

CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Universal Access Clusters Pilot Program | Zambia | 2026

About Global Energy Alliance

The Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet ('Global Energy Alliance') **builds transformative public, private, philanthropic partnerships to end energy poverty and accelerate green economic opportunity.** Founded in 2021 by The Rockefeller Foundation, IKEA Foundation and Bezos Earth Fund, we work to unlock finance, strengthen institutions and transform markets, delivering progress that goes beyond individual projects to drive lasting systems change. **Through our two interconnected global pillars, Grids of the Future – focused on innovation and infrastructure – and Powering Opportunity – with a focus on jobs and livelihoods –** we work toward our vision: a world where everyone has access to affordable, reliable, clean electricity and the means to use it to improve their lives. With work in more than 30 countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, our Alliance aims to reach 1 billion people with clean electricity, prevent 4 billion tons of carbon emissions and create or improve 150 million jobs.

About the Program

The Global Energy Alliance and Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL) in partnership with Zambia's Rural Electrification Authority (REA), and with support from The Rockefeller Foundation, are piloting a Universal Access Clusters (UAC) model to accelerate universal rural electrification in Zambia.

The UAC model is designed to move beyond the conventional Results-Based Financing (RBF) approaches - which typically reach only the most commercially attractive customers - toward a model that delivers truly universal electrification across defined geographic clusters, with affordable tariffs and operational long-term sustainability. The pilot is aligned with Zambia's Rural Electrification Masterplan 2.0 (REMP 2.0), the Mission 300 initiative, and Zambia's commitment to power 1,000 communities with decentralized renewable energy.

How the Model Works

- **Designated Electrification Clusters:** REA identifies defined geographic clusters for implementation under the pilot programme. Any rights or approvals required for electricity service provision within the clusters shall be obtained in accordance with the applicable laws and regulatory requirements of the Republic of Zambia.
- **CAPEX subsidy:** 50% of capital costs are contributed by the developer (equity); 50% is grant-funded through development partners and existing electricity access funding programs.
- **Revenue settlement mechanism:** A 5 -years operating subsidy bridges the gap between affordable regulated tariffs and the total cost of supply, funded for this pilot by partners via an escrow account. The operating subsidy will be paid twice a year in line with agreed service levels for the concessional areas.
- **Technology-agnostic delivery:** Developers may use any blend of mini-grid, solar home systems, or other distributed energy technologies to meet minimum service standards.

The pilot will be deployed across pre-selected clusters in Zambia, of between 1,000 and 10,000 households (communities in Mpika, Nchelenje, and Petauke have been preliminarily earmarked for the pilot), electrifying all households and businesses within a defined area. Minimum performance standards for both SHS and mini-grid customers will be specified. Revenue settlement will be biannually. It will include the difference between approved costs of the operator (return on capital

and O&M) and the revenue from pre-approved tariffs. A concept note describing the UAC model and financing structure in greater detail will be provided at full proposal stage.

Productive Use of Energy (PUE) Component

The central objective of the UAC pilot is to move beyond basic household electrification toward powering productive economic activity in rural communities. Each selected cluster has been ground-truthed for agricultural productivity, commercial activity, and the presence of anchor loads such as agro-processing facilities, cell towers, health centers, and schools.

PUE loads - including grain grinding mills, rice dehullers, irrigation pumps, welding shops, and refrigerated retail - represent a meaningful share of demand at each pilot site and are key to the financial viability of the model. By incorporating higher-demand productive users alongside households within a defined electrification cluster, the UAC structure drives demand growth over the project implementation period, improving the economics for developers and reducing the level of operating subsidy required over time.

Tariffs under the UAC model are set as an input - defined by REA and the Energy Regulation Board (ERB) - to enable affordable electricity for households and cost-competitive supply for productive users, supporting rural livelihoods and import substitution. The financing structure accounts for the higher generation capacity needed to serve PUE loads, with site-specific feasibility studies used to establish CAPEX and OPEX parameters.

In addition to the core electrification grant, the program anticipates a dedicated productive use financing component to support PUE adoption - for example, through equipment financing or demand stimulation support for agro-processors and other productive users within the clusters.

What We Are Looking For

We are seeking expressions of interest from private Distributed Renewable Energy (DRE) developers who are interested in participating in this pioneering pilot. This is a non-committal shortlisting process. Shortlisted developers will be invited to a collaborative site co-selection process and subsequent negotiation of project terms, including grant pricing on an open-book basis.

We expect to shortlist up to two developers through this process. However, shortlisting does not confer exclusivity over any site or cluster, nor does it guarantee progression to a subsequent procurement or contract award. Shortlisted developers and Global Energy Alliance will agree on performance guarantees for the project period.

Eligibility Criteria

Applications will be evaluated against four criteria. Applicants must demonstrate all four:

#	Criterion
1	Active development pipeline in Zambia (15%) The developer must demonstrate active and ongoing mini-grid or DRE development activity in Zambia, with projects currently in development, construction, or recently commissioned.
2	Demonstrated experience operating DRE systems at portfolio scale (15%) The developer must have a track record of operating multiple mini-grids or DRE systems, demonstrating the operational capacity to manage a portfolio of sites with reliability and commercial discipline.
3	Availability of equity and commitment to co-invest (40%) The developer must have equity available - or be in an advanced position to raise it - and must be willing to contribute approximately 50% of project CAPEX. Co-investment by the developer is a core requirement of the UAC financing structure.
4	Commitment to data sharing (30%)

The developer must commit to sharing operational, financial, and consumer data from the project with the consortium partners (Global Energy Alliance, SEforALL, RF, REA). Data sharing is essential to validating the UAC model and enabling the pivot to scale.

How to Apply

Interested developers should submit an expression of interest addressing each of the four criteria above. Please include:

- Company overview, including years of operation and markets served
- Summary of Zambia-based development portfolio and project pipeline
- Number of mini-grids or DRE systems currently under operation
- Confirmation of equity availability and willingness to co-invest
- Confirmation of commitment to data sharing
- List of key staff and board members
- Incorporation documents
- Audited Financial Statements

Submissions should be sent to: uac@energyalliance.org by 17:00 CAT, 24 July 2026.

Shortlisted developers will be contacted for further discussions and site co-selection. This process is non-committal and does not constitute a contractual obligation on either party.

Clarifications and Query Handling

Global Energy Alliance has taken care to be as clear as possible in the language and terms it has used in compiling this EOI. Where any ambiguity or confusion arises from the meaning or interpretation of any word or term used in this document or any other document relating to this EOI, the meaning and interpretation attributed to that word or term by Global Energy Alliance will be final. Global Energy Alliance will not accept responsibility for any misunderstanding of this document or any others relating to this EOI.

Any queries about this EOI should be addressed in writing to Global Energy Alliance via email at uac@energyalliance.org. Clarifications and answers shall be collated and published online at <https://www.energyalliance.org> in a timely manner.

Conditions of EOI Submission

- i) Submissions must be completed in English.
- ii) Submissions must respond to all requirements set out in this EOI.
- iii) Failure to submit the required information will, in almost all circumstances, result in the rejection of submissions.
- iv) Interested developers must disclose all relevant information to ensure that all submissions are fairly and legally evaluated. Any attempt to withhold any information that the respondent knows to be relevant or to mislead Global Energy Alliance and/or its evaluation team in any way will result in disqualification.
- v) Any conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest (including any family relations to Global Energy Alliance staff, contractors or representatives) involving a respondent must be fully disclosed to Global Energy Alliance.

- vi) Global Energy Alliance will not be liable in respect of any costs incurred by respondents in the preparation and submission of offers or any associated work effort.
- vii) Global Energy Alliance will conduct this EOI, including the evaluation of responses and final awards in accordance with its policies and the detail set out in this EOI.
- viii) Global Energy Alliance reserves its right to reject any or all the offers(part/full) including incomplete offers at any stage without assigning any reasons whatsoever.
- ix) Global Energy Alliance reserves the right to prequalify a single developer or multiple developers as a result of this EOI, at its sole discretion.
- x) Global Energy Alliance reserves the right to withhold or withdraw the process or terminate this prequalification at any stage.
- xi) Global Energy Alliance reserves the right to change/modify/amend any or all provisions of this EOI document. Such revisions to the EOI/ amended EOI will be made available on the Global Energy Alliance's website.
- xii) This document is not construed in any way as an offer to contract or an obligation on the part of Global Energy Alliance to invite any offers or proposals from any respondents or developers who have taken part in this process.
- xiii) Global Energy Alliance and all prequalified developers must act in all its procurement and other activities in full compliance with donor requirements. Any contract(s) that arise from this EOI may be financed by multiple donors and those donors and/or their agents have rights of access to Global Energy Alliance and/or any of its grantees, investees or contractors for audit purposes. These donors may also have additional regulations that it is not practical to list here. Submission of an offer under this EOI assumes the respondent's acceptance of these conditions.
- xiv) Global Energy Alliance does not make any representation or warranty as to the accuracy, reliability or completeness of the information in this EOI document.
- xv) Global Energy Alliance will not have any liability to any prospective developer or respondent under any laws (including without limitation the law of contract, tort the principles of equity), restitution or unjust enrichment, or otherwise for any loss, expense or damage which may arise from or be incurred or suffered in connection with anything contained in this EOI document, any matter deemed to form part of this EOI document, the information and any other information supplied by or on behalf of Global Energy Alliance or their employees, any consultants or otherwise arising in any way from the prequalification process. Global Energy Alliance will also not be liable in any manner whether resulting from negligence or otherwise however caused arising from reliance of any respondent upon any statements contained in this EOI.
- xvi) The issue of this EOI does not imply that Global Energy Alliance is bound to prequalify or contract any respondent, as the case may be.

Tentative Timelines

Issue date: 02 July 2026

Due date for request for clarifications/questions: 14 July 2026

Expected date of responses to questions: 17 July 2026

Due date for submissions: 24 July 2026; 17:00 CAT

Expected date for Results: 7 August 2026