds marked for any specific country? What percent of this amount has been disbursed?

Project Design

5. How was the project design for UEF conceived? Which stakeholders and key resources were consulted during the design phase? (eg Government, Academia, CSOs, and other donor agencies etc.)

6. Is the UEF design flexible enough to respond to the changing needs of the market? (eg: helping developers overcome perceived financial risks)

7. Is the approach used by SEforALL for its UEF different from that used by other RBF projects/programmes? If yes, how?

8. Based on what criteria were the countries of intervention selected?

    a. What up front due diligence was performed in order to select current countries of operation? Are there minimum thresholds and is there a documented process for conducting this up front research before deciding to implement the UEF in a given country?

9. What assumptions were made by the UEF in determining the fundraising targets:
    a. USD 100 million (2021);
    b. USD 250 million (2022); and
    c. USD 500 million (2023)?

10. What concrete steps were, or are being, undertaken by the UEF in ensuring sufficient support from Funders and donors to achieve the fundraising targets:
    a. USD 100 million (2021);
    b. USD 250 million (2022); and
    c. USD 500 million (2023)?

11. Since the UEF was designed during the COVID-19 pandemic, how were the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic factored into determining targets for the UEF?

12. In establishing the total targets for verified mini-grid connections, were any per-country mini-grid connection targets established? If not, why not?

13. With regards to project governance structure, how were implementing partners solicited for participation in the Advisory Board and Investment Committee?

    a. Who are the members of the Advisory Board and Investment Committee? What are their functional titles/positions?
    b. Has the Advisory Board been meeting at regularly at the established meeting schedule?
    c. When and how often does the Investment Committee meet once the site-specific application stage starts?
    d. Have there been any challenges in convening the Advisory Board and the Investment Committees?
    e. Is the membership composition of the Advisory Board and Investment Committee static or do/will the members rotate?
    f. What support does SEforALL provide to the Advisory Board and Investment Committee?

14. What is the role of the Taskforce and what is the reporting structure of the Taskforce? What have been the major contributions of the Taskforce?

15. Have there been challenges in reporting on established KPIs, other than those caused by delays in the timeline of the UEF?

Pre-Launch Phase of the UEF

16. What role did the implementing partners/funders play in the pre-launch phase of the UEF?

17. What factors influenced the decision to include Benin, Madagascar, and Sierra Leone in Wave 1 of the UEF?
18. What were the challenges in meeting the 2020 target number of countries where UEF operates? What measures did the UEF undertake, if any, to ensure that the 2020 target for number of countries (04 countries) was reached?
19. What methods of outreach were used by the UEF in socializing the Programme among potential developers and other stakeholders? Were some methods more effective than others?

20. During the pre-launch phase of the UEF, what types of engagements were undertaken with potential developers?

    a. On average, how many potential applicants attended these online events per country?

21. What were the opportunities and challenges associated with conducting pre-launch activities using webinars instead of in-country workshops?

22. To what extent were the online webinars effective in garnering wider participation from potential developers?

23. Did the UEF solicit feedback from potential applicants at the pre-launch phase? If so, what feedback did the Programme receive from applicants?
24. Were there any changes in the approach and method of the pre-launch activities for Benin based on lessons learned in Sierra Leone and Madagascar?

Pre-Qualification Stage

25. What was the breakdown of the applicants by country and size of operations?

26. What proportion of the total applicants were local developers?

27. What is the duration of the pre-qualification stage period? Have there been differences in durations across the project application rounds/cycles?

28. Did applicants have to register with the Odyssey platform in order to access the eligibility criteria for the UEF?

29. Who within the UEF evaluate(s) the applications at the pre-qualification stage? Is it done on the basis of an internal committee? Who comprise(s) the review team and what are their qualifications?

30. Which eligibility criteria were applications mostly rejected on the basis of at the Pre-Qualification and Site-Specific Stages?

31. Did the UEF undertake any verification of already existing project sites? If so, were these done remotely or on-site or both?

32. How did the UEF engage with the applicants during the pre-qualification stage? What support was provided to the applicants during this stage and using which methods (e.g.: webinars, answers to questions over email, etc.)?

33. According to the 2020 Annual Progress Report, deadlines were extended during the pre-qualification stage. What were the factors that led to this decision? And what was the duration of the deadline extension?

    a. Compared to the timeframe in the Operating Manual, did these deadline extension(s) affect the timeliness of the UEF application process? If so, how?

34. Did the UEF notify applicants about whether they qualified or not within 14 business days after submission of applications, as stipulated in the UEF Operating Manual?

35. What other challenges, if any, were encountered by the UEF Team during the pre-qualification stages in a) Madagascar, b) Sierra Leone; and c) Benin? How were these addressed?

    a. In the latest semi-annual reporting process it was noted that there were more specific challenges in Benin's enabling environment causing delays, can you unpack this further?

36. Since the UEF was launched in Madagascar and Sierra Leone first, were any changes made in the operational processes, at the pre-qualification stage, on the basis of lessons learned in Madagascar and Sierra Leone?

Site-Specific Stage

37. What is the duration of the site-specific stage period? Have there been differences in durations across the project application rounds/cycles?

    a. When did the first site-specific stage for Sierra Leone and Madagascar launch and for how long?
    b. When did the second site-specific stage for Sierra Leone and Madagascar launch and for how long? Where there any differences in the duration of the second site-specific stage period in the two countries on the basis of lessons learned in the first site-specific stage?

38. How did the UEF engage with the applicants during the site-specific stage? What support was provided to the applicants during this stage and using which methods (eg: webinars, answers to questions over email, etc)?

39. Did the UEF undertake any on-site verification at the site-specific stage? Or were all verifications done remotely?

40. Which eligibility criteria were applications mostly rejected on the basis of?

41. What challenges were encountered by the UEF Team during the pre-qualification stages in a) Madagascar; b) Sierra Leone; and c) Benin? How were these addressed?

42. According to the 2021 Semi-Annual Progress Report, applicants in Benin were given an extended site-specific stage timeframe. What were the factors that led to this decision? And what was the duration of the deadline extension compared to those for Madagascar and Sierra Leone?

    a. Compared to the timeframe in the Operating Manual, did this extension affect the timeliness of the UEF application process? If so, how?

43. How long did the Advisory Board take to make its decision at the site-specific stage for the first and second cycles in Madagascar and Sierra Leone?

44. What are the lessons learned from your own experiences, based on the three site-specific stages that the UEF has undergone?

Contracting Stage and Beyond

45. As of October 31, 2021, how many approved applicants per country have entered into a grant agreement with the UEF?

    a. On average, how long has the signing of grant agreements taken after the approval at the site-specific stage?

46. What is the average number of connections proposed by the applicants approved at the site-specific stage per country?

47. Has the UEF been successful in meeting its aims of awarding at least 25% of total funding to locally-owned developers? If not, what have been the challenges in meeting this goal?

48. As of October 31, 2021, what amount of funds raised have been earmarked for the Grantees?

49. As of October 31, 2021, how many Grantees have begun implementation of their sites?

50. In light of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, does the UEF foresee the possibility of extending the stipulated duration of implementation (12 months)? On what information will the UEF base such a decision on?

51. What is the criteria that the UEF is using to evaluate and onboard verification agents in the three countries? By when does the UEF envision completing this process?

FORWARD LOOKING CONSIDERATIONS

52. As most of the 2021 KPI targets have not been met by the UEF, what steps has the Programme undertaken to cover the ground on mini-grids to keep the project on track in terms of:
    a. Funds (USD million) raised for UEF;
    b. Funds (USD million) disbursed by UEF as grants to providers;
    c. No. of verified mini-grid connections with power flowing; and
    d. No. of countries where the UEF is operating?

53. As per the Semi-Annual Progress Report 2021, the Programme has not operationalized the “Standalone solar for productive use” (SSPU) component as it was newly integrated

this year. What have been the challenges in looking to integrate this into the focus of the programme?

a. As of October 31, 2021, has the UEF Program developed a proposal to fund this component?
b. What steps has the UEF undertaken to ensure the funding of this component? What have been the outcomes of these steps?
c. By when does the UEF envision that this component will become operationalized?
d. How does the UEF foresee the inclusion of SSPU affecting other priorities for the programme, such as solar home systems and clean cooking integration and related targets?

54. Based on discussions and engagements with donors, what has been the response from donors with regards to the use of RBF approaches for SHS for productive use and clean cooking solutions in general and in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa?

55. When is the KPI Tool slated to undergo review? At this stage, does the UEF anticipate any revisions to the annual targets of the KPIs? If so, what are the reasons for any such revisions?

56. We are aware that clean cooking and solar home system targets may have to shift forward due to the prioritization of SSPU, how does this impact stakeholders expecting clean cooking and solar home system roll outs in the next years? How does it affect your team's subsidy design process?

57. What do you foresee as the main challenges in the scale up phase ahead in 2022? Such challenges could include the hiring of 17 new positions in the first 6 months of the year while in parallel managing operations. What kind of recommendations do you foresee, or hope to see from this evaluation for the successful scaleup of the UEF in 2022 in this context?

CYNOSURE

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW (KII) SHEET

UEF/RBF PROGRAMME EVALUATION

KII – DONORS

1. Name of the Respondent	
2. Designation	
3. Name of the Donor	
4. Contact Details	
5. Date of KII	
6. Starting Time of KII	
7. Finishing Time of KII	

Donors

Background

1. What are the development priorities of your organization in [country name]? And who are your key program implementing partners?

2. How does the UEF fit into these development priorities?

3. Does the donor have any previous experience with RBF specifically in the energy sector? Have any learnings being incorporated into this project?

UEF Design

4. Was your organization involved in the design of the UEF? If so, please elaborate on the role your organization played.

5. SEforAll has extensive experience of working with the United Nations and leaders in government, the private sector, financial institutions, civil society and philanthropies to drive faster action towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG7)– Given this unique position, what factors influenced your decision to partner with SEforALL on the UEF? Please elaborate

6. What is the comparative advantage of the UEF model in relation to other RBFs in the sector based on your experience and from an investment perspective?

7. What challenges has your organization faced with regard to the "design" of the UEF? And how were these challenges overcome?

8. As a donor, do you find the reporting and communications coming from the UEF to be fit to purpose for your understanding of the progress of the programme and future funding decisions? Is there more or less you would like to see of in this regard?

9. Are there more partners you would like to see engaged in the further design and scale up of the UEF, either in country on the ground or in the international donor community?

UEF Operations

10. What is the donor's role and level of participation/representation in the Advisory Board, Investment Committee, and Task Force? How effective have these mechanisms been in ensuring progress towards goals and outcomes?

11. What do you see as SEforALL's value proposition in managing the UEF programme?

12. What challenges, if any, did you encounter in your role on the Advisory Board/Investment Committee? How and to what extent were they addressed?

13. What is the level of your organization's engagement with country governments to create buy-in for the UEF?

14. Do you think the UEF has been efficient in its operations vis-à-vis reporting and disbursement of funds? If not, what should the UEF have done differently to improve its efficiency? How can the UEF improve its efficiency going forward?

15. Are there any specific considerations you would like to see integrated into the scaleup of the UEF in the coming year(s)?

Lessons Learned and Future Considerations

16. What are some of the lessons learned and recommendations for improved implementation of the project, from your perspective, in the upcoming waves?

17. Does your organization have plans for continued funding to the UEF project? If yes, please provide details. Which countries would your organization want the UEF to expand to in the subsequent waves?

    a. Is there any specific evidence or data you are looking to see from the UEF to help your future funding decisions in the programme?

18. Does your organization have any plans to support standalone solar for productive use (SSPU), solar home systems and clean cooking initiatives? If yes, which of the three are your main priorities and why? Under which financing models, and in what priority, would you like to the see these technologies integrated into the UEF?

19. What has your experience been, if any, in financing energy sector projects in Africa? Based on those experiences, what do you see as SEforALL's value proposition in implementing a successful results based financing facility in support of the sector?

20. Compared to other financing models, is the Results-Based Financing modality adapted by the UEF an adequate solution to expand energy access for off-grid mini-grids across Africa?

21. What has your experience been, if any, in financing energy sector projects in Asia? For the replication of the UEF in Asia in future, what other considerations would you recommend the programme consider?

22. Based on the experienced you just mentioned, to what extent do you think that the RBF approach has the potential to be replicated in the countries you have been engaged in?

23. Are there other countries in Asia, in addition to the ones previously mentioned, where the RBF approach to energy financing has the potential to be replicated? If so, what factors associated with these countries would enable the success of the approach?

CYNOSURE

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW (KII) SHEET

UEF/RBF PROGRAMME EVALUATION

KII – STRATEGIC PARTNERS

1. Name of the Respondent	
2. Designation	
3. Name of Organization	
4. Contact Details	
5. Date of KII	
6. Starting Time of KII	
7. Finishing Time of KII	

CYNOSURE

STRATEGIC PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

1. What is the nature of the programmes your organization has undertaken in electrification, clean cooking technology, SHS and standalone solar for productive use (SSPU)?
    a. When were these programmes initiated?
    b. What is the financial size of your programme portolio?
    c. Who have been your major partners?
    d. What is the geographic location of your programme(s)?

2. What other approaches has your organization used for these projects? (e.g.: RBF vs traditional) What have been the lessons learned from these approaches?

3. What are the determinants of success of using these approaches at the country level? (e.g.: policy and regulatory frameworks, implementing partners, etc.)

4. What has been the nature of your partnership with SEforALL? (e.g.: knowledge sharing, co-financing, support at design and/or launch stage, etc.)

5. Are there any specific considerations you would like to see integrated into the scaleup of the UEF in the coming year(s)?

6. What do you see as SEforALL's value proposition in managing the UEF programme?
    a. What is the comparative advantage of working with SEforALL compared to other organizations to manage the programme in the sector?

7. What have been the synergies between the UEF and your programme portfolio?

8. Are there opportunities for further alignment and synergies between the UEF and your programme portfolio?
9. What has your experience been, if any, in financing/managing energy sector projects in Africa? Based on those experiences, what do you see as SEforALL's value proposition in implementing a successful results based financing facility in support of the sector?

10. What has been your experience, if any, in financing energy sector projects in Asia? For the replication of the UEF in Asia in future, what other considerations would you recommend the programme consider?

11. Based on the experience you mentioned, to what extent do you think that the RBF approach has the potential to be replicated in the countries you have been engaged in?

12. Are there other countries in Asia, in addition to the ones previously mentioned, where the RBF approach to energy financing has the potential to be replicated? If so, what factors associated with these countries would enable the success of this approach?

13. Compared to other financing models, is the Result-Based Financing modality adapted by the UEF program an adequate solution to expand energy access for off-grid mini grids across Africa?

14. What is your organization's role and level of participation/representation in the Advisory Board, Investment Committee, and Task Force? How effective have these mechanisms been in ensuring progress towards goals and outcomes?

15. What is your organization's strategy for future support to the RBF financing modality in energy sector?

16. Does your organization have future plans to collaborate with the UEF?

17. Are there more partners you would like to see engaged in the further design and scale up of the UEF, either in country on the ground or in the international donor community?

18. What has your experience been with regards to traditional and/or RBF approaches for clean cooking technology, SHS and standalone solar for productive use (SSPU)? What are your lessons learned and recommendations based on your organization's experience?

CYNOSURE

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW (KII) SHEET

UEF/RBF PROGRAMME EVALUATION

KII – GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

1. Name of the Respondent	
2. Designation	
3. Government Agency	
4. Country	
5. Contact Details	
6. Date of KII	
7. Starting Time of KII	
8. Finishing Time of KII	

GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

Background

1. What is the primary role of your department/agency in determining/implementing Renewable Energy policy and/or regulating of power purchasing schemes in the country?

2. Currently what is the key policy mechanism driving the Renewable energy business in [country name]?

3. What are the current priorities/programmes of Government of [country name] in terms of renewable energy, especially as they relate to:
    a. off-grid mini-grids
    b. Clean Cooking
    c. Solar Home Systems
    d. Standalone Solar for Productive use

4. What are some of the other key government agencies which are involved in this role, especially in relevance to:
    a. off-grid mini-grids
    b. Clean Cooking
    c. Solar Home Systems
    d. Standalone Solar for Productive use

5. Who are the major donors and private sector entities involved in renewable energy in your country with respect to:
    a. off-grid mini-grids
    b. Clean Cooking
    c. Solar Home Systems
    d. Standalone Solar for Productive use

6. What financing modalities are used by your Government, donors and the private sector for the delivery of:
    a. off-grid mini-grids
    b. Clean Cooking
    c. Solar Home Systems
    d. Standalone Solar for Productive use

Opportunities and Challenges

7. What are the barriers to financing off-grid projects in your country?

8. What have been the main opportunities and challenges faced by these projects? E.g: Tariffs, regulatory restrictions, licensing, available RE technologies

9. What other gaps in the enabling environment need to be addressed to increase chances of success?

10. In your opinion, do the foreign developer companies have an unfair advantage over the locally-owned companies?

11. If yes, what specific support should be provided to make locally-owned developer companies more competitive?

12. Does the government of [country name] provide any special support to the locally-owned companies? For eg. grants, introduction to other lenders and financiers, other guidance etc.

13. Are there any government-approved tariffs? If so, how do those compare with RBF-promoted tariffs? What areas of concerns or challenges, if any, exist between your government's tariffs and those promoted under different energy financing programmes?

UEF Project

14. To what extent do you see UEF as tackling challenges to financing of off-grid projects?

15. What role can projects such as the UEF play in supporting your department in addressing any policy or regulatory barriers faced by project developers?

16. Do you consider the above-described level of engagement sufficient for effective implementation of the UEF project in [country name] in times of the COVID-19 pandemic?

17. If no, how did this lack of involvement affect the project's implementation during Wave 1, and what are its implications for the upcoming phases?

18. Compared to other financing models, is the Result-Based Financing modality adapted by the UEF program an adequate solution to expand energy access for off-grid mini grids in [country name]?

19. If no, are there other types of finance, such as blended finance, Capex cost, or other mechanisms, the UEF should consider beyond grants in this model?

20. What are your recommendations for the development of future off-grid mini grid projects in [country name]?

21. What are your recommendations for the development of Clean Cooking, SHS, and Standalone Solar for Productive Use in [country name]?

22. In what ways, if any, could the UEF further align with the priorities of your government?

23. What other partners have you worked with or are working with that the UEF should be more involved with?

CYNOSURE

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW (KII) SHEET

UEF/RBF PROGRAMME EVALUATION

KII – DEVELOPERS/GRANTEES

1. Name of the Respondent	
2. Designation	
3. Name of Company	
4. Country	
5. Contact Details	
6. Date of KII	
7. Starting Time of KII	
8. Finishing Time of KII	

DEVELOPERS/GRANTEES

Background

1. Please give us a brief overview of your company
    a) Size of the company
    b) Local or international
    c) Types of RE being supported (solar pv, wind, hydroelectric, biomass etc.)

2. Based on your knowledge what is the estimated number of off-grid mini grid developers in the market today.
    a) What% are local developers?
    b) What% companies are owned by women

3. What are some of the challenges in general faced by off-grid mini grid companies in your country? Please elaborate For ex:
    - Off-grid policy, strategy, and licensing
    - Business and financing models
    - Others

4. Do you have prior experience with results-based financing (RBF)? Based on your opinion/experience what are some of the opportunities and challenges for adaption of this financing modality in the mini-grid sector.

5. What type of subsidies do your see as most critical for the viability of mini-grids?

6. To what extent does your company delve into other off grid technologies such as clean cooking, SHS, SSPU?

    a) From your engagement in the off grid sector, do you have an opinion on the viability and demand for these other off grid solutions in the country(ies) you are operating in?

Pre-Qualification Stage

7. How did you find out about the UEF? (e.g., social media, newspaper, government website etc.)

8. In your opinion, what are some of the ways UEF can improve its outreach in order to attract more developers?

9. What motivated you to apply for the UEF grant? (e.g. grant amount, ease of application, government buy-in, other support etc.)

10. Did you apply as individual firm or consortium?

11. How would you rate the pre-qualification criteria? Why?
    a) Lenient
    b) Market competitive
    c) Stringent
    d) Not sure

12. Some of the key elements of the pre-qualification criteria include gender composition, ability to finance and technical experience. Based on your experience, what are some of the key elements of the pre-qualification criteria that are likely to encourage/discourage locally-owned companies from applying? Please elaborate.

13. Based on your experience, do you think international firms have an unfair advantage over locally-owned firms? Please elaborate

14. In your opinion what additional support can be provided to locally-owned firms to make them more competitive?

15. From the time of submission of documents, how long did it take for the UEF to respond regarding pre-qualification decision?

Site-Specific Project Application Stage

16. How would you rate the criteria of the project application stage? Why?
    a) Lenient
    b) Market competitive
    c) Stringent
    d) Not sure

17. Some of the key requirements at the site-specific stage of the UEF application process include generation technology requirements, customer metering technology, minimum level of development for potential sites, among others. Based on your experience, what are some of the key elements of the application stage criteria that are likely to encourage/discourage developer companies from applying? Please elaborate.

18. From the time of submission of documents, how long did it take for the UEF to respond regarding the final decision?

19. Did the time taken for response from UEF regarding the final decision have an impact on your business plans?

Learning and Support

20. Prior to using the platform, were you provided any orientation/training on the application process? If yes, how can this support be further improved?

21. Did you face any problems using the UEF platform (Odyssey)? If yes, how were you able to resolve these issues?
    a) UEF Support/Odyssey
    b) On your own

22. To what extent are you satisfied with the level of communication and support from the UEF Team? (5 = extremely satisfied, 4 = somewhat satisfied, 3 = neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 2 = somewhat dissatisfied, 1 = extremely dissatisfied)
    a) <IF SOMEWHAT SATISFIED OR EXTREMELY SATISFIED>
       In what ways has the UEF Team supported you throughout the application process?
    b) <IF SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED OR EXTREMELY DISSATISFIED>
       What should the UEF Team do to improve the level of communication and support it provides to applicants?

23. During the first wave, has UEF been flexible in accommodating the specific needs of the developers? Please cite examples (eg extension of deadlines, provisional approvals etc.)

24. Overall, how would you rate the UEF's flexibility throughout the application process? (5=Extremely Flexible, 4 = somewhat flexible, 3 = neither flexible nor inflexible, 2 = somewhat inflexible, 1 = extremely inflexible)

Other

25. What is your risk mitigation strategy on customers' willingness and ability to pay for the cost of energy?

26. How do you measure that against trends in energy usage?

27. How do you take data on energy usage and customers' willingness and ability to pay to inform next site selection?

28. Are you leveraging additional finance to cover the remaining cost of the connection? Is the remaining cost still a risk for you? If so, how have you integrated this into your business model?

29. What are the comparative benefits of RBF in comparison to other subsidies and financing models?

30. On average, what percent of the developers cost per connection does the current subsidy of USD 433 cover? How does it compare to other RBF programmes/facilities in your country?

31. Do you foresee any problems in keeping the connections active and running in the next 2-5 years? Please elaborate some of the challenges you might face? (eg. low consumption, change in tariffs, policy and regulations etc)
32. Do you have any recommendations for the improvement of the UEF program? (eg timelines, pre-qualification/ application stage criteria, process of application, Verification/Reporting etc.)

33. What role can projects such as the UEF play in addressing any policy or regulatory barriers that you face?

34. From your experiences so far, how simple would you rate the reporting required by the UEF for your RBF subsidy, as well monthly and quarterly reporting? Very simple, somewhat simple, simple, somewhat complicated, onerous. (or on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being most difficult)

CYNOSURE

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW (KII) SHEET

UEF/RBF PROGRAMME EVALUATION

KII – INTERNAL Programme Leads / Teams

1. Name of the Respondent	
2. Designation	
3. Contact Details	
4. Date of KII	
5. Starting Time of KII	
6. Finishing Time of KII	

UIEP/PRF/PHC Programme Teams <All separate interviews to be used as a script that adapts to the conversation flow>

1. What is the nature of your Programme?

2. Has/Was the [Name of Programme] been involved in the design, launch, and/or implementation of the UEF? If yes, in what ways did [Name of Programme] contribute? What are your programme's specific responsibilities when it comes to supporting or working with the UEF? Examples could be as further leading questions: research and analysis of countries of operation pre implementation, commonalities between your work and the UEF's in the same country, bringing together country strategy, etc.

3. Has [Name of Programme] collaborated with the UEF? If yes, in what form(s)? If no, what are the reasons for the lack of collaboration?

4. Has the UEF provided support to the [Name of Programme]? If yes, what type of support has the UEF provided?

5. To what extent do opportunities exist for collaboration between the UEF and [Name of Programme] currently and in the future?

6. What mechanisms exist to facilitate collaboration and leverage synergies within SEforALL's portfolio? How effective are they?

7. What have been the opportunities and challenges in collaborating with the UEF?

8. Does [Name of Programme] have any plans to collaborate with the UEF in the future? If yes, in what form(s) and programmatic area(s)?

9. How do you perceive the UEF's value add for the sector?

10. How do you perceive more collaboration between your programme and the UEF adding further value to the sector, if any?

11. What is your perception of the upcoming scale up for the UEF in terms of risk, difficulty, how it will affect the organization, etc. over the coming year(s), 2022 specifically?

12. Do you have any recommendations for the UEF to consider in their scale up phase to mitigate risks, make the scale up more seamless and reduce and challenges the scaleup could have on the organization, if any?

13. Do you have any recommendations for SEforALL to consider in their scale up phase to mitigate risks, make the scale up more seamless and reduce and challenges the scaleup could have on the organization, if any?

14. How do you see the UEF as part of SEforALL's Country Engagement Strategy, is it well integrated, are there ways the programme could be more integrated into the country engagement approach of the organization and across other programmes?

Clean Cooking Team

1. What is the nature of your Programme?

2. What are the global and regional challenges in the financing of clean cooking initiatives?
    a. How and to what extent does the RBF approach address these challenges?

3. Based on your knowledge and experience, what are donor's perception of and appetite for investing in clean cooking solutions that use the RBF approach compared to traditional methods of financing?

4. Has/Was the Clean Cooking Team been involved in the design, launch, and/or implementation of the UEF? If yes, in what ways did Clean Cooking contribute?

5. Has the Clean Cooking Programme collaborated with the UEF? If yes, in what form(s)? If no, what are the reasons for the lack of collaboration?

    a. If yes, what have been the opportunities and challenges in collaborating with the UEF?

6. Has the UEF provided support to the Clean Cooking Programme? If yes, what type of support has the UEF provided?

7. What mechanisms exist to facilitate collaboration and leverage synergies within SEforALL's portfolio? How effective are they?

8. How and in what forms does the Clean Cooking Programme plan to collaborate with the UEF in the future?

    a. How as the integration of Solar Systems for Productive Use (SSPU) affected the timeline for the cooking integration into the programme? How does that affect stakeholders you are working with and their perception of the UEF as a solution in the near or long term?

9. In your opinion, what approach can or should the UEF take to facilitate the operationalization of its clean cooking solutions component in the near future?

10. What is your perception of the upcoming scale up for the UEF in terms of risk, difficulty, how it will affect the organization, etc. over the coming year(s), 2022 specifically?

15. How do you see the UEF as part of SEforALL's Country Engagement Strategy, is it well integrated, are there ways the programme could be more integrated into the country engagement approach of the organization and across other programmes?

11. Do you have any recommendations for the UEF to consider in their scale up phase to mitigate risks, make the scale up more seamless and reduce and challenges the scaleup could have on the organization, if any?

12. Do you have any recommendations for SEforALL to consider in their scale up phase to mitigate risks, make the scale up more seamless and reduce and challenges the scaleup could have on the organization, if any?

HR <Separate interview>

1. What are the functions of your department?

2. What is the total staffing strength of SEforALL?

    a. What proportion of total staff is full time and what proportion is hired on a contractual basis?
    b. What is the average duration of contracts and do these differ across different Programmes?

c. How do you see the scale up of the UEF over the next year, how will that affect SEforALL's staffing, culture, priorities of the organization?`

3. How does your department support the operations of the UEF?

4. Have there been any challenges in terms of human resources at SEforALL? If yes, please elaborate. To what extent have these challenges been addressed?

5. What is your perception of the upcoming scale up for the UEF in terms of risk, difficulty, how it will affect the organization, etc. over the coming year(s), 2022 specifically?

6. How do you see the UEF as part of SEforALL's Country Engagement Strategy, is it well integrated, are there ways the programme could be more integrated into the country engagement approach of the organization and across other programmes?

7. Do you have any recommendations for the UEF to consider in the scale up phase to mitigate risks, make the scale up more seamless and reduce and challenges the scaleup could have on the organization, if any?

8. Do you have any recommendations for SEforALL to consider in the scale up phase to mitigate risks, make the scale up more seamless and reduce and challenges the scaleup could have on the organization, if any?

Procurement & Operations <Separate interview>

1. What are the functions of your department?

2. What policies are in place to facilitate the procurement of goods and services?

3. How does your department support the operations of the UEF?
4. Have there been any challenges in terms of procurement for SEforALL and the UEF? If yes, please elaborate. To what extent have these challenges been addressed?
5. What is your perception of the upcoming scale up for the UEF in terms of risk, difficulty, how it will affect the organization, etc. over the coming year(s), 2022 specifically?
6. How do you see the UEF as part of SEforALL's Country Engagement Strategy, is it well integrated, are there ways the programme could be more integrated into the country engagement approach of the organization and across other programmes?

7. Do you have any recommendations for the UEF to consider in their scale up phase to mitigate risks, make the scale up more seamless and reduce and challenges the scaleup could have on the organization, if any?

8. Do you have any recommendations for SEforALL to consider in their scale up phase to mitigate risks, make the scale up more seamless and reduce and challenges the scaleup could have on the organization, if any?

Resource Mobilization <Separate interview>

1. What are the functions of your department?

2. How does your department support the resource mobilization of the UEF?

3. What have the challenges in terms of fundraising for the UEF that your department has faced? How and to what extent have these been addressed?

    a. Are there specific questions being asked by donors and partners that the UEF does not yet have data and evidence to answer?
    b. Are there any specific questions you would like to see integrated into our interviews with key strategic and funding partners on your behalf based on the interview questions we have provided? Can you unpack how and if these donors or partner questions have been challenging?

4. Has fundraising the UEF been complementary or has it distracted your department from fundraising for the rest of SEforALL's programmes?

5. What is your perception of the upcoming scale up for the UEF in terms of risk, difficulty, how it will affect the organization, etc. over the coming year(s), 2022 specifically?

6. How do you see the UEF as part of SEforALL's Country Engagement Strategy, is it well integrated, are there ways the programme could be more integrated into the country engagement approach of the organization and across other programmes?

7. Do you have any recommendations for the UEF to consider in the scale up phase to mitigate risks, make the scale up more seamless and reduce and challenges the scaleup could have on the organization, if any?

8. Are there any priorities from resource mobilization's perspective that should be integrated into the scale up phase in terms of information donors need in order to invest in the programme?

9. Do you have any recommendations for SEforALL to consider in the scale up phase to mitigate risks, make the scale up more seamless and reduce and challenges the scaleup could have on the organization, if any?

MEL <Separate Interview>

1. What are the functions of your department in the larger context of SEforALL?

2. What is the role of your department with regards to the UEF?

3. What role does the M&E Team play at various stages of the UEF? (pre-launch, pre-qualifications, site-specific, and contracting)

4. What have been some of the challenges you encountered at various stages of the UEF?

5. How were these challenges addressed?

6. To what extent does the UEF have mechanisms in place to identify early risks to the project in terms of progress towards results? How effective are these mechanisms?

7. Did your department play a role in the development of SEforALL's 3-Year Business Plan 2021-2023? If so, what was your role?

8. What challenges, if any, did your team encounter during the development of high-level metrics (KPIs) to monitor and assess the performance of the UEF?

9. Are there any indicators that you anticipate collecting data for would be challenging? If so, what are these indicators?

10. Other than additional time needed for data to be available due to delays, what have been any other challenges in data collection and reporting on metrics for the KPI Tool?

11. When is the KPI Tool slated to undergo review? At this stage, does the UEF anticipate any revisions to the annual targets of the KPIs? If so, what are the reasons for any such revisions?

12. The most recent 2021 Semi-Annual Progress Report did not contain targets for non-Business Plan metrics, when does the UEF plan to develop targets for the non-Business Plan metrics? How does the UEF plan to develop these?

13. Has the UEF been reporting to various stakeholders (funders and public) at the established frequencies (monthly, quarterly, and annually) as per schedule? What have been some of the challenges encountered during reporting?

14. What are some of the lessons learned and recommendation for strengthening the MEL for the UEF in its subsequent Waves?

15. What is your perception of the upcoming scale up for the UEF in terms of risk, difficulty, how it will affect the organization, etc. over the coming year(s), 2022 specifically?

16. How do you see the UEF as part of SEforALL's Country Engagement Strategy, is it well integrated, are there ways the programme could be more integrated into the country engagement approach of the organization and across other programmes?

17. Do you have any recommendations for the UEF to consider in the scale up phase to mitigate risks, make the scale up more seamless and reduce and challenges the scaleup could have on the organization, if any?

18. Do you have any recommendations for SEforALL to consider in the scale up phase to mitigate risks, make the scale up more seamless and reduce and challenges the scaleup could have on the organization, if any?

ANNEX 2: PROGRAMMATIC SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

Stages	Scope of the Evaluation
Pre-Launch Phase of the UEF ***(January 2020 to October 2020)***	• Conceptual elaboration including development and implementation of the MEL Framework and of key programme documentation; • Pre-launch activities such as webinars for interested developers, engagement with stakeholders, design and launch of the UEF online platform;
Launch and Implementation of the UEF Wave 1 ***(October 2021 to ongoing)***	• Sierra Leone and Madagascar launched in October 2020; • Benin launched in January 2021
UEF Application Process ***(21 October 2020 to October 2021)***	• **Pre-Qualification Stage:** o Activities around the launch; o Evaluation by the UEF team of the Pre-Qualification applications; o Decision-making and consultations with the UEF's Advisory Board; o Engagement and communication with the developers/applicants and other relevant stakeholders; o Pre-Qualification Webinars; o Pre-Qualification post-application process survey • **Site-Specific Stage:** o Evaluation by the UEF team of the Site-Specific applications; o Decision-making and consultations with the UEF's Advisory Board and Investment Committee; o Engagement and communication with developers/applicants and other relevant stakeholders: ▪ Site-specific stage Webinar for Sierra Leone and Madagascar; ▪ Providing support and information for applicants; o Site-specific post-application process survey
Contracting with Developers ***(July 2021 to September 2021)***	• Project Approval and Grant Agreement Signing (Sierra Leone and Madagascar) o Process of grant agreement signing o Contractual components in relation to data, MEL, etc. and opportunities to enhance these components for future alignment with the Operating Manual and data required for ongoing MEL and reporting to donors

ANNEX 3: BREAKDOWN OF THE OECD-DAC CRITERIA QUESTIONS ACROSS EVALUATION COMPONENTS

OECD-DAC Criteria	RETROSPECTIVE COMPONENT	FORWARD-LOOKING COMPONENT
Relevance	• *Has* the intervention done the right things in order to achieve its intended results and impact? • Is the design of the UEF an adequate solution to unlock finance more efficiently for energy access *in the three countries of operation*? *Has* it reduced the main causes of the problem? • Compared to other RBF facilities available, how do developers and other key stakeholders perceive the relevance of the UEF?	• *How can* the intervention do the right things in order to achieve its intended results and impact? • Is the design of the UEF an adequate solution to unlock finance more efficiently for energy access *in the pan-African context*? Does it reduce the main causes of the problem? What can be improved? What should the programme continue to prioritize? • Are there other types of finance, such as blended finance or other mechanisms, the UEF should consider beyond grants in this model? • Does the UEF have the potential for replication in Asia?
Effectiveness	• What worked well in launching and implementing the UEF? • What went well prior to the launch of the UEF in Sierra Leone and Madagascar? • What worked well during the Pre-Qualification and Site-Specific stages in the above-mentioned countries? • What was less successful in launching and implementing the UEF? • What did not go well prior to the launch of the UEF in Sierra Leone and Madagascar? • What could have been better during the Pre-Qualification stage in the countries? • What could have been better in the Site-Specific stages in the above-mentioned countries? • What was the value of communication and support from the UEF Team? • To what extent has gender been addressed in the UEF design and implementation? Where is there room for improvement in terms of gender focus and considerations? • Is the UEF on track to achieve its intended outcomes and results *for mini-grids*?	• *How can the UEF replicate what was done well across the different stages of UEF process for subsequent Waves?* • *What should the UEF do differently to refine it operations before scaling up in subsequent Waves*? • Are there policy or regulatory barriers that project developers are facing that the UEF could further support in addressing? • Is the UEF on track to achieve its intended outcomes and results *for SHS for productive use and clean cooking solutions*?
Efficiency	• Has the UEF been managed efficiently? What measures *were* taken during planning and	• What measures can be taken during planning and implementation *of subsequent*

OECD-DAC Criteria	RETROSPECTIVE COMPONENT	FORWARD-LOOKING COMPONENT
	implementation to ensure that resources *were* used more effectively? How well were risks managed? • Could the UEF have been implemented with fewer resources without reducing the quality and quantity of the results? • Could more of the same result have been produced with the same resources? • To what extent did developers and other stakeholders in the sector value the support they received from UEF?	*Waves* to ensure that resources are used more effectively *and efficiently*?
Coherence	• How well does the UEF align with the needs of the sector/other initiatives/the needs of Wave 1 countries? • Where do synergies exist with other RBF initiatives? How are these synergies perceived to be working? What were the benefits? • How well is the UEF aligned with the priorities of each country of operation? • Is the UEF integrated well enough into the political dialogue in each country of operation in order to support project developers at the right political level in country? • Are the UEF's activities well-aligned with SEforALL's 3-year Business Plan?	• What are the key considerations for scale-up in Africa with a focus on complementing other RBF initiatives, filling in the gaps and avoiding replication? • Is the UEF missing opportunities to further align with other RBFs in the sector, if so, how could the programme better align? • Are there opportunities for further alignment with the priorities of each country of operation? • Are there opportunities to further align with SEforALL's programmes of work?

ANNEX 4: EVALUATION DESIGN MATRIX

Evaluation Design Matrix

OECD-DAC Criteria	Evaluation Component	Key Programmatic Question	Elements of Analysis/Possible Indicators	Data Sources	Methods of Verification
Relevance	**Retrospective**	Has the intervention done the right things in order to achieve its intended results and impact?	Understanding how UEF's intended results and impacts in the context of the first Wave were defined and determined. Assessing the extent to which the intended results were SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timebound) Assessing the extent to which the UEF achieved its intended results and impacts Assessing the extent to which the operational and managerial processes in place were followed and led to or did not lead to the achievement of intended results and impacts Identifying what steps were taken by UEF to ensure intended results and impacts were achieved and assessing their efficacy in achieving the intended results and impacts Contextualizing "right things" by comparatively analyzing UEF's approach with that of other RBF Programmes pertaining to off-grid mini-grids. Identifying similarities and differences between the approaches. How well as the programme understood the enabling and disabling factors to each country's enabling environment in order to do the right things?	• Programme Management Team • Internal Documents • External Documents	• Key Informant Interviews • Desk Review
		Is the design of the UEF an adequate solution to unlock finance more efficiently for energy access *in the three countries of operation*? *Has* it reduced the main causes of the problem?	Identifying the barriers to financing off-grid projects in the three countries of intervention Analyzing the extent to which the UEF addresses these barriers to off-grid financing Assessing and evaluating the comparative advantages of the UEF model to: a) traditional models of financing; and b) other RBF models in terms of unlocking finance more efficiently for energy access Analyzing and evaluating the assumptions behind the UEF's design Identifying which stakeholders were involved in the design of the UEF, assessing the extent of their involvement and the extent to which their involvement was perceived by them as sufficient. Assessing the extent of donors' and strategic partners' previous experience with both traditional and RBF approaches in the energy sector and assessing the extent to which learning from such previous experience was incorporated into the UEF's design	• Programme Management Team • MEL Team • Donors • Strategic Partners • Government Representatives • Developers • Internal Documents • External Documents	• Key Informant Interviews • Desk Review

OECD-DAC Criteria	Evaluation Component	Key Programmatic Question	Elements of Analysis/Possible Indicators	Data Sources	Methods of Verification
			Analyzing perceived challenges with the design of the UEF across different stakeholder groups Analyzing the extent to which the UEF design offers flexibility and adaptability to changing market needs		
		Compared to other RBF facilities available, how do developers and other key stakeholders perceive the relevance of the UEF?	Evaluating the extent to which the UEF fits with the development priorities of donors Identifying the factors that influenced donors' and strategic partners' decision to partner with SEforALL on the UEF For donors and strategic partners, analyzing the comparative advantages of working with SEforALL compared to other programme managers in the energy sector, including SEforALL's value proposition and teasing that out Analyzing the factors that influenced developers' decision to apply for the UEF grant For developers, analyzing the comparative benefits of RBF in comparison to other financing models and assessing how UEF's subsidy compares to other RBF programmes and facilities in their countries	• Donors • Strategic Partners • Developers • Internal Documents • External Documents	• Key Informant Interviews • Desk Review

OECD-DAC Criteria	Evaluation Component	Key Programmatic Question	Elements of Analysis/Possible Indicators	Data Sources	Methods of Verification
	Forward-Looking	*How can* the intervention do the right things in order to achieve its intended results and impact?	Based on the results of the first Wave, identifying what steps the UEF is taking or plans to take to cover the ground on mini-grids, and evaluating the efficacy of the steps being undertaken or planned to be undertaken Identifying and assessing the UEF's existing plans for upscale and expansion in its subsequent Waves Identifying internal mechanisms for risk mitigation and evaluating their effectiveness and recommending measures to strengthen such mechanisms Identifying gaps in enabling environment that could be addressed by the UEF to increase its chances of success Identifying lessons learned and recommendations based on external review and taking into account feedback from various stakeholders (government representatives, developers, donors, and strategic partners) on what the UEF can or should do in order to achieve its intended results and impact. Identifying potential avenues for greater stakeholder engagement Identifying key recommendations from internal and external stakeholders on what needs to be integrated into scale up phase, risk mitigation, further evidence and data, etc.	• Programme Management Team • MEL Team • Donors • Strategic Partners • Government Representatives • Developers • Internal Documents • External Documents	• Key Informant Interviews • Desk Review
		Is the design of the UEF an adequate solution to unlock finance more efficiently for energy access *in the pan-African context*? Does it reduce the main causes of the problem? What can be improved? What should the programme continue to prioritize?	Assessing the extent to which the design of the UEF addresses barriers to energy financing in the wider context of Africa Assessing and evaluating the comparative advantages of the UEF model to: a) traditional models of financing; and b) other RBF models in terms of unlocking finance more efficiently for energy access in the wider context of Africa Assessing the extent of donors' and strategic partners' previous experience with both traditional and RBF approaches in the energy sector and assessing the extent to which learning from such previous experience can be incorporated into the UEF's design for subsequent Waves	• Government Representatives • Strategic Partners • Donors • Developers • External Documents	• Key Informant Interviews • Desk Review
		Are there other types of finance, such as blended finance or other	Identifying other types of finances currently being used and assessing their applicability to the UEF keeping in line its intended results and impacts	• Government Representatives	• Key Informant Interviews • Desk Review

OECD-DAC Criteria	Evaluation Component	Key Programmatic Question	Elements of Analysis/Possible Indicators	Data Sources	Methods of Verification
		mechanisms, the UEF should consider beyond grants in this model?		• External Documents	
		Does the UEF have the potential for replication in Asia?	Surveying the energy financing sector in Asia and identifying approaches currently being used for energy financing Identifying the barriers to energy financing across regions of Asia and assessing the extent to which the RBF approach is suitable for addressing those barriers Comparing UEF's approach with that of existing RBF programmes in Asia and assessing the extent to which the UEF could be replicated in Asia Analyzing donors' and strategic partners' experience in the energy sector in Asia particularly with regards to utilizing the RBF approach	• Donors • Strategic Partners • External Documents	• Key Informant Interviews • Desk Review
Effectiveness	**Retrospective**	What went well prior to the launch of the UEF in Sierra Leone and Madagascar	Assessing the role of stakeholders during the pre-launch phase of the UEF Assessing the UEF's methods of outreach used and types of engagements and gauging their effectiveness based on attendance to online events Assessing the opportunities associated with conducting pre-launch activities online rather than through in-country engagements Analyzing any feedback obtained from applicants at the pre-launch phase	• Programme Management Team • Internal Documents	• Key Informant Interviews • Desk Review
		What worked well during the Pre-Qualification and Site-Specific Stages in the abovementioned countries?	Analyzing feedback obtained from applicants during the pre-qualification and site-specific stages during the first Wave Analyzing the extent to which internal UEF targets and goals pertaining to the application process were met	• Programme Management Team • Internal Documents	• Key Informant Interviews • Desk Review
		What did not go well prior to the launch of the UEF in Sierra Leone and Madagascar	Analyzing challenges associated with conducting pre-launch activities using webinars instead of in-country workshops	• Programme Management Team • Internal Documents	• Key Informant Interviews • Desk Review

OECD-DAC Criteria	Evaluation Component	Key Programmatic Question	Elements of Analysis/Possible Indicators	Data Sources	Methods of Verification
		What was less successful during both the Pre-Qualification and Site-Specific stages in the above-mentioned countries?	Identifying and analyzing any challenges associated with: ● Convening the Advisory Board and Investment Committee ● Number of applications received ● Number of applications approved ● Quality of applications ● Delays in timelines of the two stages across the countries ● Reporting requirements ● Disbursement of funds by donors	● Programme Management Team ● MEL Team ● Donor ● Internal Documents	● Key Informant Interviews ● Desk Review
		How did the applicants find the application process?	Analyzing developers' feedback at the pre-qualification and site-specific stages of the application process Analyzing developers' perception regarding the extent to which the pre-qualification and site-specific criteria were stringent or lenient; and encouraged or discouraged potential applicants comparing locally-owned firms with international firms Identifying ways for UEF to improve outreach in order to attract more developers Assessing the actual response times of UEF at pre-qualification and site-specific stages against timeframe established by Operating Manual Assessing whether response times from UEF impacted applicants' business plans Assessing the user experience of the Odyssey platform in terms of usability, accessibility, troubleshooting, and timeliness of resolution of flagged issues Assessing UEF's flexibility in accommodating needs of developers and adaptability in terms of external in-country conditions	● Developers ● Internal Documents	● Key Informant Interviews ● Desk Review
		What was the value of communication and support from the UEF Team?	Assessing what support was provided by UEF in facilitating the Advisory Board and Investment Committee Assessing developers' level of satisfaction with the support and communication from UEF Identifying areas of improvement in terms of support and level of communications by the UEF	● Programme Management Team ● Developers ● Internal Documents	● Key Informant Interviews ● Desk Review

OECD-DAC Criteria	Evaluation Component	Key Programmatic Question	Elements of Analysis/Possible Indicators	Data Sources	Methods of Verification
	[redacted]	Is the UEF on track to achieve its intended outcomes and results *for mini-grids*?	Analyzing the challenges in meeting various KPIs and targets and assessing reasons for their emergence Identifying steps undertaken by UEF to ensure that targets were reached and analyzing reasons for missing targets Assessing where the UEF is currently based on ● number of approved applicants per country entering into a grant agreement with UEF, ● amount of funds earmarked for the Grantees, ● number of Grantees who have begun implementation of their sites Identifying potential risk factors to the UEF in terms of its first Wave with regards to: ● Potential delays in implementation of sites by developers ● Potential delays or challenges in launch of next project application cycles ● Potential delays or challenges in launch in new countries of intervention ● Potential delays in data collection for KPIs and reporting purposes	● Programme Management Team ● MEL Team ● Internal Documents	● Key Informant Interviews ● Desk Review
	Forward-Looking	*How can the UEF replicate what was done well across the different stages of the UEF process for subsequent Waves?*	Identifying and analyzing lessons learned in terms of operational processes in place for the various phases of an application cycle in the three countries Assessing the extent to which lessons learned in the launch and implementation of the UEF in Madagascar and Sierra Leone were applied to that in Benin	● Programme Management Team ● Internal Documents	● Key Informant Interviews ● Desk Review
		What should the UEF do differently to refine it operations before scaling up in subsequent Waves?	Identifying operational processes that should be streamlined for subsequent Waves of the UEF, based on stakeholder feedback Identifying what was valued by applicants and identifying areas where the applicants feel that additional improvements can be made Recommending potential areas of improvement through a comparative analysis of operational processes of the UEF with other RBF programmes/initiatives and identifying lessons learned and recommendations of UEF stakeholders	● Programme Management Team ● Donors ● Developers ● Clean Cooking Team ● Internal Documents ● External Documents	● Key Informant Interviews ● Desk Review

OECD-DAC Criteria	Evaluation Component	Key Programmatic Question	Elements of Analysis/Possible Indicators	Data Sources	Methods of Verification
		Are there policy or regulatory barriers that project developers are facing that the UEF could further support in addressing?	Analyzing policy or regulatory barriers faced by project developers in the countries of intervention Assessing the extent to which the UEF could support in addressing the policy or regulatory barriers Identifying potential actions the UEF could undertake to support in addressing policy or regulatory barriers	• Government Representatives • Developers • External Documents	• Key Informant Interviews • Desk Review
		Is the UEF on track to achieve its intended outcomes and results *for SHS for productive use and clean cooking solutions*?	Identifying global and regional challenges in the financing of solar for productive use and clean cooking solutions Analyzing the extent to which RBF approaches are effective in addressing these challenges Analyzing the steps taken by UEF to prepare for the operationalization of standalone solar for productive use and clean cooking including obtaining the necessary funding Surveying the existing RBF approaches for standalone solar for productive use and clean cooking and assessing their level of success, and identifying limitations and lessons learned Gauging donor appetite for standalone solar for productive use and clean cooking programmes Assessing the timeframe in which the solar for productive use and clean cooking components of the UEF could become operationalized	• Programme Management Team • Donors • Clean Cooking Team • External Documents	• Key Informant Interviews • Desk Review
Efficiency	**Retrospective**	Has the UEF been managed effectively? What measures were taken during planning and implementation to ensure that resources were used more effectively? How well were risks managed?	Assessing the UEF's operational and management processes and analysing any challenges with regards to: • Frequency and timeliness of Advisory Board meetings as per schedule established in Operating Manual • Timeliness of Investment Committee meetings during site-specific stage • Timeliness of decision making regarding applications at the pre-qualification stage • Timeliness of responding to applicants at pre-qualification stage regarding decisions and requests for clarification • Timeliness of decision making by Advisory Board at the site-specific stage • Timeliness of contracting with Grantees after approval at site-specific stage • Presence and effectiveness of Internal mechanisms for identification of early risks to UEF in terms of progress towards results • Submission of monthly, quarterly and annual reports as per established schedule under Carbon Trust document	• Programme Management Team • MEL Team • Donor • Strategic Partner • Developers • Internal Documents	• Key Informant Interviews • Desk Review

OECD-DAC Criteria	Evaluation Component	Key Programmatic Question	Elements of Analysis/Possible Indicators	Data Sources	Methods of Verification
	Retrospective		Assessing developers' risk mitigation strategy with regards to ● customers' willingness and ability to pay ● leveraging energy usage trends and customers' willingness and ability to pay to inform next site selection ● leveraging of additional finance to cover remaining costs of the connection		
		To what extent did developers and other stakeholders in the sector value the support they received from UEF?	Assessing how the UEF engaged with applicants during the pre-qualification and site-specific stages of the application process including the effectiveness of support provided	● Programme Management Team ● Developers ● Internal Documents	● Key Informant Interviews ● Desk Review
Coherence		How well does the UEF align with the needs of the sector/other initiatives/the needs of Wave 1 countries?	Identifying the needs of energy sector, other financing initiatives and needs of the countries of intervention and assessing the extent to which the UEF aligns with those	● Donor ● External Documents	● Key Informant Interviews ● Desk Review
		Where do synergies exist with other RBF initiatives? How are these synergies perceive to be working? What were the benefits?	Surveying other RBF initiatives in the region and identifying existing synergies with programmes of strategic partners, donors, and governments Identifying potential benefits as a result of any synergies existing between the UEF and other initiatives Identifying mechanisms that facilitate the synergies between the UEF and other initiatives	● Strategic Partners ● Government Representatives ● Internal Documents ● External Documents	● Key Informant Interviews ● Desk Review
		How well is the UEF aligned with the priorities of each country of operation?	Identifying current priorities of the countries of operation and assessing the extent to which the UEF aligns with those priorities	● Government Representatives ● External Documents	● Key Informant Interviews ● Desk Review
		Is the UEF integrated well enough into the political dialogue in each country of operation in order to support project developers at the right political level in country?	Assessing the level of engagement of governments with the UEF and analyzing the factors that led to the selection of the countries for implementation of the UEF Assessing the level of visibility and recognition of the UEF in the national landscape of the countries of implementation by examining national-level print and electronic media	● Programme Management Team ● Donor ● Internal Documents ● External Documents	● Key Informant Interviews ● Desk Review

OECD-DAC Criteria	Evaluation Component	Key Programmatic Question	Elements of Analysis/Possible Indicators	Data Sources	Methods of Verification
	Forward-Looking	What are the key considerations for scale-up in Africa with a focus on complementing other RBF initiatives, filling in the gaps and avoiding replication?	Assessing strategic partners' and donors' strategies for future support to the RBF financing modality in the energy sector and examining how SEforALL and/or the UEF could leverage those for subsequent scale up Identifying the determinants of success for programmes using RBF approaches in the context of Africa	• Strategic Partners • Programme Management Team • Developers • External Documents	• Key Informant Interviews • Desk Review
		Is the UEF missing opportunities to further align with other RBFs in the sector, if so, how could the programme better align?	Identifying and assessing opportunities for alignment and synergy between the UEF and other RBFs in the context of Africa	• Strategic Partners • External Documents	• Key Informant Interviews • Desk Review
		Are there opportunities for further alignment with the priorities of each country of operation?	Identifying ways the UEF could further align with the priorities of governments in countries of operation and in the future Identifying potential partners that the UEF could be more involved with in the countries of operation and in future countries of operation	• Government Representatives • External Documents	• Key Informant Interviews • Desk Review
		Are there opportunities to further align with SEforALL's programme of work?	Identifying ways in which the UEF has collaborated with other SEforALL programmes Identifying and assessing opportunities to enhance collaboration between UEF and other SEforALL programmes in the future Identifying challenges encountered in collaboration between UEF and other SEforALL programmes Identifying and assessing mechanisms within SEforALL that facilitate collaboration across different programmes and assessing ways to strengthen those mechanisms	• UIEP, PRF and PHC Programme Teams • Clean Cooking Team • Internal Documents	• Key Informant Interviews • Desk Review

ANNEX 5: LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

List of Documents Reviewed

- Terms Of Reference for the Evaluation
- UEF Revised Operating Manual
- SEforALL 3 Year Business Plan
- SEforALL Annual Report 2020
- SEforALL Annual Monitoring Review 2020
- Carbon Trust SEforALL Metrics and Reporting Development
- SEforALL UEF/RBF Annual Progress Report 2020
- SEforALL UEF/RBF Semi-Annual Progress Report 2021
- SEforALL UEF Webinar Debrief Report
- UEF Information Deck – Full Deck
- UEF Benin Deck
- UEF FAQ Indigenous Developer Webinar
- UEF Pre-Qualification and Site-Specific Stage Surveys
- UEF Pre-Qualification Application Form
- UEF Application Submission Letter
- UEF Pre-Qualification Financial Capacity Forms 2.1 and 2.2
- UEF Pre-Qualification Technical Capacity Form 3.1
- UEF Site-Specific Application Template
- UEF Project Application Instructions
- UEF Grant Agreement Form
- UEF Application - Environmental and Social Management System Template
- UEF Offer Letter Template
- Cover Notes for Benin, Madagascar, and Sierra Leone
- Country Assessments for Benin, Madagascar, and Sierra Leone
- UEF KPI Management Tool
- UEF Odyssey Data Architecture
- UEF Subsidy Note

ANNEX 6: MAPPING PROGRAMMATIC QUESTIONS TO INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

OECD-DAC Criteria	Evaluation Component	Key Programmatic Question	Specific Interview Question	Stakeholder Type
Relevance	**Retrospective**	Has the intervention done the right things in order to achieve its intended results and impact?	Is the approach used by SEforALL for its UEF different from that used by other RBF projects/programmes? If yes, how?	Programme Management Team
			Based on what criteria were the countries of intervention selected? What up front due diligence was performed in order to select current countries of operation? Are there minimum thresholds and is there a documented process for conducting this up front research before deciding to implement the UEF in a given country?	
			What up front due diligence was performed in order to select current countries of operation? Are there minimum thresholds and is there a documented process for conducting this up front research before deciding to implement the UEF in a given country?	
			What concrete steps were, or are being, undertaken by the UEF in ensuring sufficient support from Funders and donors to achieve the fundraising targets: a) USD 100 Million (2021); b) USD 250 Million (2022); and c) USD 500 Million (2023)?	
			Since the UEF was designed during the COVID-19 pandemic, how were the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic factored into determining targets for the UEF	
			What measures did the UEF undertake, if any, to ensure that the 2020 target for number of countries (04 countries) was reached)?	
			What is the criteria that the UEF is using to evaluate and onboard verification agents in the three countries? By when does the UEF envision completing this process?	
			What have the challenges in terms of fundraising for the UEF that your department has faced? How and to what extent have these been addressed?	RM Team
			Are there specific questions being asked by donors and partners that the UEF does not yet have data and evidence to answer?	
			Has fundraising the UEF been complementary or has it distracted your department from fundraising for the rest of SEforALL's programmes?	
		Is the design of the UEF an adequate solution to unlock finance more efficiently for energy access *in the three countries of operation*? *Has* it reduced the main causes of the problem?	What assumptions were made by the UEF in determining the fundraising targets: a) USD 100 Million (2021); b) USD 250 Million (2022); and c) USD 500 Million (2023)?	Programme Management Team
			Is the UEF design flexible enough to respond to the changing needs of the market? (eg: helping developers overcome perceived financial risks)	
			How was the project design for UEF conceived? Which stakeholders and key resources were consulted during the design phase? (eg Government, Academia, CSOs, and other donor agencies etc.)	
			What is the total amount committed to UEF by each donor? Are donor funds marked for any specific country? What percent of this amount has been disbursed?	
			Did your department play a role in the development of the UEF KPIs inSEforALL's 3-Year Business Plan 2021-2023? If so, what was your role?	MEL Team
			What challenges, if any, did your team encounter during the development of high-level metrics (KPIs) to monitor and assess the performance of the UEF?	

OECD-DAC Criteria	Evaluation Component	Key Programmatic Question	Specific Interview Question	Stakeholder Type
			Does the donor have any previous experience with RBF specifically in the energy sector? How have related learnings being incorporated into this project?	Donors
			What challenges has your organization faced with regard to the "design" of the UEF? And how were these challenges overcome?	
			What do you see as SEforALL's value proposition in managing the UEF programme? What is the comparative advantage of working with SEforALL compared to other organizations to manage the programme in the sector?	Donors & Strategic Partners
			What is the comparative advantage of the UEF model in relation to other RBFs in the sector from your experience and investment perspective?	
			What other approaches has your organization used to support these types of projects? (e.g.: RBF vs traditional) What have been the lessons learned from these approaches?	
			Do you consider the above-described level of engagement sufficient for effective implementation of the UEF project in [country name] in times of the COVID-19 pandemic? If no, how did this lack of involvement affect the project's implementation during Wave 1, and what are its implications for the upcoming phases?	Government Representatives
			What are the barriers to financing off-grid projects in your country?	
			To what extent do you see the UEF as tackling challenges to financing of off-grid projects?	
			Compared to other financing models, is the Result-Based Financing modality adapted by the UEF program an adequate solution to expand energy access for off-grid mini grids in [country name]?	
			Do you foresee any problems in keeping the connections active and running in the next 2-5 years? Please elaborate some of the challenges you might face? (eg. low consumption, change in tariffs, policy and regulations etc)	Developers
		Compared to other RBF facilities available, how do developers and other key stakeholders perceive the relevance of the UEF?	How does the UEF fit into the development priorities of your organization?	Donors
			SEforALL has extensive experience of working with the United Nations and leaders in government, the private sector, financial institutions, civil society and philanthropies to drive faster action towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG7)– Given this unique position, what factors influenced your decision to partner with SEforALL on the UEF? Please elaborate Please elaborate	
			What has your experience been, if any, in financing energy sector projects in Africa? Based on those experiences, what do you see as SEforALL's value proposition in implementing a successful results based financing facility in support of the sector?	
			What has your experience been, if any, in energy sector projects in Africa? Based on those experiences, what do you see as SEforALL's value proposition in implementing a successful results based financing facility in support of the sector?	Strategic Partners
			What has been the nature of your partnership with SEforALL? (e.g.: knowledge sharing, co-financing, support at design and/or launch stage, etc.)	

OECD-DAC Criteria	Evaluation Component	Key Programmatic Question	Specific Interview Question	Stakeholder Type
			What are the comparative advantages of working with SEforALL compared to other organizations in the sector who might manage the programm?	
			What motivated you to apply for the UEF grant? (e.g. grant amount, ease of application, government buy-in, other support etc.)	Developers
			What types of subsidies do you (developers) see as most critical for the viability of mini-grids?	
			What are the comparative benefits of RBF in comparison to other subsidies and financing models?	
			On average, what percent of the developers cost per connection does the current subsidy of USD 433 cover? How does it compare to other RBF programmes/facilities in your country?	
	Forward-Looking	*How can* the intervention do the right things in order to achieve its intended results and impact?	As most of the 2021 KPI targets regarding off-grid mini-grids have not been met by the UEF, what steps has the Programme undertaken to cover the ground on mini-grids to keep the project on track in terms of the following KPIs: a) Funds (USD million) raised for UEF; b) Funds (USD million) disbursed by UEF as grants to providers; c) No. of verified mini-grid connections with power flowing; and d) No. of countries where UEF is operating?	Programme Management Team
			When is the KPI Tool slated to undergo review? At this stage, does the UEF anticipate any revisions to the annual targets of the KPIs? If so, what are the reasons for any such revisions?	
			Are there any specific questions you would like to see integrated into our interviews with key strategic and funding partners on your behalf based on the interview questions we have provided? Can you unpack how and if these donors or partner questions have been challenging?	RM Team
			Are there any priorities from resource mobilization's perspective that should be integrated into the scale up phase in terms of information donors need in order to invest in the programme?	
			When is the KPI Tool slated to undergo review? At this stage, does the UEF anticipate any revisions to the annual targets of the KPIs? If so, what are the reasons for any such revisions?	MEL Team
			The most recent 2021 Semi-Annual Progress Report did not contain targets for non-Business Plan metrics, when does the UEF plan to develop targets for the non-Business Plan metrics? How does the UEF plan to develop these?	
			What are some of the lessons learned and recommendation for strengthening the MEL for the UEF in its subsequent Waves?	
			Does your organization have plans for continued funding to the UEF project? If yes, please provide details. Which countries would your organization want the UEF to expand to in the subsequent waves?	Donors
			What approaches has your organization used for these projects? (e.g.: RBF vs traditional) What have been the lessons learned from these approaches?	Strategic Partners
			Does your organization have future plans to collaborate with the UEF?	
			What has your experience been with regards to traditional and/or RBF approaches for clean cooking technologies and SHS and standalone for productive use (SSPU)? What are your lessons learned and recommendations based on your organization's experience?	
			What other gaps in enabling environment need to be addressed by the UEF to increase its chances of success?	Government Representatives

OECD-DAC Criteria	Evaluation Component	Key Programmatic Question	Specific Interview Question	Stakeholder Type
			Are there any government-approved tariffs? If so, how do those compare with RBF-promoted tariffs? What areas of concerns or challenges, if any, exist between your government's tariffs and those promoted under different energy financing programmes?	
			In your opinion, do the foreign developer companies have an unfair advantage over the locally-owned companies?	
			If yes, what specific support should be provided to make locally-owned developer companies more competitive?	
			Do you consider the above-described level of engagement sufficient for effective implementation of the UEF project in [country name]? If no, how did this lack of involvement affect the project's implementation during Wave 1, and what are its implications for the upcoming phases?	
			What are your recommendations for the development of future off-grid mini grid projects in [country name]?	
			What are your recommendations for the development of Clean Cooking, SHS and Standalone Solar for Productive Use in [country name]?	
			Do you have any recommendations for the improvement of the UEF program? (eg timelines, pre-qualification/ application stage criteria, process of application, Verification/Reporting etc.)	Developers
			How do you see the scale up of the UEF over the next year, how will that affect SEforALL's staffing, culture, priorities of the organization?	HR
			Do you have any recommendations for the **UEF** to consider in their scale up phase to mitigate risks, make the scale up more seamless and reduce and challenges the scaleup could have on the organization, if any?	UIEP, PRF PHC, Clean Cooking, and RM Programme Teams; HR, Procurement & Operations & MEL Teams
			Do you have any recommendations for **SEforALL** to consider in their scale up phase to mitigate risks, make the scale up more seamless and reduce and challenges the scaleup could have on the organization, if any?	
		Is the design of the UEF an adequate solution to unlock finance more efficiently for energy access *in the pan-African context*? Does it reduce the main causes of the problem? What can be	What have been the main opportunities and challenges faced by these projects? E.g: Tariffs, regulatory restrictions, licensing, available RE technologies	Government Representatives
			Compared to other financing models, is the Result-Based Financing modality adapted by the UEF program an adequate solution to expand energy access for off-grid mini grids across Africa?	Strategic Partners
				Donors
			Do you have prior experience with results-based financing (RBF)? Based on your opinion/experience what are some of the opportunities and challenges for adaption of this financing modality in the Mini-grid sector.	Developers
			On average, what percent of the developers cost per connection does the current subsidy of USD 433 cover? How does it compare to other RBF programmes/facilities in your country?	

OECD-DAC Criteria	Evaluation Component	Key Programmatic Question	Specific Interview Question	Stakeholder Type
		improved? What should the programme continue to prioritize?		
		Are there other types of finance, such as blended finance or other mechanisms, the UEF should consider beyond grants in this model?	Compared to other financing models, is the Result-Based Financing modality adapted by the UEF program an adequate solution to expand energy access for off-grid mini grids in [country name]? If no, are there other types of finance, such as blended finance, Capex cost, or other mechanisms, the UEF should consider beyond grants in this model?	Government Representatives
		Does the UEF have the potential for replication in Asia?	What has been your experience, if any, in financing energy sector projects in Asia? For the replication of the UEF in Asia in future, what other considerations would you recommend the programme consider?	Donors
			Based on the experience you mentioned, to what extent do you think that the RBF approach has the potential to be replicated in the countries you have been engaged in?	
			Are there other countries in Asia, in addition to the ones previously mentioned, where the RBF approach to energy financing has the potential to be replicated? If so, what factors associated with these countries would enable the success of this approach?	
			What has been your experience, if any, in financing energy sector projects in Asia? For the replication of the UEF in Asia in future, what other considerations would you recommend the programme consider?	Strategic Partners
			Based on the experience you mentioned, to what extent do you think that the RBF approach has the potential to be replicated in the countries you have been engaged in?	
			Are there other countries in Asia, in addition to the ones previously mentioned, where the RBF approach to energy financing has the potential to be replicated? If so, what factors associated with these countries would enable the success of this approach?	
Effectiveness	**Retrospective**	What went well prior to the launch of the UEF in Sierra Leone and Madagascar	What role did the implementing partners/funders play in the pre-launch phase of the UEF?	Programme Management Team
			What methods of outreach were used by the UEF in socializing the Programme among potential developers and other stakeholders? Were some methods more effective than others?	
			During the pre-launch phase of the UEF, what types of engagements were undertaken with potential developers?	
			On average, how many potential applicants attended these online events per country?	
			What were the opportunities associated with conducting pre-launch activities using webinars instead of in-country workshops?	

OECD-DAC Criteria	Evaluation Component	Key Programmatic Question	Specific Interview Question	Stakeholder Type
			Did the UEF solicit feedback from potential applicants at the pre-launch phase? If so, what feedback did the Programme receive from applicants?	
		What worked well during the Pre-Qualification and Site-Specific Stages in the abovementioned countries?	Has the UEF been successful in meeting its aims of awarding at least 25% of total funding to locally-owned developers? If not, what have been the challenges in meeting this goal?	Programme Management Team
		What did not go well prior to the launch of the UEF in Sierra Leone and Madagascar	What were the challenges associated with conducting pre-launch activities using webinars instead of in-country workshops?	Programme Management Team
		What was less successful during both the Pre-Qualification and Site-Specific stages in the above-mentioned countries?	Have there been any challenges in convening the Advisory Board and the Investment Committees?	Programme Management Team
			Which eligibility criteria were applications mostly rejected on the basis of at the Pre-Qualification and Site-Specific stages?	
			According to the 2020 Annual Progress Report, deadlines were extended during the pre-qualification stage. What were the factors that led to this decision? And what was the duration of the deadline extension?	
			Compared to the timeframe in the Operating Manual, did these deadline extension(s) at the pre-qualification stage affect the timeliness of the UEF application process? If so, how?	
			What other challenges, if any, were encountered by the UEF Team during the pre-qualification stages in a) Madagascar, b) Sierra Leone; and c) Benin? How were these addressed?	
			In the latest Semi-Annual Progress Report, it was noted that there were more specific challenges in Benin's enabling environment causing delays. Can you unpack this further?	
			What other challenges, if any, were encountered by the UEF Team during the site-specific stages in a) Madagascar, b) Sierra Leone; and c) Benin? How were these addressed?	
			According to the 2021 Semi-Annual Progress Report, applicants in Benin were given an extended site-specific stage timeframe. What were the factors that led to this decision? And what was the duration of the deadline extension compared to those for Madagascar and Sierra Leone?	
			Compared to the timeframe in the Operating Manual, did this extension (for Benin) affect the timeliness of the UEF application process? If so, how?	
			What have been some of the challenges with regards to MEL encountered at various stages of the UEF? How were these challenges addressed?	MEL Team

OECD-DAC Criteria	Evaluation Component	Key Programmatic Question	Specific Interview Question	Stakeholder Type
			What challenges, if any, did you encounter in your role on the Advisory Board/Investment Committee? How and to what extent were they addressed?	Donor
		How did the applicants find the application process?	In your opinion, what are some of the ways UEF can improve its outreach in order to attract more developers?	Developers
			How would you rate the pre-qualification criteria? [Lenient, Market competitive, Stringent, Not sure] Why?	
			Some of the key elements of the prequalification criteria include gender composition, ability to finance, and technical experience. Based on your experience, what are some of the key elements of the pre-qualification criteria that are likely to encourage/discourage locally-owned companies from applying? Please elaborate.	
			Based on your experience, do you think international firms have an unfair advantage over locally-owned firms? Please elaborate	
			From the time of submission of documents, how long did it take for UEF to respond regarding pre-qualification decision?	
			How would you rate the site-specific criteria? [Lenient, Market competitive, Stringent, Not sure] Why?	
			Some of the key requirements at the site-specific stage of UEF application process include generation technology requirements, customer metering technology, minimum level of development for potential sites among others. Based on your experience, what are some of the key elements of the application stage criteria that are likely to encourage/discourage developer companies from applying? Please elaborate.	
			From the time of submission of documents, how long did it take for UEF to respond regarding the final decision?	
			Did the time taken for response from the UEF regarding the final decision have an impact on your business plans?	
			Did you face any problems using the UEF platform (Odyssey)? If yes, how were you able to resolve these issues: with UEF Support/Odyssey? On your own?	
			During the first wave, has UEF been flexible in accommodating the specific needs of the developers? Please cite examples (eg extension of deadlines, provisional approvals etc.)	
			Overall, how would you rate the UEF's flexibility throughout the application process? (extremely flexible, somewhat flexible, neither flexible nor inflexible, somewhat inflexible, extremely inflexible)	
			From your experiences so far, how simple would you rate the reporting required by the UEF for your RBF subsidy, as well monthly and quarterly reporting? Very simple, somewhat simple, simple, somewhat complicated, onerous. (or on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being most difficult)	
		What was the value of communication and support from the UEF Team?	What support does UEF provide to the Advisory Board and Investment Committee?	Programme Management Team
			How did you find out about the UEF? (e.g., social media, newspaper, government website etc.)	Developers

OECD-DAC Criteria	Evaluation Component	Key Programmatic Question	Specific Interview Question	Stakeholder Type
			To what extent are you satisfied with the level of communication and support from the UEF Team? (extremely satisfied, somewhat satisfied, neither satisfied nor unsatisfied, somewhat unsatisfied, extremely unsatisfied) <if somewhat satisfied or extremely satisfied to above question> In what ways has the UEF Team supported you throughout the application process? <if somewhat unsatisfied or extremely unsatisfied> What should the UEF Team do to improve the level of communication and support it provides to applicants?	
		Is the UEF on track to achieve its intended outcomes and results *for mini-grids*?	Have there been challenges in reporting on established KPIs, other than those caused by delays in the timeline of the UEF?	Programme Management Team
			What were the challenges in meeting the 2020 target number of countries where UEF operates?	
			What concrete steps were/are undertaken by the UEF in in ensuring sufficient support from Funders and donors to achieve the fundraising targets: a) USD 100 Million (2021); b) USD 250 Million (2022); and c) USD 500 Million (2023)?	
			As of October 31, 2021, how many approved applicants per country have entered into a grant agreement with the UEF?	
			As of October 31, 2021, what amount of funds raised have been earmarked for the Grantees?	
			As of October 31, 2021, how many Grantees have begun implementation of their sites?	
			In light of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, does the UEF foresee the possibility of extending the stipulated duration of implementation (12 months)? On what information will the UEF base such a decision on?	
			Are there any indicators that you anticipate collecting data for would be challenging? If so, what are these indicators?	MEL Team
			Other than additional time needed for data to be available due to delays, what have been any other challenges in data collection and reporting on metrics for the KPI Tool?	
	Forward-Looking	*How can the UEF replicate what was done well across the different stages of the UEF process for subsequent Waves?*	Were there any changes in the approach and method of the pre-launch activities for Benin based on lessons learned in Sierra Leone and Madagascar?	Programme Management Team
			Since the UEF was launched in Madagascar and Sierra Leone first, were any changes made in the operational processes, at the pre-qualification stage, on the basis of lessons learned in Madagascar and Sierra Leone?	
			When did the second site-specific stage for Sierra Leone and Madagascar launch and for how long? Where there any differences in the duration of the second site-specific stage period in the two countries on the basis of lessons learned in the first site-specific stage?	
		What should the UEF do differently to refine it	What are the lessons learned from your own experiences based on the three site-specific stages that the UEF has undergone?	Programme Management Team
			What are some of the lessons learned and recommendations for improved implementation of the project, from your perspective, in the upcoming waves?	Donors

OECD-DAC Criteria	Evaluation Component	Key Programmatic Question	Specific Interview Question	Stakeholder Type
		operations before scaling up in subsequent Waves?	As a donor, do you find the reporting and communications coming from the UEF to be fit to purpose for your understanding of the progress of the programme and future funding decisions? Is there more or less you would like to see of in this regard?	
			Is there any specific evidence or data you are looking to see from the UEF to help your future funding decisions in the programme?	
			Are there any specific considerations you would like to see integrated into the scaleup of the UEF in the coming year(s)?	Donors & Strategic Partners
			In your opinion what additional support can be provided to locally-owned firms to make them more competitive?	Developers
			Prior to using the platform, were you provided any orientation/training on the application process? If yes, how can this support be further improved?	
			In your opinion, what approach can or should the UEF take to facilitate the operationalization of its clean cooking solutions component in the near future?	Clean Cooking Team
		Are there policy or regulatory barriers that project developers are facing that the UEF could further support in addressing?	What role can projects such as the UEF play in supporting your department in addressing any policy or regulatory barriers faced by project developers?	Government Representatives
			Does the government of [country name] provide any special support to the locally-owned companies? For eg. grants, introduction to other lenders and financiers, other guidance etc.	
			What are some of the challenges in general faced by off-grid mini grid companies in your country? Please elaborate For ex: a) Off-grid policy, strategy, and licensing; b) Business and financing models and c) Others	Developers
			What role can projects such as the UEF play in addressing any policy or regulatory barriers that you face (project developers)?	
		Is the UEF on track to achieve its intended outcomes and results *for SHS for productive use and clean cooking solutions*?	As per the Semi-Annual Progress Report 2021, the Programme has not operationalized the "Standalone solar for productive use" (SSPU) component as it was newly integrated this year. What have been the challenges in looking to integrate this into the focus of the programme??	Programme Management Team
			As of October 31, 2021, has the UEF Program developed a proposal to fund this component?	
			What steps has the UEF undertaken to ensure the funding of this component? What have been the outcomes of these steps?	
			By when does the UEF envision that this component will become operationalized?	
			How does the UEF foresee the inclusion of SSPU affecting other priorities for the programme, such as solar home systems and clean cooking integration and related targets?	
			Based on discussions and engagements with donors, what has been the response from donors with regards to the use of RBF approaches for SHS for productive use and clean cooking solutions in general and in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa?	
			We are aware that Clean Cooking and Solar Home System targets may have to shift forward due to the prioritization of SSPUs. How does this impact stakeholders expecting clean cooking and solar home system roll outs in the next years? How does it affect your team's subsidy design process?	

OECD-DAC Criteria	Evaluation Component	Key Programmatic Question	Specific Interview Question	Stakeholder Type
			What do you foresee as the main challenges in the scale up phase ahead in 2022? Such challenges could include the hiring of 17 new positions in the first 6 months of the year in parallel managing operations. What kind of recommendations do you foresee or hope to see from this valuation for the successful scale-up of the UEF in 2022 in this context?	
			To what extent does your company delve into other off-grid technologies such as Clean Cooking, Solar Home Systems, and Standalone Solar for Productive Use?	Developers
			From your engagement in the off-grid sector, do you have an opinion on the viability and demand for these other off-grid solutions in the country(ies) you are operating in?	
			Does your organization have any plans to support standalone solar for productive use (SSPU), solar home systems and clean cooking initiatives? If yes, which of the three are your main priorities and why? Under which financing models, and in what priority, would you like to the see these technologies integrated into the UEF?	Donors
			What are the global and regional challenge in the financing of clean cooking initiatives?	Clean Cooking Team
			How and to what extent does the RBF approach address these challenges?	
			How has the integration of Solar Systems for Productive Use (SSPU) affected the timeline for the cooking integration into the programme? How does that affect stakeholders you are working with and their perception of the UEF as a solution in the near or long term?	
Efficiency	**Retrospective**	Has the UEF been managed effectively? What measures were taken during planning and implementation to ensure that resources were used more effectively? How well were risks managed?	Has the Advisory Board been meeting regularly at the established meeting schedule?	Programme Management Team
			What challenges have you encountered with regards to: a) staffing and recruitment; and b) procurement in the first Wave of the UEF? What have been the other challenges you faced during this Wave?	
			When and how often does the Investment Committee meet once the site-specific application stage starts?	
			What were the opportunities and challenges associated with conducting pre-launch activities using webinars instead of in-country workshops?	
			To what extent were the online webinars effective in garnering wider participation from potential developers?	
			Who within the UEF evaluate(s) the applications at the pre-qualification stage? Is it done on the basis of an internal committee? Who comprise(s) the review team and what are their qualifications?	
			Did the UEF notify applicants about whether they qualified or not within 14 business days after submission of applications, as stipulated in the UEF Operating Manual?	
			How long did the Advisory Board take to make its decision at the site-specific stage for the first and second cycles in Madagascar and Sierra Leone?	
			On average, how long has the signing of grant agreements taken after the approval at the site-specific stage?	
			To what extent does the UEF have mechanisms in place to identify early risks to the project in terms of progress towards results? How effective are these mechanisms?	MEL Team

OECD-DAC Criteria	Evaluation Component	Key Programmatic Question	Specific Interview Question	Stakeholder Type
			Has the UEF been reporting to various stakeholders (funders and public) at the established frequencies (monthly, quarterly, and annually) as per schedule? What have been some of the challenges encountered during reporting?	
			What is the donor's role and level of participation/representation in the Advisory Board, Investment Committee, and Task Force? How effective have these mechanisms been in ensuring progress towards goals and outcomes?	Donor
			As a donor, do you find the reporting and communications coming from the UEF to be fit to purpose for your understanding of the progress of the programme and future funding decisions? Is there more or less you would like to see of in this regard?	
			Do you think the UEF has been efficient in its operations vis-à-vis reporting and disbursement of funds? If not, what should the UEF have done differently to improve its efficiency? How can the UEF improve its efficiency going forward?	
			What is your organization's role and level of participation/representation in the Advisory Board, Investment Committee, and Task Force? How effective have these mechanisms been in ensuring progress towards goals and outcomes?	Strategic Partner
			What is your (developers) risk mitigation strategy with regards to customers' willingness and ability to pay for the cost of energy? How do you measure that against trends in energy usage?	Developers
			How do you (developers) take data on energy usage and customers' willingness and ability to pay to inform next site selection?	
			Are you leveraging additional finance to cover the remaining cost of the connection? Is the remaining cost still a risk for you? If so, how have you integrated this in your business model?	
		To what extent did developers and other stakeholders in the sector value the support they received from UEF?	How did the UEF engage with the applicants during the pre-qualification stage? What support was provided to the applicants during this stage and using which methods (eg: webinars, answers to questions over email, etc)?	Programme Management Team
			How did the UEF engage with the applicants during the site-specific stage? What support was provided to the applicants during this stage and using which methods (eg: webinars, answers to questions over email, etc)?	
			Prior to using the platform, were you provided any orientation/training on the application process? If yes, how can this support be further improved?	Developers
Coherence	**Retrospective**	How well does the UEF align with the needs of the sector/other initiatives/the needs of Wave 1 countries?	What are the development priorities of your organization in [country name]? And who are your key program implementing partners?	Donor
			How does the UEF fit into these development priorities?	
			How do you perceive the UEF's value add for the sector?	UIEP, PRF and PHC Programme Teams
			How do you perceive more collaboration between your programme and the UEF adding further value to the sector, if any?	

OECD-DAC Criteria	Evaluation Component	Key Programmatic Question	Specific Interview Question	Stakeholder Type
		Where do synergies exist with other RBF initiatives? How are these synergies perceive to be working? What were the benefits?	What have been the synergies between the UEF and your programme portfolio?	Strategic Partners
			Who are the major donors and private sector entities involved in renewable energy in your country with respect to: a) off-grid mini-grids; b) clean cooking; c) solar home systems; and d) standalone solar for productive use	Government Representatives
			What financing modalities are used by your Government, donors and the private sector for the delivery of: a) off-grid mini-grids; b) clean cooking; c) solar home systems; and d) standalone solar for productive use?	
		How well is the UEF aligned with the priorities of each country of operation?	What are the current priorities/programmes of Government of [country name] in terms of renewable energy, especially as they relate to: a) off-grid mini-grids; b) clean cooking; and c) solar home systems; and d) Standalone solar for productive use	Government Representatives
			To what extent is the UEF aligned with the priorities of your government?	
		Is the UEF integrated well enough into the political dialogue in each country of operation in order to support project developers at the right political level in country?	What factors influenced the decision to include Benin, Madagascar, and Sierra Leone in Wave 1 of the UEF?	Programme Management Team
			What is the level of your organization's engagement with country governments to create buy-in for the UEF?	Donor
	Forward-Looking	What are the key considerations for scale-up in Africa with a focus on complementing other RBF initiatives, filling in the gaps and	What is your organization's strategy for future support to the RBF financing modality in energy sector?	Strategic Partners
			What are the determinants of success of using these approaches at the country level? (e.g.: policy and regulatory frameworks, implementing partners, etc.)	
			Can you please provide an estimated number of off-grid mini grid developers in each country of operation? What percent of these are locally-owned companies?	Programme Management Team
			Based on your knowledge what is the estimated number of off-grid mini grid developers in the market today, what percent are local developers? What percent of companies are owned by women?	Developers

OECD-DAC Criteria	Evaluation Component	Key Programmatic Question	Specific Interview Question	Stakeholder Type
		avoiding replication?	What is your perception of the upcoming scale up for the UEF in terms of risk, difficulty, how it will affect the organization, etc. over the coming year(s), 2022 specifically?	UIEP, PRF PHC, Clean Cooking, and RM Programme Teams; HR, Procurement & Operations & MEL Teams
		Is the UEF missing opportunities to further align with other RBFs in the sector, if so, how could the programme better align?	Are there opportunities for further alignment and synergies between the UEF and your programme portfolio?	Strategic Partners & Donors
			Are there more partners you would like to see engaged in the further design and scale up of the UEF, either in country on the ground or in the international donor community?	
		Are there opportunities for further alignment with the priorities of each country of operation?	In what ways, if any, could the UEF further align with the priorities of your government?	Government Representatives
			What other partners has your department worked with or is working with that the UEF should be more involved with?	
		Are there opportunities to further align with SEforALL's programme of work?	Has [Name of Programme] collaborated with the UEF? If yes, in what form(s)? If no, what are the reasons for the lack of collaboration?	UIEP, PRF and PHC Programme Teams
			What are your programme's specific responsibilities when it comes to supporting or working with the UEF? Examples could be as further leading questions: research and analysis of countries of operation pre implementation, commonalities between your work and the UEF's in the same country, bringing together country strategy, etc.	
			Has the UEF provided support to the [Name of Programme]? If yes, what type of support has the UEF provided?	
			What have been the opportunities and challenges in collaborating with the UEF?	
			To what extent do opportunities exist for collaboration between the UEF and [Name of Programme] currently and in the future?	
			What mechanisms exist to facilitate collaboration and leverage synergies within SEforALL's portfolio? How effective are they?	
			Does [Name of Programme] have any plans to collaborate with the UEF in the future? If yes, in what form(s) and programmatic area(s)?	

OECD-DAC Criteria	Evaluation Component	Key Programmatic Question	Specific Interview Question	Stakeholder Type
			How do you see the UEF as part of SEforALL's Country Engagement Strategy, is it well integrated, are there ways the programme could be more integrated into the country engagement approach of the organization and across other programmes?	UIEP, PRF PHC, Clean Cooking, and RM Programme Teams; HR, Procurement & Operations & MEL Teams
			Has/Was the Clean Cooking Team been involved in the design, launch, and/or implementation of the UEF? If yes, in what ways did Clean Cooking contribute?	Clean Cooking Team
			Has the Clean Cooking Programme collaborated with the UEF? If yes, in what form(s)? If no, what are the reasons for the lack of collaboration? If yes, what have been the opportunities and challenges in collaborating with the UEF?	
			Has the UEF provided support to the Clean Cooking Programme? If yes, what type of support has the UEF provided?	
			To what extent do opportunities exist for collaboration between the UEF and Clean Cooking Programme currently and in the future?	
			What mechanisms exist to facilitate collaboration and leverage synergies within SEforALL's portfolio? How effective are they?	
			Does the Clean Cooking Programme have any plans to collaborate with the UEF in the future? If yes, in what form(s)?	

ANNEX 7: ToRs

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SEforALL Terms of reference

Consultancy for the Evaluation of the UEF/RBF Programme

07 | 09 | 2021

Context

Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL) is an international organization working with leaders in government, the private sector and civil society to drive further, faster action toward achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG7), which calls for universal access to sustainable energy by 2030, and the Paris Agreement, which calls for reducing greenhouse gas emissions to limit climate warming to below 2° Celsius.

Achieving these goals will require a radical rethink of the way we produce, distribute, and consume energy. SEforALL is at the heart of this foundational shift to ensure no one is left behind. Drawing on data and evidence, we identify a critical path to success in achieving SDG7.

Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched the Sustainable Energy for All initiative in 2011. Now an independent organization, we maintain close links with the UN, including through a relationship agreement, partnerships with UN agencies and with SEforALL's CEO acting as the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Sustainable Energy for All and Co-Chair of UN-Energy. These roles include advising the UN Secretary General and his staff on issues relating to sustainable energy and the implementation of SDG7 and supporting the coordination of sustainable energy issues in the United Nations system.

The ambitions of SDG7 are extraordinary. Aiming to achieve them in the context of the Paris Agreement on climate change involves transformation at a scale never undertaken before. Swift action must be taken by leaders in governments, private sector companies, institutions, financiers, development banks, unions, communities, entrepreneurs, and civil society. As we enter the final decade to achieve SDG7, SEforALL has strategically chosen to strengthen global agenda-setting while expanding its activities to an engagement model that prioritizes data-driven decision-making, partnerships with high-impact countries and implementation on the ground. The new SEforALL three-year business plan outlines 12 programmes, coined “Results Offers” to external audiences in the business plan, that scope out our planned interventions and demonstrate to our funding partners the impact of their support. This Terms of Reference (TOR) is focused on one of 12 programmes: Results Based Financing (RBF): the Universal Energy Facility (UEF).

Results Based Financing (RBF) Universal Energy Facility (UEF):

2020 marked the start of the final decade to achieve SDG7 – access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all – by 2030. The world is not on track and a renewed sense of urgency and new approaches are required.

Access to sustainable and appropriate finance is a key barrier to the achievement of SDG7 that this programme has been designed to address. Providing finance at the speed and scale needed to achieve SDG7 requires a paradigm shift towards results-based financing (RBF). RBF allows governments and donors to shift an appropriate level of risk of delivery to the private sector, provides greater certainty to industry

about access to the level of financial support required, and aggregates financing and scales support across multiple countries.
The Universal Energy Facility (UEF) is a multi-donor RBF facility established to support the electrification of households, businesses, public institutions, and other potential electricity consumers in sub-Saharan Africa that do not have reliable access to modern electricity services. The UEF provides incentive payments (i.e., grants) on a 'results-based' approach to selected eligible organizations that develop and operate systems and provide verified electricity connections.
The main objective of the programme is to provide a funding mechanism that allows for scale, speed and efficiency to achieve universal energy access by 2030 – in alignment with SEforALL's business plan. To support the scale up of the programme, the objectives since its launch in October 2020 have been to:

- Develop an operational manual/guidelines and relevant documentation
- Operationalize UEF for mini-grids, solar home systems and clean cooking
- Upstream development and operationalization of in-country implementation

SEforALL was selected as Programme Manager and established this RBF facility in collaboration with a number of donors and implementing partners. Wave 1 of the UEF was launched in 3 countries in sub-Saharan Africa (Sierra Leone, Madagascar, and Benin), with the goal of delivering more than 14,000 electricity connections through mini-grid developments. This will be followed, dependent on funding that is trending in the right direction, by a scale up to eventually deliver more than 2 million energy access connections (electricity and clean cooking) by 2023.

Evaluation Purpose and Use

The purpose of the evaluation of the first Wave of the UEF programme is to evaluate the first year of operation of the UEF in order to generate learnings and create an internal and external facing learning document. This will be a retrospective assessment looking back from the establishment of the facility in October 2020 to present day to understand of what's worked well, what's been more challenging, and outlining opportunities for improvement based on learnings generated throughout the evaluation. Learnings are expected to be complemented by key recommendations for improvement prior to substantial scale up. Such recommendations could include, but are not limited to, efficiency and effectiveness of operations, country engagement and implementation strategy, the application process for developers, and how to further support implementation for developers and relevant partners.

The target audience for the evaluation, key learnings and recommendations will be SEforALL internal Programme Management and staff, external UEF donors and partners as well as stakeholders in the broader RBF community. Evidence generated from the evaluation will be utilized to improve the programme going forward in existing operations and implementation and will be integrated in the plan to scale up the UEF. Learning outcomes are required by the end of 2021 to strategically inform the next wave of the UEF.

Evaluation Focus and Scope

The evaluation scope will include the Pre-Launch phase of the UEF; the launch and implementation of UEF's Wave 1 in the Sierra Leone and Madagascar and Benin; the two different stages of the UEF application process- the Pre-Qualification stage and the Site-Specific stage; and the contracting phase, including grant agreement signing process with successful applicants.

The evaluation is expected to be conducted remotely including a desk review and interviews with key stakeholders.

The time-period covered by the evaluation is *January 2020 to October 2021* as below:

- Pre-Launch Phase of the UEF – *January 2020 – October 2020*
  - Conceptual elaboration including development and implementation of MEL Framework and of key programme documentation
  - Pre-launch activities such as webinars for interested developers, engagement with stakeholders, design and launch of the UEF online platform.

- Launch and Implementation of the UEF Wave 1 – *October 2020 to ongoing*
  - Sierra Leone and Madagascar launched in October 2021
  - Benin launched in January 2021

- UEF Application Process – *21 October 2020 - October 2021*
  - Pre-Qualification stage
    - Activities around the launch
    - Evaluation by the UEF team of the Pre-Qualification applications
    - Decision making and consultations with the UEF's Advisory Board
    - Engagement and communication with developers/applicants and other relevant stakeholders
    - Pre-Qualification Webinars
    - Pre-Qualification post application process Survey
  - Site-Specific Stage
    - Evaluation by the UEF team of the Site-Specific applications
    - Decision making and consultations with the UEF's Advisory Board and Investment Committee
    - Engagement and communication with developers/applicants and other relevant stakeholders
      - Site-specific stage Webinar for Sierra Leone and Madagascar
      - Providing support and information for applicants
    - Site-Specific post application process Survey

- Contracting with Developers – *July 2021 – September 2021* (Sierra Leone and Madagascar)
  - Project Approval and Grant Agreement Signing
    - Process of grant agreement signing

Evaluation Criteria and Key Questions

Given the purpose of the evaluation is for both learning and improvement of UEF operations, the criteria selected are consistent with the four OECD-DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and coherence. The following are some initial key evaluation questions, while the evaluation proposal is expected to further develop and refine this list. SEforALL acknowledges there are limitations to how deep the evaluation can go into these questions considering the timeframe and welcomes feedback from bidders on how to mitigate this challenge while maintaining the integrity and purpose of the evaluation

Relevance

- Is the intervention doing the right things in order to achieve its intended results and impact?
- Is the design of the UEF programme an adequate solution to unlock finance more efficiently for energy access? Does it reduce the main causes of the problem? What can be improved? What should the programme continue to prioritize?
  - Are there other types of finance, such as blended finance or other mechanisms, the UEF should consider beyond grants in this model?
- Does the UEF programme have the potential for replication in Asia?
- Compared to other RBF facilities available, how do developers and other key stakeholders perceive the relevance of the UEF?

Effectiveness

- What worked well in launching and implementing the UEF?
  - What went well prior to the launch of the UEF in Sierra Leone and Madagascar?
  - What worked well during both stages: The Pre-Qualification stage and the Site-Specific stage?
- What was less successful in launching and implementing the UEF?
  - What did not go well prior the launch of the UEF in Sierra Leone and Madagascar?

- What was less successful during both stages: The Pre-Qualification stage and the Site-Specific stage?
- Leveraging survey data and enriching with interviews:
  - How did applicants (developers) find the application process?
  - What was the value communication and support from the UEF team?
- To what extent has gender been addressed in the UEF programme design and implementation? Where is there room for improvement in terms of gender focus and considerations?
- Are there policy or regulatory barriers that project developers are facing that the UEF could further support in addressing?
- Is the UEF on track to achieve its intended outcomes and results?

Efficiency

- Has the UEF been managed efficiently? What measures can be taken during planning and implementation to ensure that resources are used more efficiently?
- Could the UEF have been implemented with fewer resources without reducing the quality and quantity of the results?
- Could more of the same result have been produced with the same resources?
- Leveraging survey data and enriching with interviews:
  - To what extent did developers and other stakeholders in the sector value the support they received from UEF/SEforALL?

Coherence

- How well does the UEF programme align with the needs of the sector / other initiatives / the needs of Wave 1 countries?
  - What are key considerations for scaleup in Africa, with a focus on complementing other RBF initiatives, filling in the gaps and avoiding replication?
  - Where do synergies exist with other RBF initiatives? How are these synergies perceived to be working, what were the benefits? Is the UEF missing opportunities to further align with other RBFs in the sector, if so, how could the programme better align?
  - How well is the UEF aligned with the priorities of each country of operation, are there opportunities for further alignment?
  - Is the UEF integrated well enough into the political dialogue in each country of operation in order to support project developers at the right political level in country?
- Are the UEF's activities well aligned with SEforALL's 3-year Business Plan?
  - Are there opportunities to further align with SEforALL's programmes of work?

The evaluation questions will be further developed and refined by the selected evaluation team in alignment with SEforALL during the inception phase.

Evaluation Approach and Methodology

As this is considered primarily a formative and process evaluation, an integrated mixed-methods approach is likely to be the most appropriate. SEforALL requests a proposed evaluation approach and methodology as part of the proposal to this TOR and is open to the most pragmatic approach to rapidly inform our operations and scale up. It is expected the evaluation will be conducted as a desk review of all available and relevant documentation, complemented by desk research and interviews with key stakeholders. Once an evaluation team is selected, a more detailed evaluation design will be developed in consultation with UEF/RBF staff and the SEforALL MEL Team.

Deliverables, Timeline, and Budget

Timeline and Budget: The evaluation is expected to start in early October 2021 and be completed by early December 2021.

The budget range for the evaluation is: USD 30,000 to 50,000 USD.

The evaluation process and expected deliverables are set out below. Note that dates (in italics) are to be confirmed:

- Contract signed and on-line kick-off meeting: *1 October 2021*
  - Contract signed followed by a discussion with the SEforALL team, documents supplied; information access and list of key internal contacts provided.
  - Discussion on external stakeholders, introductions, etc.
- Delivery of Inception Report/Document: *15 October 2021*
  - Evaluation design and implementation plan, including details of qualitative and quantitative methods, data collection, data analysis clearly set out in an evaluation design matrix.
  - The rationale for selection of the approach and methods must be explained.
  - Any existing and anticipated limitations must also be explained.
- Evaluation implementation: *18 October – 12 November 2021*
  - Ongoing communication with the SEforALL UEF/RBF team and/or MEL Team, desk review and research, interviews, access to stakeholders, and scheduling meetings/interviews, etc.
- Preliminary Learnings Draft from desk review - *22 October 2021*
  - Starts in parallel with inception
  - Based on available data and early discussions, a rough draft of preliminary learnings for SEforALL to discuss as preliminary in key meeting in October
- Delivery of Draft Evaluation Report: *16 November 2021*
  - UEF/RBF team and/or MEL team to respond with comments by – *23 November 2021*
- Final Evaluation Report / Learning document & accompanying external facing PPT submitted: *30 November 2021*
  - The Evaluation Report / Learning Document will be presented to the UEF/RBF team in a slide deck in addition to the internal facing word document

Deliverable	Due Date
Inception report	15 October 2021
Preliminary learning draft from desk review	22 October 2021
Draft Evaluation Report – Internal facing	16 November 2021
Final Evaluation Report – Internal facing & accompanying external facing PPT	30 November 2021
Evaluation Presentation	1 December 2021

Evaluation Team Competencies

Organizations wishing to submit a proposal must match the minimum requirements laid out below:

- Lead Evaluator – Masters level post-graduate qualification in evaluation, social sciences, international relations, political science, development studies, economics, energy, engineering, or climate science. Other relevant qualifications may also be considered along with significant relevant experience
  - 7 years demonstrated relevant experience in monitoring and evaluation, including experienc e in undertaking evaluation of projects and programmes specifically focused on sustainable development, development finance, partnerships, innovation and systems change, programme design and implementation, preferably in the energy sector.
- Evaluation team has a minimum of 2 years' experience working with the lead evaluator.

- Demonstrated experience conducting evaluations that focus on the enabling environment - including policy, regulation and finance considerations of specific developing countries and associated markets.
- Demonstrated experience of programme evaluation at an international level, including qualitative and quantitative methods.
- Demonstrated experience of formative and process evaluation.
- A demonstrated track record of conducting high quality evaluations in the international development space with professionalism, integrity, respect, and impartiality when drawing conclusions and interacting with all key stakeholders.
- Language skills: high level of competency in both written and spoken English, as well competency in French strongly preferred.

Desirable Skills and Experience:

- Demonstrated experience working in, and / or evaluating, clean energy market development in Africa and Asia; knowledge and understanding of the nuances of market development including factors such as barriers to implementation, policy and regulation, access to finance, political will and support, and other considerations for project developers to succeed.
- Experience and knowledge of the energy sector in Sierra Leone, Madagascar and / or Benin, including current enabling environment and challenges for the private sector a strong asset.
- Knowledge of Results-Based Financing (RBF), within the energy space.
- Recent experience of working with the UN system, multilateral organisations, and donors.
- Experience in evaluating projects for international organizations similar to SEforALL.
- Demonstrated experience in delivering high quality evaluation in the energy sector.

Reporting

The evaluation will be managed by the UEF/RBF team with support of the SEforALL MEL Team. All enquiries about this TOR up to selection can be sent to SEforALL's Procurement Team: procurement@seforall.org.

Quality assurance of the evaluation process and final products will be monitored jointly by the SEforALL MEL team and UEF/RBF team. All deliverables will be approved by the Programme Manager of the UEF.

Travel

Due to ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, travel is not required for this evaluation. The evaluation activities will therefore be carried out remotely from the evaluator's home base. No site-specific travel is expected for this evaluation.

Gender Mainstreaming

The selected firm(s) should make a concerted effort to mainstream gender considerations throughout this assignment. This includes, for example, the team deployed for this purpose implement a 40:60 female to male ratio (if applicable), provide a copy of gender policies followed by the organization and follow a gender balanced approach in the assignment.

Bidding Process

Proposals must include the following (in either PDF or PPT format):

- Organization's profile including organization's name, address, contact information and a brief background
- Your organization's understanding of the assignment, including any proposed changes to the scope of work
- Methodology/Plan of action to carry out the services required and meet criteria outlined above is mandatory (it is strongly recommended to leverage this TOR while adding in evaluation approach and the evaluator's own suggestions from experience)
- Relevant experience and examples of work
- Key personnel profiles
- Proposed budget

- An explanation of conflicts of interest (if any)
- Gender Policy/ Gender balancing approach

All bids are to be submitted to procurement@seforall.org by 21st September 2021 by 23:59 PM Central European Summer Time (CEST)

CYNOSURE

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