

Request for Proposals: Mid-Term Evaluation of the Modern Cooking Facility for Africa (MCFA)

Questions & Answers, 9 October 2026

General guidance to Consultants with respect to the Assignment timeline:

The Assignment is expected to commence within 14 days of concluding the consultancy agreement, although the start date may be agreed between Nefco and the selected Consultant. Nefco expects the final report (item 9. In Section 7 of the ToR) to be completed before the end of 2027, while allowing flexibility in the implementation timeline.

NO.	QUESTION	ANSWER
QA1.1	Eligibility and minimum requirements Status of minimum requirements: The evaluation grid marks some criteria explicitly as pass/fail (degree, English), while others are labelled minimum requirements and carry points "for meeting minimum criteria". Does a proposal that does not fully meet one of the latter get rejected as non-responsive, or does it receive fewer points than the minimum on that sub-criterion? This concerns in particular (a) the five strategic or large-scale evaluations of at least EUR 200,000 required of the firm and (b) the four evaluations of at least EUR 150,000 required of the Team Leader.	<i>The degree and English requirements are expressly pass/fail. The other stated minimum requirements carry merit points for meeting the minimum criteria. A proposal that does not fully meet the minimum criteria, receives fewer points.</i>
QA1.2	If such proposals are scored, how would Nefco assess a Team Leader who has led many evaluations, some of which fall below the EUR 150,000 threshold?	<i>Experience on leading evaluations but for lesser value than EUR 150,000 will be reflected in the scoring.</i>
QA1.3	Value of Team Leader references: Where a consortium delivered the evaluation, or where it formed a distinct assignment within a larger contract (a framework call-off or a multi-year MEL contract), which value applies?	<i>The value of the evaluation component that was led by the proposed Team Leader applies, irrespective of whether the assignment was carried out by a consortium.</i>
QA1.4	Firm references. Could Nefco confirm: a. Whether programme, portfolio or fund-level evaluations delivered within multi-year monitoring, evaluation and learning contracts qualify as strategic or large-scale evaluations, and whether the EUR 200,000 threshold then applies to the whole contract or to the evaluation component; b. Whether, for consortium assignments, Nefco considers the total contract value or the tenderer's share; c. Which exchange rate applies to references in	<i>a. Yes, they qualify and the threshold of EUR 200,000 applies to the evaluation component. b. In company references, Nefco considers the total value of tenderer's share. In Key Expert references, the entire contract value is considered. c. Value of references can be calculated with the average fx rate for the year when the referenced contract was signed.</i>



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	USD or GBP: the rate at contract signature, or the ECB rate on the submission date as in clause 3.10; d. Whether the ten-year period runs back from the submission date and applies to the completion date; e. Whether a single assignment may appear in both columns of the TECH-2A summary table?	d. Yes. c. Yes, an assignment can appear in both columns.
QA1.5	Key Experts in several proposals. Clause 2.6 allows Key Experts to take part in more than one proposal "when circumstances justify". Which circumstances would Nefco accept, and does this flexibility extend to the Team Leader?	<i>The Evaluation Manager may take part in several proposals as a Key Expert. This flexibility however does not extend to the Team Leader who should take part in only one proposal.</i>
QA1.6	Timeline, budget and contract Timeline: The ToR specify no start date, duration or end date. What timeframe does Nefco envisage, and which decision points should the evaluation inform, such as Steering Committee meetings, donor programming decisions or exit planning?	<i>Please refer to the additional guidance at the top of the document.</i> <i>The evaluation is intended to inform adaptive management, portfolio steering, CSP engagement, management decisions, communications strategy, exit preparation, organisational learning, donor accountability, strategic learning, future programming and future facility design.</i> <i>The Team Leader is expected to identify, together with Nefco and the Reference Group during the ToR finalisation phase, the key events and milestones the evaluation should inform.</i>
QA1.7	Contingency reserve: Under which circumstances, and through which procedure, would Nefco release the EUR 50,000 contingency? Could it fund additional expert inputs if the team composition agreed after ToR finalisation requires more effort than the remuneration ceiling allows?	<i>The Assignment, as described in the ToR, must be carried out within the remuneration ceiling stated in the RfP. Contingency funding may be mobilised for any unexpected, additional work not foreseen in the ToR.</i>
QA1.8	Travel and reimbursable costs: Does Nefco expect missions to Kenya and Zambia, or only if the inception phase justifies them? Clause 2.13 lists subsistence among reimbursable costs, while Annex 1 excludes daily allowances. Which subsistence costs, if any, are reimbursable?	<i>Most work and interviews are expected to be remote. The budget should foresee possible travel to Helsinki or an MCFA Steering Committee meeting in one of the Nordic countries and/or in one of the MCFA project countries. In addition, if justified during ToR finalisation or inception, possible travel to Zambia and Kenya may be included. Subsistence costs refers to business trip costs not specifically mentioned in the RfP such as accommodation and meals.</i>
QA1.9	Evidence and scope Portfolio data; Which CSP-level data will the evaluation team receive, and in what format: milestone and IVA verification reports, CCS delivery data, usage or metering data, financial statements,	<i>Available sources may include portfolio records, milestone information, CSP-level performance data, financial data, projections and business-model information, subject to confidentiality; MRV,</i>

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	projections and business plans? Will access require separate confidentiality agreements with individual CSPs?	<i>IVA, payment, customer and other monitoring data where available; annual results reports; and programme, donor, governance and management documentation. Available sources may be provided as documents or by granting the Consultant access to relevant online systems, as applicable. Access to relevant sources does not require separate confidentiality agreements with individual CSPs.</i>
QA1.10	Customer surveys: What are the timing, sample and coverage of the separate customer surveys?	<i>End-user evidence will be collected by the IVA through separate customer surveys, planned for 2027. No detailed decisions have yet been taken on the exact sample and coverage.</i>
QA1.11	BGFA Mid-Term Evaluation: Will the evaluation team have access to the full BGFA MTE, including annexes and any internal version, and to Nefco's management response if one exists?	<i>Yes.</i>
QA1.12	Stakeholder access: Will Nefco introduce the evaluation team to all 24 CSPs, the three donors and Steering Committee members? Does Nefco have an order of magnitude in mind for the number of interviews or CSP case studies?	<i>Yes, Nefco may facilitate introductions to CSPs and donors/Steering Committee. The practicalities around the introductions as well as the number of interviews/case studies will be agreed during inception phase. Bidders should note that engagement with the Reference Group, CSPs and other stakeholders to be interviewed is the Evaluation Manager's task. As a general principle, coverage and depth must explain meaningful variation while remaining proportionate.</i>
QA1.13	Analytical framework and report structure: Section 5.1 makes the Five Dimensions of Impact the primary organising framework and treats the OECD-DAC criteria as inputs, while the indicative final report follows the OECD-DAC criteria. Which structure should the final report follow, or should the team propose one during ToR finalisation?	<i>During ToR refinement and inception, the Team Leader must translate the evaluation framework into a structure based on the Five Dimensions of Impact. OECD-DAC criteria and the tentative questions are analytical inputs rather than the primary organising framework. The final report table of contents is expressly indicative, and final deliverables will be agreed during ToR refinement and inception. Bidders should, however, be prepared to structure the final report around the Five Dimensions of Impact if this is agreed as the most suitable format.</i>
QA1.14	Review process and report versions: What are the expected composition and size of the Reference Group, how many meetings does Nefco foresee, and will Nefco consolidate comments into a single matrix? Is the external version of the report a separate full report or a redacted version of the internal report?	<i>A Reference Group will consist of representatives of MCFA's donors (the donors can invite additional members to the Reference Group). They are expected to comment on key deliverables and may advise on questions, methodology, findings and recommendations, without compromising evaluation independence. Major deliverables should receive a two-week review period. The team should budget for up to four report versions and document comment responses in matrices. Both internal and external report versions are</i>

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		<i>anticipated; the external version will also be a full version but it must protect confidential and commercially sensitive information.</i>
QA2.1	Eligibility and structure Q2.1. Can references of a consortium partner or sub-consultant count toward the firm's 5 evaluations and 3 clean cooking references? Do they count differently from those of a JV member?	<i>Firm experience may be demonstrated through the experience of the Consultant, a Consortium Member or a JV member. Experience of Sub-Consultants may not be used to demonstrate the firm's experience.</i>
QA2.2	Can the Team Leader and Evaluation Manager come from a sub-consultant or an individual associate rather than a JV member?	<i>Yes.</i>
QA2.3	Do evaluations the Team Leader led while employed at another firm count toward the 4-evaluation requirement?	<i>Yes. The requirement concerns the Team Leader's demonstrated professional experience leading qualifying evaluations irrespective of employment history.</i>
QA2.4	Should the clean cooking references be evaluations only, or do assessments and market studies also qualify?	<i>Three qualifying clean-cooking assignments are required. Broader energy-access or household-energy evaluations may qualify where clean cooking was substantial and separately assessable. Thematic, including market studies may qualify where clean cooking was the principal focus and involved systematic evidence collection and analysis relevant to the evaluation objectives.</i>
QA2.5	What counts as "evidence of knowledge of the private clean cooking sector" (Section 2 - 2.1), and what form is expected?	<i>This aspect will be scored under the "a) Consultant's organisation" and submitted company reference cards will be used as evidence.</i>
QA2.6	Is the "minimum" for each criterion pass/fail, or do partial points apply when thresholds are narrowly missed?	<i>Partial points apply when thresholds are narrowly missed.</i>
QA2.7	Are the EUR 20k reimbursables and EUR 50k contingency available to the consultant in practice, and under what approval process?	<i>The Assignment, as described in the ToR, must be carried out within the remuneration ceiling stated in the RfP. Contingency funding may be mobilised for any unexpected, additional work not foreseen in the ToR and must be agreed in writing between the Consultant and Nefco. EUR 20,000 for reimbursable expenses is reserved for travel costs, as justified and determined during the inception phase and agreed in writing between the Consultant and Nefco.</i>
QA2.8	Do the 2 donor presentations and 2 webinars include travel, and what is the likely split between Helsinki and country travel?	<i>Most work is home-based and webinars don't require any travel. Presentation to an MCFA Steering Committee meeting may include travel to a Nordic country and/or an MCFA project country.</i>

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		<i>Additional travel may be included, if justified, to Kenya and Zambia.</i>
QA2.9	Will customer survey data and BGFA MTE findings be available at inception, and what is the timing?	<i>Please see QA1.10 and QA1.11 above.</i>
QA2.10	Is there an expected overall duration or end date for the evaluation? This will affect pricing and staffing.	<i>Please refer to the additional guidance at the top of the document.</i>
QA3.1	Could Nefco clarify whether there is any flexibility in the interpretation of the reference criterion concerning clean cooking experience? In particular, could other types of assignments in which clean cooking constituted a substantial and clearly identifiable component be considered eligible even where the assignment was not an evaluation, e.g. assignments that involved relevant analytical, monitoring, research or implementation work? A broader interpretation of the criterion in this regard would allow tenderers to draw on a wider range of relevant clean cooking experience.	<i>The company requirement is three completed clean-cooking assignments of at least EUR 30,000 each. Broader energy-access or household-energy evaluations may qualify where clean cooking was substantial and separately assessable. Thematic studies may qualify where clean cooking was the principal focus and involved systematic evidence collection and analysis relevant to this evaluation.</i>
QA3.2	We understand that, in addition to the Team Leader and Evaluation Manager, the evaluation team is expected to include one Senior Evaluator, one junior/mid-career evaluator and one Quality Assurance Adviser. For each position, Nefco may ask the Consultant to present up to three profiles, but only one of them will be selected per role. Could you please confirm if our understanding is correct? If more than one Senior Evaluator may be required, could Nefco clarify the anticipated number of positions?	<i>The number of Senior Evaluators will be determined during the inception phase.</i> <i>Yes, your understanding is correct that Nefco reserves the right to ask the Consultant to present up to three profiles, but only one of them will be selected per role (except for the Senior Evaluator).</i>
QA3.3	Could Nefco indicate the expected overall duration of the assignment, or an indicative target date for completion?	<i>Please refer to the additional guidance at the top of the document.</i>
QA4.1	Minimum organizational requirements: Regarding the minimum requirement of three clean cooking evaluations, if the lead bidding entity engages an independent expert or sub-consultant to serve as a subject matter expert, can the past corporate or individual references held by the sub-consultant be counted towards the firm's minimum organizational requirement in FORM TECH-2B, or must the lead bidding entity hold these contracts directly?	<i>No, only the references of the lead bidding entity or it's consortium/JVCA member will be considered in the scoring of company experience.</i>
QA4.2	Staffing schedules and CV submissions: The RfP requires CVs only for the Team Leader and Evaluation Manager at the proposal stage, and the rest of the team will be identified during the	<i>The Consultant should provide indicative number days for the entire team, including the Team Leader, Evaluation Manager, Senior Evaluator(s), junior/mid-career evaluator, other personnel and</i>



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	inception phase. However, FORM TECH-7 (Indicative Staffing Schedule) and FORM FIN-2 Table B require the number of days and daily fee rates for all team roles, including Senior Evaluators, Junior Evaluators, and the QA Adviser. Should we still provide estimated days and average fee rates for these un-named profiles, and will these rates be strictly binding when we finalize the team and their specific CVs during the inception phase? Furthermore, would we be penalized if we went ahead and provided CVs for the full team at this stage instead of just the Team Lead and Evaluation Manager?	<i>QA Adviser for phases 4–11 of the Assignment. In addition, the Consultant should state the daily fees by key expert category to demonstrate the calculation of its financial offer.</i> <i>The final team, inputs and fee breakdown will be submitted for Nefco approval during inception and must remain within the accepted lump-sum total. The daily rates will be strictly binding during the entire Assignment.</i> <i>Submitting additional CVs may cause the proposal to exceed the maximum page limit, making it non-responsive and potentially subject to rejection. For clarity, additional CVs will not be considered in the evaluation.</i>
QA5.1	Financial Proposal and Additional Experts: The RFP provides for remuneration of up to EUR 230,000, while only the Team Leader and Evaluation Manager are required to be identified at proposal stage. Does this ceiling cover the entire evaluation team, including experts identified after ToR finalisation, and should their costs therefore be included in the Financial Proposal?	<i>The maximum EUR 230,000 remuneration covers all evaluation stages and all team members, including experts identified after ToR finalisation.</i>
QA5.2	Staffing and Remuneration Allocation: As the detailed team will only be finalised following ToR refinement, can staff days and remuneration subsequently be reallocated across experts, provided the accepted remuneration ceiling is not exceeded?	<i>Yes, subject to Nefco's written approval.</i>
QA5.3	JVCA Experience Requirements: Can the minimum company experience requirements under Section 8.1 be satisfied collectively across JVCA members, or must each member satisfy them independently?	<i>They can be satisfied collectively.</i>
QA5.4	Geographic Scope of Qualifying Experience: Must the qualifying strategic/large-scale evaluation and clean-cooking assignments have been undertaken in MCFA focus countries, or do relevant assignments from other countries also qualify?	<i>No, relevant assignments from other countries qualify as well.</i>
QA5.5	Clean-Cooking Experience: The RFP notes that thematic studies may qualify where clean cooking was the principal focus and systematic evidence collection and analysis were undertaken. Can clean-cooking market assessments, baseline studies, pre-feasibility studies or similar analytical assignments also qualify, provided the stated conditions and minimum contract-value threshold are met?	<i>Yes, clean-cooking thematic studies may qualify where clean cooking was the principal focus and the assignment involved systematic evidence collection and analysis relevant to this evaluation, with a minimum contract value of EUR 30,000.</i>



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QA5.6	Assignment Duration: What is the anticipated overall implementation period for the assignment, including the expected commencement and completion timeframe?	<i>Please refer to the additional guidance at the top of the document.</i>
QA6.1	A. Baseline and evidence base Was a baseline study conducted for MCFA at the programme, CSP, or customer level? If so, who conducted it, when, and will the report and underlying datasets be shared with the selected Consultant?	<i>A market scoping study was conducted in 2020–2021 by Open Capital and MECS but it was not a full-fledged baseline study. The report and underlying datasets will be shared with the Consultant.</i>
QA6.2	If no baseline exists, is the Consultant expected to reconstruct one using sources such as CSP application data, the 2020–2021 scoping study, or national statistics? If so, should this work be included in the proposed scope and budget?	<i>No, the Consultant is not expected to reconstruct a baseline.</i>
QA6.3	ToR §4.2 refers to “separate customer surveys.” Who will conduct these surveys, when will they be conducted, what is the planned sample, and will the data be available before the MTE data-collection phase?	<i>Please see QA1.10 above.</i>
QA6.4	Will Nefco provide the full Altai Consulting early evaluation of MCFA1 (2023), the pre-call country assessment, and the 2020–2021 scoping study?	<i>Yes.</i>
QA6.5	What CSP-level data are currently available, including business plans, financial models, MRV/IVA reports, disbursement records, and other relevant monitoring data?	<i>Please see QA1.9 above.</i>
QA6.6	B. Team Leader and team composition Can the Team Leader requirements be met through a complementary team, with other experts covering areas where the Team Leader does not personally meet all the requirements? Or must the Team Leader individually demonstrate all specified skills and experience?	<i>No, the Team Leader must individually meet all stated minimum qualifications and experience requirements.</i>
QA6.7	Will the collective expertise described in ToR §8.4 be assessed or scored at the proposal stage, or only during Phase 3 when the senior team is specified?	<i>At proposal stage, technical scoring covers the Consultant’s experience, methods and work planning, indicative staffing plan, and the qualifications of the Team Leader and Evaluation Manager. The remaining team is identified after further ToR development and submitted for Nefco approval.</i>
QA6.8	Can the Team Leader or Evaluation Manager be an independent consultant engaged as a sub-	<i>Yes, they can be sub-consultants.</i>

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	consultant rather than a staff member of the lead firm or a JV/CA member?	
QA6.9	C. Company experience and references What evidence of assignment completion and contract value is acceptable—for example, client certificates, contracts, or published reports? Can supporting evidence be included as annexes outside the 45-page proposal limit?	<i>The tenderer must provide evidence of the scope, value and completion of each reference. TECH-2B requires information including contract value, client, location, duration, expert months, activities and objectives, limited to one page per project and 20 pages total within the overall proposal page limit. Nefco reserves the right to separately request supporting evidence for the references.</i>
QA6.10	D. Methodology and scope Is primary data collection with end-users expected as part of the MTE, or will the evaluation rely primarily on the separate customer surveys? Is fieldwork in Kenya and Zambia expected, or would it only be conducted if required by the evaluation design?	<i>The MTE may use desk review, interviews and possible country work. It is not a full impact evaluation and no primary data collection with end-users is expected. Additional end-user evidence will be collected through separate surveys by the IVA. Most work is expected to be remote, with possible travel to Kenya and Zambia only if justified during ToR finalisation or inception.</i>
QA6.11	Are interviews or document reviews in French (DRC) and Portuguese (Mozambique) expected? If so, should bidders demonstrate relevant language capacity at the proposal stage?	<i>No French or Portuguese language capacity is required.</i>