

Transforming Energy Access Technical Assistance Facility

EVALUATION REPORT



Transforming
Energy
Access



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List of Acronyms

CEO	Chief Executive Officer's
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
GDI	Global Disability Innovation
GEDSI	Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion
HIC	High Impact Countries
IEC	International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LPI	Local Partnership Inclusion
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPDs	Organisations of Persons with Disabilities
PHIF	Powering Healthcare Innovation Fund
PREO	Powering Renewable Energy Opportunities
ROGEAP	Regional Off-Grid Electricity Access Project
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SteerCo	Steering Committee
TEA	Transforming Energy Access
UK	United Kingdom
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNEP-CCC	UNEP Copenhagen Climate Centre
ZE-Gen	Zero Emission Generators

Definition of Terms

In the context of this project and report, local partners are defined as:

▼ Organisations, businesses, entities, enterprises, academic institutions, and entrepreneurs that are fully based in sub-Saharan Africa, South/Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Island countries (which only operate in these regions/countries).

▼ Organisations, businesses, entities, and enterprises that are majority (over 51%) owned/founded by citizens, diaspora, indigenous people, refugees, migrants, or forcibly displaced people of the target.

▼ Autonomous national/regional networks/organisations/associations/academic institutions operating in the target regions. This can include autonomous organisations that are part of an international organisational, enterprise, network, or institutional framework.



Executive summary

Local partners, despite understanding the energy access markets within their local contexts, often cannot scale due to a lack of meaningful financing. These local partners often face significant barriers when seeking grant financing, including a rigorous application process exacerbated by limited organisational capacity to submit high-quality proposals. To support local partners and bridge this funding access gap, the Transforming Energy Access (TEA) programme, through the Local Partnership Inclusion (LPI) support services, established the technical assistance facility to provide tailored pre-application support to 22 local partners submitting grant proposals to TEA open calls.

The TEA focus areas for the technical assistance were countries that have historically received less attention in global climate and energy investment flows, which include:

- i. Sub-Saharan Africa, incorporating all countries except South Africa;
- ii. South/Southeast Asia: Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Vietnam; and
- iii. Indo-Pacific: Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu.



Upon completion of the technical assistance, a self-evaluation was completed by the technical assistance team (EED Advisory) to respond to the following research questions:



- i. To what extent did the technical assistance strengthen local partners' capacity to develop competitive grant applications for future grant opportunities?
- ii. Does grant pre-application technical assistance create sustainable change for local partners?
- iii. What lessons did the TEA technical assistance facility and EED Advisory Ltd learn that can inform future technical

assistance programmes and ensure that they deliver value for money, are timely, and are beneficial to local partners?

The self-evaluation utilised a mix of methods, gathering feedback from local partners and TEA partners who had open calls aligned to the technical assistance facility. Data collection consisted of:



- i. Routine feedback: post-round technical assistance facility surveys completed by nineteen local partners;
- ii. Online surveys: responses from eleven local partners and three TEA partners at the close of the technical assistance facility; and
- iii. Semi-structured interviews with three local partners to reflect on the technical assistance facility.

However, the evaluation methodology, just like any other research, faced some limitations, such as:



- i. Limited number of TEA partner interviews, thus limiting the generalisability of the results;
- ii. Non-response from the targeted local partners; and
- iii. The timing of the end of the project evaluation, which could potentially limit the ability to capture long-term impacts.

To mitigate these limitations, we triangulated the data and conducted multiple follow-ups with the local partners through emails and WhatsApp messages. This maximised participation, ultimately yielding a 50% response rate.

The findings indicate that the local partners rated the relevance of the modules and the effectiveness of the follow-up sessions at an average of 8.6 out of 10.

The qualitative analysis provides insights into the areas of success and those that require future improvement:

- ▼ **The handholding model:** Technical assistance sessions are more effective when a modular form of support is combined with the handholding of local partners through the proposal development stage. The handholding process, which entails a review of the draft proposals, provides the local partners with immediate feedback on areas that they need to improve in their proposal. In addition, the technical assistance was strengthened by focusing on concepts that included financial modelling and gender equity, and social inclusion (GESI).
- ▼ **Due diligence support:** In addition to reviewing the draft proposals, the support included ensuring that they assembled the required due diligence documentation before submitting the proposals. However, a critical insight is that the pre-application support was constrained by the short timelines, which limited the ability of the local partners to fully internalise concepts.
- ▼ **Value of organisational capacity strengthening:** The report also shows that, while the technical assistance is a critical tool in enhancing the capacity of local partners in securing grants, its sustainability lies in the institutionalisation of knowledge. This focuses on mainstreaming grant applications into organisational systems and structures, while also ensuring that the skills and capacity enhancement targets all levels of people within the organisation, especially those involved in business development and proposal writing.
- ▼ **Value-for-money:** Finally, the analysis indicates that the technical assistance facility delivers strong value for money when considering the investment over the entire portfolio of projects. However, the success of the technical assistance was not determined by value for money, but by the quality of assistance delivered to the local partners, which can act as a springboard for change. Whilst only 3 out of 22 local partner proposals were successful (13.6% success rate), this represents a meaningful achievement by demonstrating the potential impact of the technical assistance facility. This means that, for every pound invested in technical assistance, local partners leveraged £2.33 in grant funding through the TEA open calls. This is calculated as the ratio of the investment in the technical assistance facility (£141,016.35) to the total funding (£328,043) secured by local partners through the TEA open calls. However, the ratio used to determine the value for money does not account for the non-monetised value created by the technical assistance facility, such as strengthened capacities of the organisations. The success rate may reflect the competitive nature of grant funding. The TEA open calls aligned to the technical assistance facility achieved a 3.5% success rate relative to the total applications received. The success rate of the individual calls varied:

 - ▼ **Powering Healthcare Innovation Fund (PHIF)**
 - PHIF Round 1: Out of 84 applications received, 3 were awarded (3.6% success rate).
 - PHIF Round 2: Out of the 50 applications received, 4 were awarded (8% success rate).

Introduction

1.1 Access to grant financing

Global investment falls significantly short of the levels required to achieve universal energy access by 2030. To support the imminent scaling of clean energy projects and programmes, there is a need to increase and accelerate public and private investment. Grants play a crucial role in this effort by supporting initiatives that promote access to clean energy. In developing countries, there is a dichotomy between local and foreign organisations in accessing grant financing. Research shows that there is a long history of international organisations receiving support from outside Africa over their local counterparts. The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and UNEP Copenhagen Climate Centre (UNEP-CCC) report that local solar companies are attracting 4-5 times less investment than their international competitors (UNCDF and UNEP-CCC, 2022). According to the Global Off-Grid Lighting Association's (2022) report on off-grid sector investment trends, only 5% of the total sector investment of \$746 million was directed to locally owned organisations.

Barriers to accessing grant funding for African and other locally led organisations occur across the entire grant-making value chain, from strategic priorities to sourcing, selection, and funding design. A primary constraint is strategic misalignment: many international donors still prioritise funding large international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) or intermediaries rather than directly supporting local organisations. Even where there is stated intent to fund local actors, this commitment is often not translated into operational processes, incentives, and funding structures that enable direct support to local organisations (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2023; Peace Direct, 2021)



Global investment in clean energy **remains insufficient to achieve universal energy access** by 2030, while **local organisations** in developing countries continue to face **unequal access to grant financing, receiving significantly less investment** than international organisations despite their critical role in expanding clean energy access.

Challenges also arise during the sourcing stage. Donors frequently operate within established professional networks that are dominated by international organisations, which limits their ability to identify credible local partners. As a result, many African organisations remain outside the visibility of major funding pipelines (Peace Direct, 2021). When local organisations are identified, they often face additional barriers during due diligence and selection processes, including requirements for large financial turnovers, multiple years of audited financial statements, and mandatory co-financing arrangements. These criteria tend to favour well-resourced international organisations while excluding smaller but effective local actors (OECD, 2023). Even when funding is secured, local organisations often receive small, short-term, and highly restricted grants, limiting their ability to invest in institutional strengthening, long-term programming, and financial sustainability. This creates a cycle in which organisations remain underfunded and struggle to meet the eligibility criteria for larger funding opportunities (INTRAC, 2022).

Beyond procedural barriers, the funding architecture itself often places local and indigenous organisations at a structural disadvantage. Many donors continue to equate organisational size, international visibility, and formal compliance systems with effectiveness, while undervaluing contextual knowledge, community trust, and locally rooted delivery capacity. This results in funding models that channel resources through international intermediaries rather than directly to local actors, thereby concentrating decision-making power away from the communities most affected. In practice, this reinforces dependency, limits local ownership, and weakens the ability of domestic organisations to build the institutional track record needed to compete for larger and more flexible funding in the future. As several studies on localisation and aid reform have shown, the issue is not only one of access, but also of how legitimacy, capacity, and risk are defined within the development finance system (Metcalf-Hough, Fenton, & Manji, 2023; Peace Direct, 2021).

According to the International Monetary Fund (2020) report, the preference for foreign investment over local is driven by perceptions of higher impact returns and economic growth potential, inadvertently sidelining local businesses. The International Monetary Fund (2020) report also highlights that foreign-owned companies, often equipped with better

resources and networks, tend to navigate grant application processes more effectively than local businesses. The UNCDF and UNEP-CCC (2022) report, following the assessment of the Renewable Energy Challenge Fund, documents the key reasons why local companies fail to access finance through the renewable energy challenge (Figure 1) to include:

01. INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS AND FINANCIAL INELIGIBILITY

Many applicants were deemed ineligible because their submissions were incomplete, particularly in relation to budgets and financial information. Missing details often included company turnover, total assets and liabilities, net profit margins, and previous investment raised.



02. LOW EVALUATION SCORES AND WEAK PROJECT COMPETITIVENESS

Some companies were not shortlisted because they scored poorly during the evaluation process. Common weaknesses included limited innovation in the proposed business model, weak commercial viability, unrealistic pricing for target customers, and targets that were either too modest or too ambitious.



03. HIGH PROJECT AND ORGANISATIONAL RISK

A number of applicants proposed projects considered too risky, including operational, product, and organisational capacity risks. In many cases, the organisations lacked sufficient experience and qualified staff. Some also proposed products or technologies that had not yet been adequately tested in the market.



Figure 1: Reasons for not accessing financing by local companies



Despite under-representation in funding, locally owned companies tend to have a considerably higher positive impact through the products and services they offer. The 60 Decibels (2024) report, which synthesises findings from a 2023 survey of over 79,000 customers in 31 off-grid energy markets, reveals a significant impact gap between locally owned and non-locally owned companies. The report documents that about 66% of customers of locally owned companies experienced a significant increase in their quality of life as a direct result of the products or services received. In contrast, only 53% of customers from companies that were not locally owned reported a similar positive impact, highlighting a 13%-point performance advantage for local companies. This underscores the fact that local companies hold deep market knowledge, which is leveraged to reach a wider customer base than their international counterparts. The findings indicated that local companies were able to reach a higher share of both women customers and low-income customers. These companies also recorded lower customer challenge rates and higher customer satisfaction rates.

It is, therefore, important to note that local organisations, businesses, and entrepreneurs often have grant-worthy ideas, but are limited by their inability to access grant financing, which is driven by a myriad of factors. These include poorly written proposals, limited information on grant opportunities, stringent eligibility criteria, proposal requirements, and resource constraints, i.e., some organisations lack the human resources, time, or expertise needed to dedicate to the grant application process.

1.2 Bridging the grant financing gap through technical assistance

Technical assistance is a valuable mechanism for addressing institutional and organisational capacity constraints, particularly in the energy access sector in developing and emerging economies, as shown in Table 1. Due to the structural barriers local organisations face in accessing grant finance, the technical assistance provided to them must be fit for purpose—that is, tailored to their operating realities, capacity levels, and funding context. Technical assistance refers to non-financial, knowledge-based support provided to organisations, governments, and institutions to improve their capacity and performance.

It is typically used to strengthen institutional systems, improve operational efficiency, enhance business performance, support access to finance, and enable organisations to scale their activities.

- i. The World Bank defines technical assistance as the transfer or adaptation of ideas, knowledge, practices, technologies,

or skills for purposes such as policy development, institutional development, capacity building, and project or programme support (World Bank, 1997); and

- ii. The African Development Bank defines technical assistance as a non-lending instrument comprising advisory services, capacity-building programmes, and business linkages, aimed at reducing transaction risks and strengthening sponsor capacity (African Development Bank, 2023).

In many cases, “textbook” technical assistance is too generic and assumes that local partners already have the systems, staffing, financial records, and grant-readiness processes expected by donors. For example, textbook support may focus on producing a polished theory of change, a standard fundraising pitch deck, or a generic compliance manual. By contrast, fit-for-purpose support would help an organisation respond to the actual barriers preventing access to finance. This tailored approach focuses on:

- i. Reconstructing basic financial records, developing realistic project budgets;
- ii. Strengthening internal controls, preparing for donor due diligence; or
- iii. Identifying funding opportunities aligned with the organisation’s size and track record.

Similarly, rather than offering standard training on proposal writing alone, fit-for-purpose assistance may involve hands-on accompaniment to revise an application, meet a co-financing requirement, or build partnerships that improve eligibility. This makes flexibility, practicality, and adaptability essential, because technical assistance is most effective when it responds directly to the constraints local organisations face in trying to unlock grant financing.

Technical assistance can take various forms, such as:

- i. **Cohort-based learning:** This is a technical assistance model that provides a platform for peer exchange and collective problem-solving (Shiferaw, Hellin, & Muricho, 2020);
- ii. **Mentorship and learning by doing:** This is a technical assistance model that, in many cases, is integrated into programme delivery, providing an avenue for iterative engagement which combines training, application, and feedback, therefore supporting sustained performance improvement (World Bank, 2017; Prichett, Samji, & Hammer, 2013); and
- iii. **The embedded advisory model:** This is a technical assistance model that involves placing technical support personnel within the local organisation where they provide support.

Table 1: Review of technical assistance programs and lessons relevant to the TEA technical assistance facility

Programme	Primary Purpose & Target Beneficiaries	Core Technical Assistance Modalities	Evidence of Long-Run Effectiveness	Key Lessons Relevant to TEA Technical Assistance A	Limitations / Challenges	Time Frame
Green Climate Fund Readiness Programme (GCF, 2020; GCF, 2016) 	Strengthen the country and institutional capacity to access climate finance	• Institutional strengthening • Policy & programming support • Accreditation readiness	Independent evaluations show improved systems and coordination, but also highlight slow processes and uneven outcomes; the programme was redesigned to focus on measurable results	Readiness must move beyond activities to tangible outcomes; strong ownership and repeatability are critical	Long timelines; variable country capacity; uneven quality across delivery partners; difficulty linking readiness inputs to eventual financing outcomes.	Since 2015; ongoing.
	Convert concepts into fundable GCF proposals	• Feasibility studies • Financial and technical preparation • Compliance support	Evaluations show improved proposal quality but mixed conversion rates due to complexity and delays	Clear readiness standards, fast feedback loops, and strong gating criteria improve long-run value	Proposal complexity remains high; approval and contracting can be slow; support may not translate into funded projects if upstream concept quality is weak.	Approved in 2016; ongoing
GET.invest (GET.invest, 2025) 	Improve the bankability of clean energy projects for private and blended finance	• Hands-on advisory • Financial modelling • Investor matchmaking	Programme-reported results indicate stronger pipelines and investor engagement over time	Sustainable technical assistance focuses on upgrading core project and financial artefacts, not only narratives	Attribution is difficult; success depends on market conditions and sponsor quality; public evidence is strong on outputs/results but weaker on independent counterfactual impact.	Since 2016; ongoing.
Sustainable Energy Fund for Africa (SEFA), (ADB, 2024) 	Catalyse private investment through project preparation and enabling support	• Project preparation grants • Early-stage technical assistance • Market development	Long-running facility with evidence of pipeline creation, but challenges in attribution and speed	Conversion from prep to financing is essential to justify technical assistance costs	Slow transaction cycles; attribution problems; prep support alone may not overcome market, regulatory, or sponsor constraints.	Established in 2011; ongoing.
GEF Small Grants Programme (UNDP, 2021; GEF, n.d) 	Support local and community organisations with grants and technical assistance	• Direct grants • Embedded technical assistance • Learning-by-doing	Long-term evaluations show durable local capacity and innovation, alongside governance and cost-efficiency challenges	Local ownership, simple tools, and manageable support costs underpin sustainability	Governance and audit demands can become heavy; the management model can become stretched at scale; small grants can generate high transaction costs relative to grant size.	Since 1992; ongoing

It is important to note that technical assistance is considered effective when it goes beyond short-term knowledge and skills transfer and considers long-term benefits aimed at continued capacity strengthening (World Bank, 2019). In addition, capacity strengthening is considered impactful when local organisations are considered as co-creators rather than passive recipients of expertise (OECD, 2021). This has informed the design of technical assistance in the recent past, whereby localisation has become a key pillar for technical assistance. Effective technical assistance, therefore, needs to adapt its content, timing, and delivery model to the realities of local organisations, which include but are not limited to staffing constraints, resource constraints, and competing institutional demands.

1.3 Background to the TEA technical assistance facility

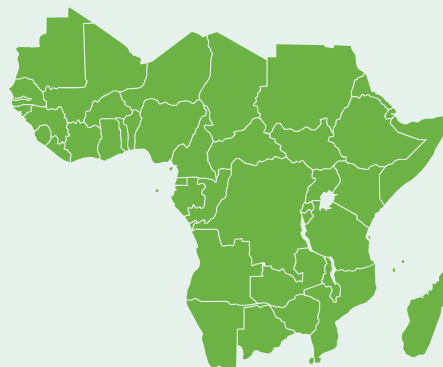
The Transforming Energy Access (TEA) technical assistance facility is a support mechanism under the broader TEA platform. It is a UK aid-funded initiative that seeks to accelerate access to affordable, clean energy in underserved markets. Implemented by EED Advisory Ltd, the technical assistance facility focused on strengthening the grant-readiness of local organisations and enterprises. Its mission was to unlock the potential of these partners by helping them overcome the capacity and compliance hurdles that often limit their access to donor funding.

The capacity-building component of the Local Partnership Inclusion (LPI) Project was developed in response to recommendations from the LPI Needs Assessment Research first conducted for the African region in 2020-2021. It provided a comprehensive multidimensional analysis integrating qualitative and quantitative data, providing evidence-based recommendations to enhance local partner inclusion in the TEA platform. It also identified the need for technical support to help local companies scale their operations and advance innovation toward achieving Sustainable Development Goal 7.

In addition, the TEA technical assistance facility was created in response to the challenges of accessing grant funding by local organisations operating in the clean energy sector. Despite being well-positioned to drive transformative energy access solutions in their local contexts, these organisations often face institutional, technical, and procedural barriers when competing for donor and development partner funding.

The facility targeted local partners in countries that have historically received less attention in global climate and energy investment flows, which include:

▼ **Sub-Saharan Africa: all countries except South Africa were eligible;**



▼ **South/Southeast Asia: Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Vietnam; and**



▼ **Indo-Pacific: Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu.**



By focusing on these regions, the technical assistance facility reinforced TEA's commitment to inclusive energy transition strategies and locally driven impact.

1.4 Objectives of the TEA technical assistance facility

The core objective of the TEA technical assistance facility was to maximise the participation and success of local partners in securing grant funding under the TEA platform and similar financing windows. The technical assistance facility sought to close the technical and due diligence gaps that often prevent otherwise capable and impactful organisations from accessing international support. Specifically, the technical assistance facility offered tailored support to local partners through three primary areas, which were designed to equip organisations with the tools and knowledge they need not only to apply for TEA grants but also to enhance their ability to secure other forms of development financing in the future, as described below.

- i. **Pre-application support:** The technical assistance facility provided direct assistance to organisations preparing grant applications. This includes help with structuring proposals, aligning project ideas with donor priorities, and articulating impact and value for money. By working closely with applicants during the concept development stage, the technical assistance facility helped them present stronger and more competitive proposals.
- ii. **Due diligence preparation:** Many funding opportunities require extensive due diligence, including financial documentation, legal compliance, and organisational

governance assessments. The technical assistance facility guided local partners through these requirements, ensuring that they are well-prepared to meet the expectations of donors. This support helps to reduce delays and increases the likelihood of successful grant contracting.

- iii. **Development of reusable templates:** Recognising the need for long-term capacity development, the technical assistance facility also supported organisations in developing standardised templates—such as project budgets, policy statements, and proposal templates that can be adapted for future bids (Annex 1). These tools reduce the time and effort required for each subsequent application and promote institutional learning.

Beyond immediate application support, the technical assistance facility aimed to contribute to broader institutional strengthening by building the capacity of the local organisations. By participating in the technical assistance process, local partners built knowledge around donor engagement, project planning, monitoring and evaluation, and financial management. This was aimed at positioning them to engage more effectively with future funding opportunities, both within and beyond the TEA platform.

1.5 Theory of change

The theory of change, as presented in Figure 2, describes the effect of improved proposal quality and increased compliance with grant requirements on access to grant financing by local partners. However, the success of the technical assistance facility assumed that local partners would be committed by dedicating staff to the proposal development process.

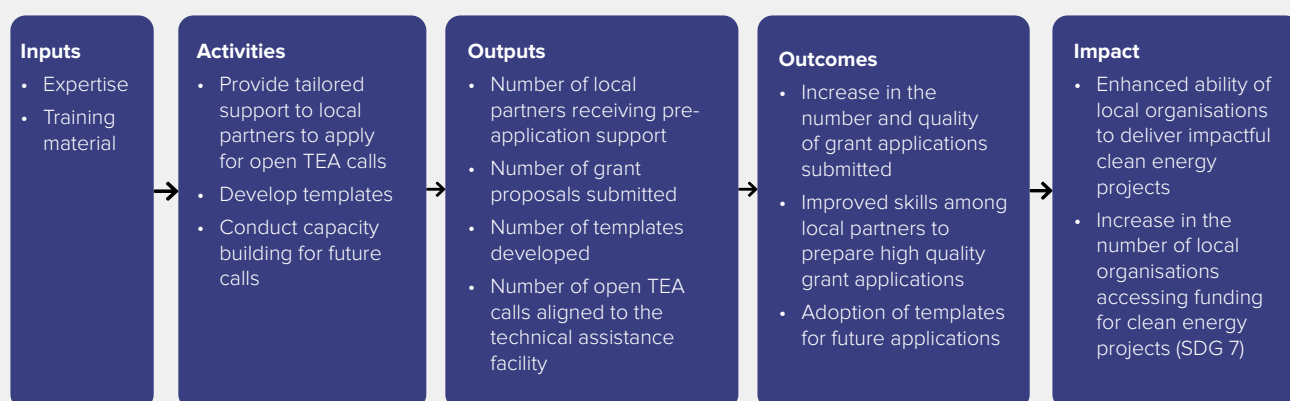


Figure 2: TEA Technical assistance facility Theory of Change

The technical assistance facility acts as a catalytic intervention that strengthens the local partners' capacity to access grant financing, as outlined:

- i. The foundational inputs of the TEA technical assistance facility consist of technical expertise and the provision of training materials to local partners;
- ii. The technical assistance facility translates its inputs into value through a suite of targeted activities, all designed to meet the specific needs of local partners. The activities were structured to strengthen the ability of local partners to submit competitive and fundable grant applications;
- iii. The outputs are concrete deliverables or results that may be directly attributable to the technical assistance facility's interventions, such as improved organisational capacity. This can be demonstrated by changes in the quality and completeness of grant application materials, compliance with application requirements, improved budgeting and financial documentation, and improvements in local partners' ability to articulate their organisational and financial models, delivery approach, and funding needs; and
- iv. The outcomes (medium-term between 2-3 years) are accumulated outputs that are expected to translate into three broad outcomes, including enhanced ability of local partners to scale their operations in energy access, enhanced access to financing by local partner and enhanced inclusivity such as increasing participation of women, youth, and marginalised communities in clean energy value chains—as beneficiaries, employees, and entrepreneurs.

The long-term impact of the TEA technical assistance facility was to contribute to a just, inclusive, and accelerated transition to clean energy by strengthening the capacity of local partners in energy by strengthening the capacity of local partners to access grant financing to implement their programmes, thereby contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 7. This aligns with global goals on climate resilience, sustainable development, and equitable economic growth. Achieving impact assumes

that financed organisations successfully implement their programmes, supported projects reach intended beneficiaries, and that wider ecosystem conditions remain conducive to clean energy uptake. Risks that may limit impact include weak post-award implementation capacity, policy, and/or regulatory instability.

1.6 Scope of the TEA technical assistance facility

The technical assistance facility was designed to provide targeted, high-quality support to local partners seeking to access funding through the TEA programme. The scope of the technical assistance facility was structured into two distinct phases:

- i. The technical assistance set-up phase; and
- ii. The technical assistance delivery phase.

The technical assistance facility was limited to 22 local partners making applications to TEA open calls, with participation limited to the local partners within the TEA focus areas (see section 1.3).

1.6.1 Technical assistance facility set-up

During the technical assistance facility set-up phase, foundational work was undertaken to prepare for effective delivery of the technical assistance. This included developing the application forms, the eligibility criteria, the technical assistance facility dissemination content, training modules, and the templates.

The establishment of the technical assistance facility was a collaborative and iterative process that involved setting clear expectations regarding the scope, deliverables, and operational modalities of the technical assistance facility. As part of the process, the technical assistance facility undertook a forward-looking approach by forecasting future TEA open calls to ensure readiness and responsiveness. This was done by working closely with the Carbon Trust¹ team to identify a pipeline of potential open calls from the TEA partners. Concurrently, the content of the technical assistance modules was reviewed and refined to reflect both emerging needs and best practices.

¹ Carbon Trust is the TEA lead delivery partner

Five core modules formed the backbone of the technical assistance facility's support framework:

Module 1: Understanding Grant Financing:



This module introduced participants to the structure, purpose, and requirements of grant financing. It covered the different types of grants available from development partners, foundations, and climate or energy access funds, and explained how these funding mechanisms differ from loans or equity financing. The module also discussed donor priorities, eligibility criteria, and common evaluation requirements. By understanding how grant financing works, organisations can better identify suitable funding opportunities and position their proposals more competitively.

Module 2a: Budgeting and Financial Management:



This module focused on developing realistic project budgets and sound financial management systems. Participants learned how to prepare detailed budgets aligned with project activities, estimate costs accurately, and ensure transparency in the use of funds. It also introduced core financial management practices such as tracking expenditures, maintaining financial records, internal controls, and complying with donor financial reporting requirements. These skills are critical for demonstrating financial accountability and building credibility with funders.

Module 2b: Financial Modelling:



This module introduced participants to financial modelling as a tool for planning and evaluating project feasibility. It focused on how organisations can develop simple financial projections to estimate project costs, revenues (where applicable), funding gaps, and long-term sustainability. Participants were guided on how to structure financial models that support grant applications by demonstrating financial viability and effective use of resources. The module also introduced basic scenario analysis to help organisations anticipate financial risks and uncertainties.

Module 3: Gender, Inclusion, and Social Equity:



This module highlighted the importance of integrating gender, inclusion, and social equity considerations into project design and implementation. Many donors increasingly require projects to demonstrate how they address inequalities and ensure that benefits reach marginalised or underserved groups. The module provided practical guidance on identifying gender and social inclusion gaps, incorporating inclusive design principles, and developing indicators to measure social impact.

Module 4: Understanding Grant Review:



This module was designed to help local partners better understand the grant review process and what reviewers look for in grant applications. It introduced them to the different stages of grant application review, from the initial submission of grant proposals to the final award notification.

Module 5: Post-Grant Award Management:



This module focused on the effective management of grants after funding has been secured. It covered key aspects such as grant compliance, monitoring and evaluation, reporting requirements, and stakeholder communication. Participants learned how to track project progress against grant milestones, manage risks, and ensure proper documentation of results and financial expenditures. Strong post-award management helps organisations maintain donor confidence and increases their chances of securing future funding.

The training modules were designed based on an assessment of the key barriers local organisations face when accessing and managing grant financing. Evidence from development finance and energy access programmes shows that many organisations face a wide range of hurdles. They struggle not only with preparing competitive grant applications but also with demonstrating financial management capacity. In addition, they struggle with building credible project models, integrating social considerations such as gender and inclusion, and complying with donor reporting and accountability requirements. The use of a model curriculum ensured consistency, while flexibility in delivery allowed responsiveness to varying levels of institutional maturity and experience among the local partners.

The set-up phase also involved active collaboration between EED Advisory Ltd, the lead TEA delivery partner- Carbon Trust, the TEA partner offering the open call, and the communications teams from both TEA and the TEA partner offering the open call, whose roles were as follows:

- i. EED Advisory Ltd managed the implementation and delivery of the technical assistance facility;
- ii. Carbon Trust provided oversight and strategic guidance;
- iii. TEA partners offering the open call ensured alignment with the call's objectives and requirements; and
- iv. The communications teams from both TEA and the TEA partner supported outreach, messaging, and dissemination through platforms such as LinkedIn and respective websites

During this stage, EED Advisory Ltd worked with the TEA partners to ensure more inclusive selection criteria, such as the need to use financial statements rather than audited financial

accounts. Many local or community-based organisations operate with limited resources and may not yet have the capacity or financial scale required to produce audited accounts, yet they may still have strong implementation experience and financial oversight systems. Requiring audited accounts at the proposal stage can, therefore, unintentionally exclude capable organisations. This collaboration with the funder enabled the screening of the best-placed local partners based on the funder's eligibility criteria. The TEA partners that were engaged during the set-up phase included:

- i. SEforALL through the Powering Healthcare Innovation Fund (PHIF) open call;
- ii. Powering Renewable Energy Opportunities (PREO); and
- iii. Zero Emission Generators (ZE-Gen).

1.6.2 Technical assistance phase (application, selection, and delivery)

A. Technical assistance facility launch

The application to the technical assistance facility was launched concurrently with that of the TEA open calls (Figure 3). The concurrent launch was to ensure that the local partners receiving the technical assistance were those aiming at submitting their proposals to the launched TEA open call. The approved application form was launched online, and its wide dissemination was done through the TEA platforms (website, LinkedIn) and shared by EED Advisory Ltd through its platforms and professional network, ensuring broad and equitable access to information. This broad outreach was designed to attract a diverse pool of applicants from across the target regions as defined by the respective TEA open call.

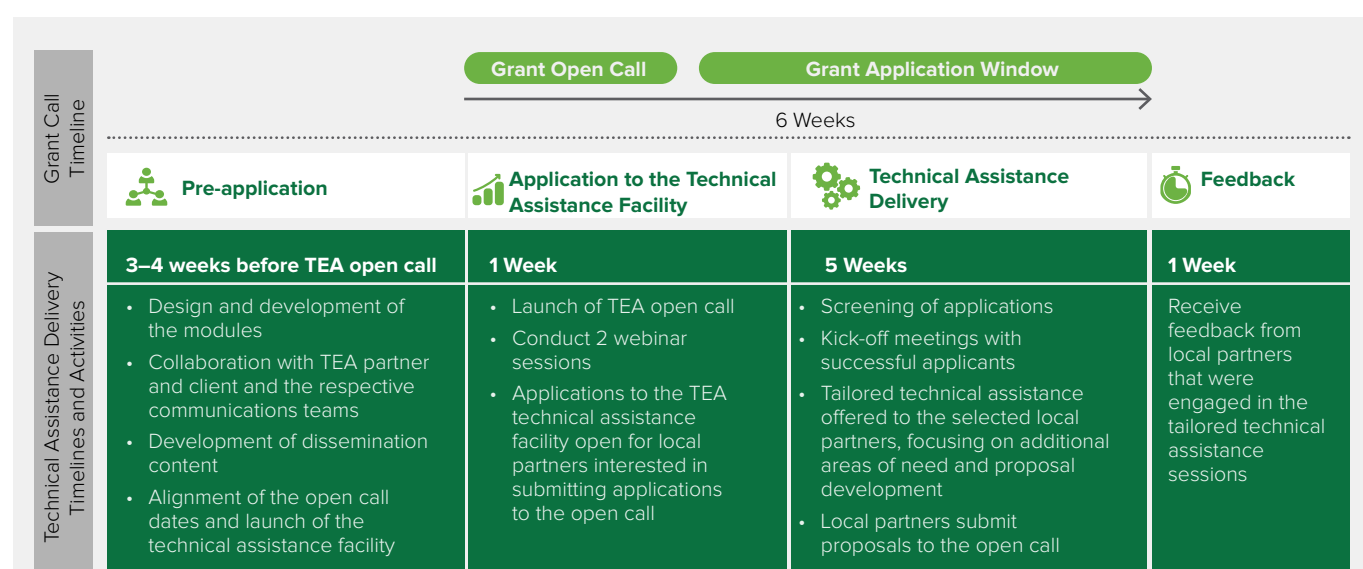


Figure 3: Technical assistance facility lifecycle

Once the TEA opened the call and the technical assistance facility was launched, two models of delivering the technical assistance were adopted:

- i. One-to-many technical assistance: Refers to generalised technical assistance offered in the form of webinars; and
- ii. One-to-one technical assistance: Refers to tailored technical assistance offered to the selected eligible local partners

During the TEA open call application window, EED Advisory Ltd conducted 2 webinar sessions as one-to-many technical assistance. The aim was to provide a generalised form of technical assistance to registered participants. The incorporation of the webinars was included from the second round of the technical assistance facility, as it was an early finding that reaching a wider audience with generalised grant-writing advice would be welcomed. These one-to-many sessions included:

- i. Webinar 1: Grant application preparation; and
- ii. Webinar 2: Navigating the grant application process

The six webinars were attended by 613 participants across the three TEA open calls (PREO, ZE-Gen, and PHIF round 2). The webinar attendees showcased remarkable diversity, drawn from 54 countries; 25 from sub-Saharan Africa, 5 from South/Southeast Asia, 2 from Pacific Island Countries, and 22 from non-TEA focus countries. In addition to the geographical diversity, participants were not just from anglophone countries but also from francophone and lusophone countries. However, English-speaking countries dominated the list of participants. For the webinars, however, no additional support was provided to participants from non-English-speaking countries. During the one-to-one technical assistance sessions, however, local partners from francophone countries received support from the EED Advisory's team of French speakers.

Besides the technical content, participants were informed of the opportunity to receive the pre-application support and provided with an overview of the respective TEA open call. The information provided included eligibility requirements, thematic priorities, and expected timelines of the technical assistance and those of the respective TEA open call. This early engagement aimed to clarify expectations, support informed applications, and improve overall application quality.

B. Application to the technical assistance facility

Local partners who were interested in receiving further technical assistance and applying for the TEA funding were required to submit an application through an online application tool (Jotform). The tool automatically filtered out applications that did not meet the basic eligibility criteria for

both the technical assistance and the TEA open call. The eligibility criteria were critical as they ensured alignment with the technical assistance objectives and the TEA open call. However, to ensure the technical assistance facility was not exclusionary, the eligibility criteria were designed to ensure the inclusivity of local partners based on the following 3 criteria:

- i. **Local partner criteria**, which comprised three categories, of which applicants were required to meet two of the following:

- a. **Operational headquarters (Geographical location):** the organisation/business is headquartered in any of the target regions/ countries;

- b. **Founding/ownership:** Organisation/business ownership structure is in line with meeting the stipulated majority (over 51%) ownership/founding by citizen/ diaspora citizen/ refugee, migrant, or forced displaced person/ indigenous people/communities in the target regions/ countries; and

- c. **Networks and support operating in target countries:** organisation/business that is a network or organisation which provides support to autonomous national/ regional network/organisations; supports and delivers to indigenous peoples/communities; supports and delivers to refugees, migrants, and forced displaced persons.

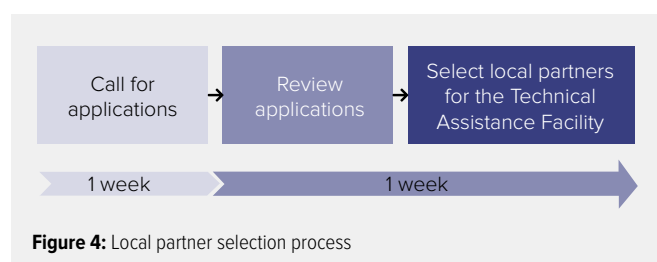
- ii. **Registration criteria:** organisations/businesses that had been in existence for over 2 years. The rationale was that such organisations are likely to have established some form of operational systems and track record in energy access and, therefore, would be ready to effectively participate in the technical assistance facility.

- iii. **Legal status criteria:** organisations/business that had formal legal status.

Lack of compliance and fulfilment of 2 out of the 3 mandatory criteria instantly disqualified an organisation from proceeding with filling in and submitting the application form.

C. Selection of the applicants

The 106 applications received from local partners were then assessed by the EED Advisory Ltd team using a pre-developed scoring matrix. The evaluation focused on the organisation's mandate, relevance to the funding call, implementation experience, and readiness to engage in proposal development. Based on the scoring outcomes, shortlisted local partners were invited to the one-to-one technical assistance sessions, providing them with individualised, organisation-specific pre-application support. This selection process is illustrated in Figure 4.



At the close of the technical assistance facility, 22 local partners distributed across 13 countries in sub-Saharan Africa (Figure 5), received technical assistance. The breakdown of the number of local partners supported per call is provided in Table 2.

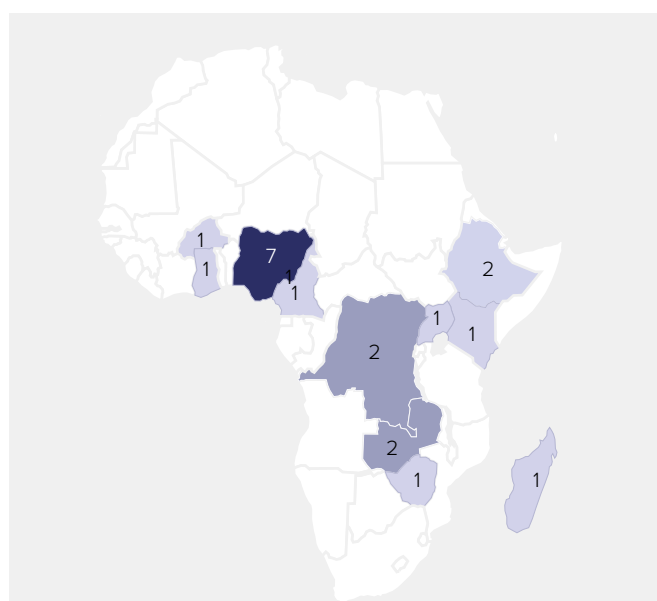


Table 2: Local partners supported through TEA open calls

#	TEA Open Call	Dates of technical assistance / TEA open call window	Number of local partners supported
1	Powering Healthcare Innovation Fund Open Call-Round 1	3 rd June to 7 th July 2024	5
2	Powering Renewable Energy Opportunities (PREO)	11 th December 2024 to 31 st January 2025	8
3	Zero Emission Generators (Ze-Gen)	26 th February -16 th April 2025	4
4	Powering Healthcare Innovation Fund Open Call-Round 2	28 th July to 8 th September 2025	5

1.6.3 Approach used to deliver the one-to-one technical assistance

Building on the standardised module content, the technical assistance was delivered on a one-on-one basis, allowing facilitators to adjust emphasis, pacing, and depth based on the specific needs and capacities of each local partner. While the overall structure of the technical assistance remained the same, greater attention was given to areas where individual local partners demonstrated the greatest gaps, such as problem articulation, budgeting, impact demonstration, or alignment with donor priorities.

This needs-based emphasis proved to be a significant strength of the technical assistance facility. It enabled focused engagement on critical weaknesses without overwhelming local partners with unnecessary content and allowed the technical assistance sessions to progress at a pace aligned with each organisation's internal availability and decision-making processes. Each organisation received 5 sessions, and each session lasted approximately 1 hour to 1 hour 15 minutes. In several cases, this approach facilitated more honest discussions around institutional constraints that would not have been possible in a generic or group-based training format.

Following the completion of the modules, local partners developed proposals in response to the respective TEA open calls, which were then reviewed by the EED Advisory Ltd team. This stage proved to be significantly more demanding and revealing than the training itself. The proposal reviews exposed persistent weaknesses that had not been fully addressed during the technical assistance sessions, including gaps in logical coherence, weak results frameworks, misalignment between narratives and budgets, weak impact documentation, weak implementation plans, and limited responsiveness to donor priorities. These issues were diagnosed through a structured review of submitted proposals against donor evaluation criteria, combined with written and verbal feedback from reviewers during the application support process.

Importantly, the review process allowed the EED Advisory Ltd team to carry forward lessons from the technical assistance sessions and apply them in a concrete, iterative manner. Feedback was grounded on real proposals rather than hypothetical examples, enabling local partners to better understand how earlier technical assistance concepts translated into practice. For several local partners, this iterative review process, rather than the standardised technical assistance modules, was the point at which meaningful improvements in proposal quality became evident, which resulted in the evolution of organisational practices to embed these learnings.

Technical Assistance Facility Evaluation

Following the completion of the technical assistance, it was imperative to evaluate the effectiveness of the technical assistance support provided to local partners. This self-evaluation, conducted by EED Advisory, was guided by the following research questions:

- i. What lessons did the Transforming Energy Access Platform and EED Advisory Ltd learn that can inform future technical assistance programmes and ensure that they deliver value for money, are timely, and are beneficial to local partners?
- ii. Does grant pre-application technical assistance create sustainable change for local partners?
- iii. To what extent did the technical assistance strengthen local partners' capacity to develop competitive grant applications for future grant opportunities?

2.1 Quality assurance

Since this was a self-evaluation, ensuring a robust process was crucial. Therefore, a steering committee of four members, drawn from a pool of TEA partners, was established to oversee

the self-evaluation process. The terms of reference of this committee included:

- i. Reviewing the methodological approach for implementing the evaluation;
- ii. Reviewing the survey questionnaires;
- iii. Reviewing the evaluation report; and
- iv. Providing written feedback on the reviewed outputs

It must be noted that the steering committee did not independently verify the results of this work but only shaped the quality of the outputs.

2.2 Methods of the technical assistance facility evaluation

Table 3 summarises the key data collection and analysis approaches adopted for this technical assistance facility evaluation. All data collection techniques and additional information on data collection are provided in Annex 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Table 3: Summary of the data collection tools used to evaluate the technical assistance facility

#	Data collection approach	Target audience	Key information gathered	Data collection periods	Number of responses
1	Literature review on technical assistance		- Drew comparisons with other forms of technical assistance - Lessons learned/recommendations for the TEA technical assistance	Was a continuous process	Not applicable
2	Application forms	Local partners	Included information on: - Organisation type, Revenue (financial statements) - Experience in applying for grants (challenges documented) - Technical assistance requirements applied for - Gender-Female-led, women's proportion in leadership - Grants received before - Experiences with technical assistance - Suggestions for improvements	At the launch of the technical assistance facility	22 were selected out of the 106 applications received
3	Feedback forms			After each round of technical assistance	19

#	Data collection approach	Target audience	Key information gathered	Data collection periods	Number of responses
4	EED trainer insights	EED trainers	Feedback was gathered from all EED trainers after the technical assistance round, which included information on: - Assessment of the selection process, criteria, and communication with the local partners - Assessment of the approach used to deliver the technical assistance - Timing of the technical assistance - Perception of the staff to develop the proposals	At the end of each technical assistance	22
5	Case Studies	Local partners	Semi-Structured interviews were used to generate data for the case studies. The questions were built on the online survey for local partners and were based around: - Understanding the experience of the organisation with the technical assistance - Organisational capacity areas most impacted - Experience applying for grants pre and post the technical assistance - Grants received pre and post the technical assistance - Timing of the technical assistance - Feedback received from grant reviewers - Organisational capacity of staff -comparing pre- and post-technical assistance	Close of technical assistance	3
6	Online survey	TEA partners	Included information on: - Overall proposal quality - Perceived value of support	At the close of the project to all relevant TEA partners	3 (100% response rate)
		Local partners	Included information such as: - Organisational profile - Participation and outputs - Perceptions and usefulness - Suggestions - Case study participation	At the close of the project to all local partners	11 out of the 22 local partners supported (50%)

2.3 Data analysis approach

The quantitative data from the semi-structured surveys were analysed using descriptive statistics, and the results were presented through charts and tables and integrated into the findings. On the other hand, the qualitative data analysis approach was divided into two elements: first, the thematic analysis of local partners' application and feedback forms, EED Advisory Ltd trainer insights, and online surveys for

local partners and TEA Partners. Second was the thematic analysis of the semi-structured interview data to generate the case studies. Whilst there was an overlap between these two elements, this approach reflected the need to develop standalone case studies to illustrate the importance and potential impacts of the technical assistance facility. Additional information on data analysis is provided in Annex 8.

Findings

This pre-application technical assistance was designed as a targeted, capacity-strengthening intervention to support local organisations in accessing competitive grant financing. The core assumption underpinning the intervention was that timely, practical, and context-specific support would:

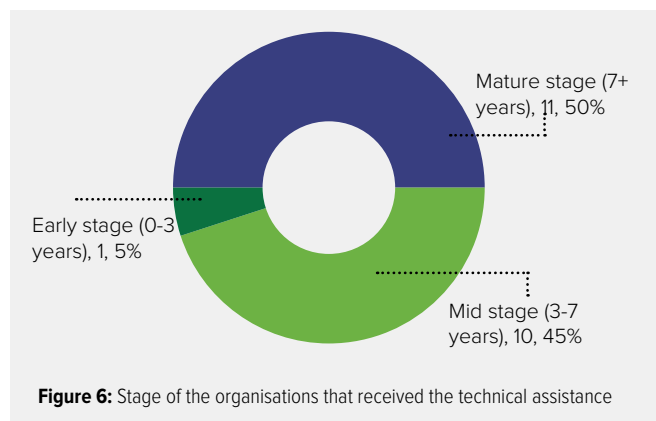
- i. Improve the quality of individual grant applications;
- ii. Strengthen organisations' broader grant readiness; and
- iii. Generate learning that extends beyond a single funding opportunity.

By combining structured learning with hands-on proposal development support, the technical assistance sought to move organisations from having strong technical ideas to being able to clearly communicate those ideas in ways that align with funder expectations. Over time, this was expected to contribute to stronger organisational systems, reduced reliance on external consultants, and improved positioning within the clean energy financing ecosystem.

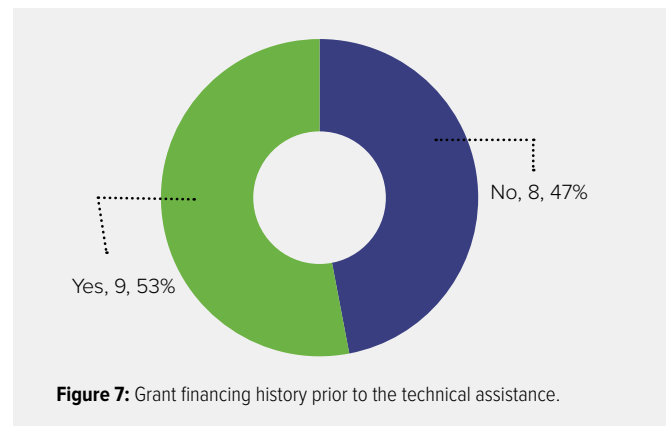
3.1 Local partner profile, motivations, and expectations for applying to the technical assistance facility

3.1.1 Organisational profile

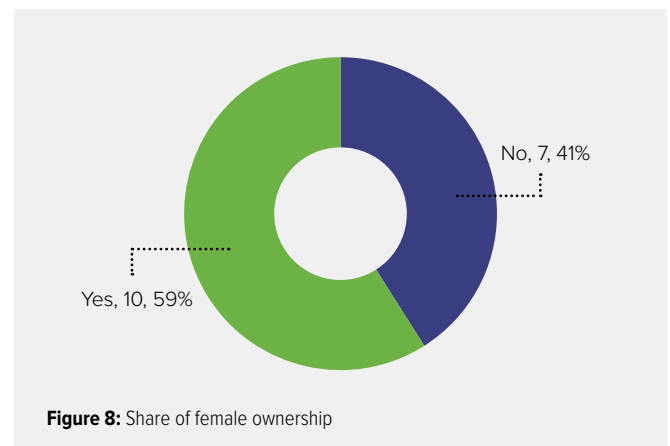
The data provided by the local partners provided a picture of the type of organisations that received the TEA technical assistance. The analysis presents their organisational stage (Figure 6) indicating that out of the 22 local partners supported by the technical assistance facility, 10 (45%) were in the mid-stage, while only 1 (5%) local partner was in its early stage.



The analysis reinforces the fact that organisations across the growth stage face challenges in applying for grants, as illustrated by the presence of a significant share of mature stage companies in the technical assistance facility. Their grant application history prior to receiving the technical assistance, as derived from the application forms, indicated that there was an almost equal split between those who had received grants (53%) and those who had not received grants (47%) (Figure 7). The data was synthesised from information of 17 local partners, as this component of the application form was incorporated after the first round of technical assistance, which had already supported 5 local partners.



Further to this analysis, female-led organisations were the majority (59%) (Figure 8), with share ownership ranging from 20% to 60%. A considerable number of organisations had women holding 50+ shares (6/9 representing 66.67%) in the companies.



Comparison between female-led organisations and grant financing history indicated that 7 of the female-led organisations had not received any grants before the technical assistance, as demonstrated by Table 4. Female-led organisations secured less funding compared to non-female-led organisations, receiving a very small portion of the total financing (1.6% where the outlier is included and 14% for the adjusted funding excluding the outlier).

Table 4: Company ownership and grant financing history prior to receiving the technical assistance

Category	Number of organisations	Total grant funding (USD) received	Average per organisation	Adjusted average funding (excluding the outlier)
Female-Led	3	\$85,000	\$28,333	\$28,333
Non-Female-Led	6	\$5,397,520	\$899,587	\$167,264
Grand Total	9	\$5,482,520	\$609,169	\$195,597

3.1.2 Challenges faced during grant application

Local organisations, despite their growth stage, often face challenges when applying for grants. Applicants to the technical assistance facility cited the complex application process and a lack of supporting documentation as their primary challenge, accounting for 29% of all responses (14 mentions). Developing grant-worthy budgets under volatile conditions (such as currency fluctuations and inflation) proved to be another significant challenge, accounting for 10 mentions (21%). Respondents highlighted skills gaps in grant writing, monitoring and evaluation, and impact communication (9 mentions, 18%). Closely tied to this was a lack of post-submission feedback, which emerged as a critical setback with 7 mentions (14%). Local partners noted they rarely receive explanations for proposal rejections, leaving them without the necessary insights to improve future applications.

3.1.3 Strengthening proposal development capacity

An analysis of the organisational profiles, including the growth stages, grant funding histories, and gender gap in grant financing, revealed reasons why the local partners sought support. They applied to the technical assistance facility primarily to strengthen their proposal writing capacity and eliminate errors that often disqualify or weaken grant applications. Organisations reported that while they had strong

technical ideas, they struggled to present them in structured, funder-aligned formats. The technical assistance was therefore viewed as a strategic opportunity to improve competitiveness, ensure application completeness, and build long-term institutional capacity rather than secure a single grant.

Quote 1: Strengthening proposal development

“We sought technical assistance to strengthen our expertise in developing a compelling proposal that communicates our project’s objectives, methodology, and potential impact.”

“Our objective was to get support in strengthening our budgeting processes, particularly aligning proposed budgets with donor requirements while realistically reflecting implementation costs in Nigeria.”

Another strong motivation for seeking support was the difficulty of producing compliant, realistic, and defensible budgets. Several organisations highlighted challenges in aligning costs with activities, justifying budget lines, and meeting donor cost ceilings while reflecting local market realities. Together, these budgetary constraints received 10 mentions in the application forms. When asked why they applied for the technical assistance, participants mentioned that they perceived the technical assistance as critical to strengthening their budgeting systems. They aimed to ensure that financial plans matched the technical narrative and implementation context, thus enhancing both the feasibility and strategic alignment of their proposed projects (Quote 1).

3.2 Assessment of the technical assistance facility

At the end of each round of technical assistance, local partners provided their feedback on the technical assistance facility. Nineteen (19) local partners rated the various aspects of the technical assistance facility on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest, as illustrated in Figure 9. Encouragement to ask questions received the highest average rating (mean of 9.1), indicating that the local partners were encouraged to engage during the technical assistance sessions.

This was followed closely by organisation and structuring of the sessions (mean of 9.0). While the overall satisfaction with the technical assistance facility was high (mean of 8.5), the presence of relatively low minimum scores for some aspects indicates variation in participants’ experience. The lowest scores for certain components ranged between 2 and 4. For instance, one respondent assigned the lowest ranking (2) for the usefulness of the templates and the level of interaction during technical assistance training sessions.

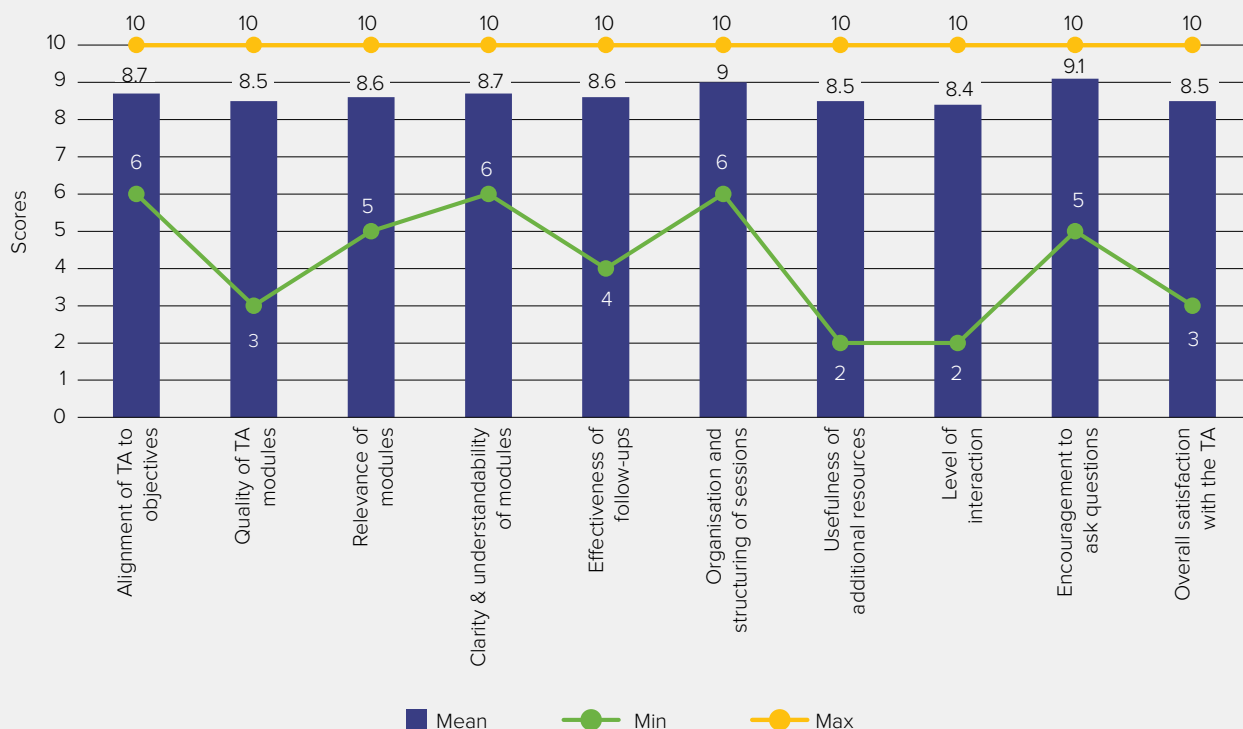


Figure 9: Feedback on the technical assistance facility from the perspective of local partners

3.2.1 Alignment of the technical assistance facility objectives to the applicant expectations

Respondents emphasised that the technical assistance was closely aligned with the expectations of the local partners (Quote 2). Organisations reported that facilitators demonstrated a strong understanding of the funder's priorities and tailored the guidance accordingly. The technical assistance helped applicants refine their proposals to better match the grant's thematic focus and eligibility criteria.

Quote 2: Alignment of technical assistance objectives to participant expectations

"The technical assistance sessions were closely aligned with our project goals and strengthened our proposal significantly."

Respondents described the support as "targeted, relevant, and responsive" to the call requirements. The absence of very low minimum scores in this area suggests a broad consensus that the technical assistance remained focused and purpose driven. Minor variations in scoring appeared linked to differing organisational expectations, such as key

performance indicators and more examples on budgeting, rather than misalignment of the support itself.

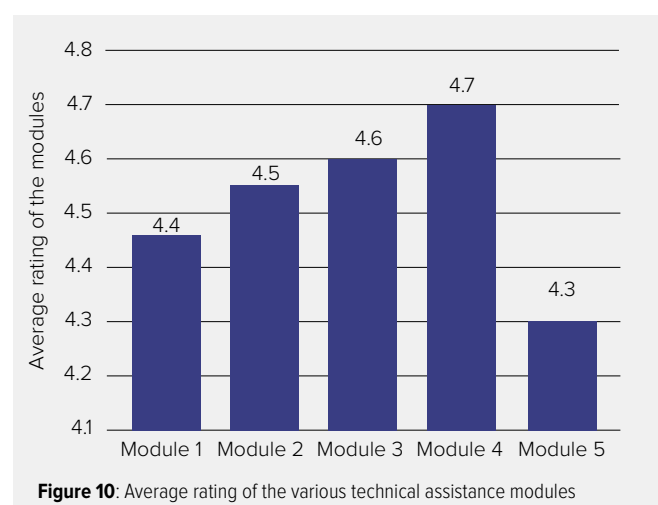
3.2.2 Quality and relevance of the technical assistance

Qualitative findings strongly reinforce the high average ratings for both quality and relevance. Respondents highlighted the clarity of presentations, the logical sequencing of modules, and the practical orientation of sessions. Specifically, modules addressing proposal structuring, theory of change, budgeting, and results frameworks were often cited as particularly valuable (Quote 3). However, a lower minimum score for quality suggests that some targeted improvements on certain modules could enhance value for local partners. For instance, one organisation with prior grant-writing experience indicated that portions of the content felt introductory, noting that some modules were "too general". This perspective likely explains the unusually low rating, even though the overall average remains high.

Quote 3: Quality & relevance of the technical assistance

"The modules were practical and directly applicable to our proposal development process."

3.2.3 Clarity and understandability of modules



Feedback from 11 local partners, collected through the technical assistance evaluation survey, indicated that the technical assistance sessions were delivered in a clear and easy-to-follow manner. Facilitators were described as knowledgeable and effective in breaking down complex concepts into digestible components. Module 4 had the highest rating (average score of 4.7 out of 5), as illustrated by Figure 10. Module 4 on Understanding Grant Review was designed to help local partners better understand the review process and what reviewers look for in proposals from the initial submission to the final award notification.

When asked to provide a reason for their rating, participants reported that the module helped them anticipate the evaluation criteria, identify weaknesses, and refine narratives for clarity and coherence (Quote 4). This session also strengthened local partners' ability to develop better-structured proposals, with improved project justification and clear demonstration of project impact. Overall, participants rated the technical assistance facility highly (Figure 9), citing clarity of instructions, structured communication, and timely responses.

Quote 4: Clarity and understandability of the modules

"This session was highly valuable in understanding how reviewers assess proposals, common strengths, and the key elements that make an application competitive."

"Understanding how proposals are reviewed helped us refine our narrative, strengthen weak sections, and better align our proposal with reviewer expectations."

3.2.4 Effectiveness of follow-ups

Follow-up support was regarded as instrumental in refining draft proposals, receiving an average rating of 8.6 (minimum score 4 and highest score 10). Respondents valued personalised feedback sessions and the iterative review processes.

These follow-ups helped address specific weaknesses, clarify feedback, and ensure alignment with the evaluation criteria. Organisations highlighted that personalised feedback strengthened clarity, coherence, and competitiveness. Written comments were described as actionable and specific, and follow-up virtual sessions allowed respondents to understand recommendations in depth. This mentorship approach was widely credited for transforming proposals from generic narratives into structured, funder-aligned applications.

The slightly lower minimum score suggests that, in some cases, follow-up time may have been constrained or responses perceived as rushed due to tight deadlines. Nevertheless, the qualitative findings confirm that most organisations experienced the follow-ups as constructive and impactful. However, the feedback was pegged on the speed at which the local partners were able to develop their proposals. While some local partners were able to submit their drafts for review early in the process, others failed to submit anything for review. This is a clear indication that, despite offering the technical assistance, much of the effort and commitment must be demonstrated by the local partner applying for the grant.

When asked about the effectiveness of the follow-up session, participants reported improvement in their skills (Quote 5). The proposal review and feedback process revealed that staff capacity improved when learning was applied to real proposals and reinforced through iterative feedback process. Where participants had the opportunity to revise proposals using structured feedback, improvements in clarity, logic, and donor alignment were evident.

This suggests that while basic staff capacity exists, it is often constrained by weak internal systems and processes. In addition, this experience suggests that while standardised technical assistance modules are necessary to establish a common baseline, they are insufficient on their own to significantly improve proposal competitiveness.

Quote 5: Effectiveness of follow-up sessions

"Follow-up engagements ensured that we addressed gaps and refined our proposal adequately."

"This was the most impactful part of the assistance. The personalised feedback, clarity on improvements, and the opportunity to discuss comments strengthened our proposal significantly."

"The written comments were specific and actionable, and the follow-up virtual sessions provided the necessary depth to refine my concept."

3.2.5 Organisation and structuring of sessions

This dimension received one of the highest mean scores (average rating of 9 out of 10), as illustrated by Figure 9. Respondents consistently described one-to-one sessions as

well-planned, logically sequenced, and efficiently managed (Quote 6). Agendas were clear, materials were shared in advance, and timelines were communicated effectively. Organisations noted that the structured format enhanced learning and reduced confusion. The high average score reflects strong satisfaction with facilitation design and session flow.

Quote 6: Organisation and structuring of sessions

“The sessions were well organised, interactive, and responsive to our needs.”

3.2.6 Usefulness of additional resources

Respondents appreciated templates, budgeting tools, policy templates, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) frameworks, and sample proposal structures. These resources were described as practical, easy to adapt, and time-saving, thus the average rating score of 8.5 out of 10 (Figure 9). Participants also reiterated the usefulness of the additional resources, as illustrated by Quote 7. However, the lower minimum score of 2 out of 10 (Figure 9) by one organisation suggests that the organisation may not have fully utilised the additional materials. The assumption is that some of the resources provided, such as the policy templates, may not have been utilised during the proposal submission as they were not required at that stage. However, they would be required once the organisations were shortlisted. Therefore, if they were not shortlisted, they may have found the templates not useful. Nonetheless, to sustainably improve proposal competitiveness, local partners require institutionalised tools such as internal templates, standardised proposal development processes, and clear internal review mechanisms. In addition, there is need for continued hands-on mentoring for staff involved in resource mobilisation.

Quote 7: Usefulness of additional resources

“The templates and examples shared were extremely useful in guiding our proposal writing.”

3.2.7 Level of interaction

Participants described the sessions as interactive, with opportunities for discussion and clarification, rating it at an average of 8.4 out of 10 (Figure 9). The discussions and question-and-answer segments were cited as helpful elements, as illustrated by Quote 8. However, the presence of lower minimum scores of 2 suggests that some respondents desired even more engagement with the facilitators but may have faced time constraints. Qualitative data indicate that interaction quality may have varied depending on the session and scheduling.

Quote 8: Level of interaction

“Interactive discussions allowed us to clarify issues in real time.”

3.2.8 Encouragement to ask questions

This dimension received the highest average score of 9.1 out of 10 (Figure 9), and the qualitative findings strongly affirm this. Respondents repeatedly emphasised that facilitators created a safe and supportive environment for inquiry. Organisations felt comfortable seeking clarification and requesting feedback (Quote 9). Respondents described the facilitators as approachable and responsive, which enhanced learning and confidence. The relatively high minimum score further suggests that most respondents consistently experienced this supportive atmosphere.

Quote 9: Encouragement to ask questions

“The facilitators created a safe environment where we felt comfortable asking questions.”

3.2.9 Overall satisfaction with the technical assistance facility

Overall satisfaction ratings (8.5 out of 10; Figure 9) reflected a strong endorsement of the technical assistance model. Qualitative findings indicated that organisations perceived the support as valuable, capacity-strengthening, and impactful in improving proposal quality, with participants stating their willingness to recommend it to others (Quote 10).

Quote 10: Overall satisfaction with the technical assistance facility

“We would highly recommend this type of pre-application support to other organisations.”

Despite the overall satisfaction and willingness to participate in similar support initiatives in the future with the technical assistance facility, respondents indicated the need for improvement. As demonstrated by Quote 11, these primarily included extending timelines, deepening financial modelling modules, and providing post-grant award mentorship.

Quote 11: Recommendations for improvement

“While the proposal development phase was covered exceptionally well, there was less focus on the post-award transition. Specifically, more guidance on setting up specialised reporting systems or navigating specific donor-compliance software once the grant is secured would have been a beneficial addition.”

“Strengthening business models, revenue strategies, and long-term financial sustainability. Advanced budgeting training, especially on cost-benefit analysis and scenarios.”

3.3 Assessment of the technical assistance facility from a grantor's perspective

The perspectives of the TEA partners who offered TEA open calls were sought to obtain feedback on the technical assistance facility. Their insights aimed to provide feedback on the quality of the proposals reviewed. The information was also useful for informing future technical assistance programmes by highlighting where most attention should be provided from a grantor's perspective. It is important to note that the identity of the local partners that received technical support was not revealed to the TEA partners. The calls were open to the public, including those who did not receive technical assistance. Therefore, this ensured fairness in the proposal review process.

3.3.1 Quality variation

Figure 11 indicates that most of the proposal components, as rated by the three (3) TEA partners, had average scores between 3.3 and 4.0 out of 5, suggesting that applicants demonstrated strong proposal development skills across several areas.

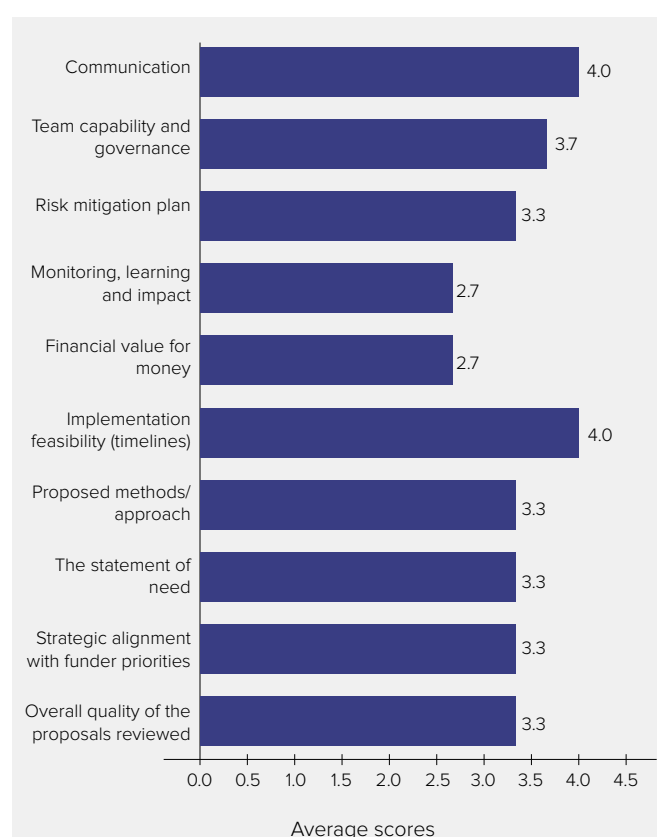


Figure 11: Average rating of the various aspects of proposals received by TEA partners

The highest rated aspects were communication and implementation feasibility, both scoring an average of 4.0 out of 5. In contrast, financial value for money and monitoring, learning, and impact received the lowest score (average of 2.7 out of 5), indicating that applicants found these aspects more challenging, thus suggesting potential priorities for future technical assistance.

The qualitative findings indicate substantial variation in the overall quality of proposals submitted, suggesting inconsistency rather than uniformly weak performance. When asked about the overall quality of the proposals reviewed, the TEA partners consistently described a broad spectrum of submissions, with quality ranging from highly competitive to significantly underdeveloped proposals, as illustrated by Quote 12.

Quote 12: Quality of proposals reviewed by TEA partners

"There was a big range in the quality of the proposals. We had 84 applications; some were very good, and some very poor."

"Overall, the standard of proposals was very high, and the number of eligible proposals was much higher than in previous years."

"We received a large number of applications, of different quality, but we cannot say this was because of the technical assistance provided, as only 5 applicants were supported by this initiative."

At the same time, there were indications of improvement compared to previous funding rounds. However, various factors beyond the technical assistance facility could have influenced the improvement of the proposals. Such external factors include prior grant writing experience, support from other capacity building initiatives, and access to external consultants, among others. The observation provided by the reviewers was based on the general assessment of the proposals they received, and not specific to those that received the TEA technical assistance.

When asked to list elements that distinguished the winning proposals from those that were not successful, the TEA partners noted that winning proposals combined completeness, clarity in problem description, innovation, inclusivity, measurable impact, sustainability, and strategic coherence (Quote 13). They moved beyond compliance to demonstrate maturity, differentiation, and implementation readiness.

Quote 13: Indicators of a winning proposal

"Well written in clear, concise English. High number of jobs created, Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI), or environmental impact. Capital raised or other investors on board."

"Creative approach, established networks, experience in the sector, understanding of the challenges, clear proposal."

“They answered all the questions and criteria required, they were well written, their proposal clearly outlined their innovation and how this would work, they were clear in how the work linked to the objectives of the grant, they had well thought-out and planned workplans and budgets.”

“Most applications followed the scope of work, but most lacked creativity or proposed a different approach to meet the objectives of the proposal.”

3.3.2 Alignment range and compliance without innovation

Strategic alignment with funder priorities reflected variability across submissions, thus receiving an average rating of 3.3 out of 5. The TEA partners justified the rating and noted that although some applicants adhered to the stated scope and eligibility requirements, compliance did not always translate into originality or added value (Quote 14). Some proposals were perceived as replicating the scope rather than demonstrating strategic differentiation. Conversely, stronger proposals demonstrated clearer and more structured alignment.

Quote 14: Proposal alignment to requirements

“Most applications followed the scope of work, but most lacked creativity or proposed a different approach to meet the objectives of the proposal.”

3.3.3 Inconsistency in clarity

Regarding the ability of local partners to clearly define the statement of need, TEA partners noted that while many applicants effectively articulated their proposed opportunity, others struggled with framing or interpreting the statement of need requirement (Quote 15). Local partners are often at different stages of growth and, therefore, differ in their ability to articulate the solutions and the problems they aim to solve in their proposals effectively.

Quote 15: Inconsistency in clarity

“It varied, but most applicants were able to clearly outline what they saw as an opportunity they would like to address.”

3.3.4 Proposed methods/approaches

The findings indicate that the proposed methods received a moderate ranking (an average score of 3.3 out of 5). The findings revealed a divide among applicants. While some demonstrated a clear understanding of the strategies required to implement their proposed project, reviewers revealed that most applications mirrored the scope of work but lacked deeper analysis and reasoning behind their proposed interventions (Quote 16). Nevertheless, some reviewers acknowledged strong comprehension among certain applicants.

Quote 16: Proposed methods/approaches

“Most applications mirrored the scope of work but lacked deeper analysis and reasoning of why they were proposing what they were proposing.”

3.3.5 Value for money

As the respondents mentioned, value for money emerged as one of the most decisive criteria influencing funding decisions, primarily because it was highly variable across submissions. When asked for their perspectives regarding the value for money as demonstrated by the submitted proposals, the TEA partners noted that while many proposals adhered to budget ceilings, it was difficult to link costs to measurable outputs and outcomes (Quote 17).

Quote 17: Value for money

“This was more varied. The value for money was one of the main determinants of success and was not always clear.”

“Most applications were within the budget but failed to prove value for money.”

3.3.6 Monitoring and impact assessment

When asked about their perspectives on the monitoring, learning, and impact as demonstrated by the proposals reviewed, some TEA partners noted structural limitations in how monitoring and learning were assessed, as these elements were not part of the application process. Impact communication, particularly in relation to environmental and social dimensions, was frequently described as unclear (Quote 18). The finding provides valuable insights into potential areas for future technical assistance programmes.

Quote 18: Monitoring and impact measurement

“We look at CO₂ abated and Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) impact. Many applications were very vague and inconsistent in their responses to these questions.”

3.3.7 Team capabilities

As per the qualitative reviews, the experience of the applicant organisations suggested that the respective teams had comparative strengths within the pool. When asked about the team capabilities as proposed in the submissions, the TEA partners mentioned that “*On the whole, applicants had good relevant experience.*”

3.3.8 Challenges faced by local partners

The TEA partners highlighted several challenges faced by local partners. Many local partners faced eligibility challenges and were eliminated at the pre-screening stage. This was

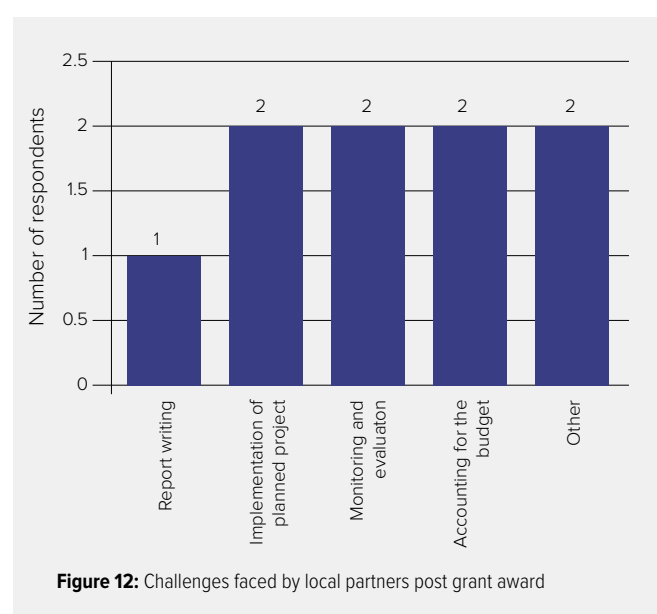
because they failed to follow the guidelines provided in the call for proposals documents. In addition, some local partners submitted proposals that lacked alignment, clarity, and innovation, and failed to adequately address the scope, as demonstrated by Quote 19.

Quote 19: Challenges faced by local partners

“Many did not meet the basic requirements and failed pre-screening. Applicants need to carefully read the guidelines and the call for proposals. For the technical proposals, sometimes the questions were not properly addressed, with some applicants pitching their ideas that did not always match the fund objectives. Some proposals lacked relevant team skills and experience.”

“Very long applications, going over the specific limit.”

“Vague answers not answering the questions. The proposal is generic and does not offer something new.”



Challenges faced by local partners also manifested post-grant award, as highlighted by the TEA partners (Figure 12). A common challenge relates to the implementation of the planned project activities, monitoring and evaluation, and financial accountability. The responses highlighted that while securing grants by local partners is a key milestone, ensuring that the projects are implemented effectively remains a challenge. Insights on the “other” category indicated challenges in due diligence and in translating the project into measurable outcomes.

3.3.9 Due diligence process

Besides the quality of proposals, the TEA partners indicated that funding of local partners was also based on the due diligence process, which involved compliance with formal

requirements and a deeper assessment of the organisational capacity and risk. When asked about the aspects of the supporting documentation that most strongly influence their funding decisions, the financial health of the organisations emerged as a key determinant (Quote 20). Despite the due diligence components being mandatory, some common areas of weakness were identified among the applicants. These included inadequate insurance coverage, challenges in completing administrative and documentation requirements, weak or unclear implementation plans, insufficient cash flows to support project implementation, and a lack of consistency and integrity in the information provided, as demonstrated by Quote 21.

Quote 20: Due diligence requirements

“Financial statements about their financial stability and health. Apart from the basic criteria, such as company registration, tax certificate, etc.”

Quote 21: Non-compliance with due diligence requirements

“We also had one applicant fail the due diligence based on a criminal conviction and sending us conflicting information.”

3.3.10 Technical assistance support

The findings indicate that while technical assistance was conceptually valuable, its operational scale and limited transparency constrained measurable impact. The restricted visibility into which applicants received support made it difficult to assess its contribution to proposal quality, as illustrated by Quote 22.

Quote 22: Usefulness of the technical assistance facility from the TEA partners' perspective

“Looking at the huge range of quality in the proposals, I believe this is an area where such support can be very valuable.”

“There were not enough applicants who received technical assistance, compared to the applications we received, to come to a conclusion that it made a difference.”

3.4 Technical assistance facility outcomes

3.4.1 Short-term outcomes

In the short term, the technical assistance contributed to clear improvements in proposal quality and coherence. Organisations demonstrated stronger articulation of impact, additionality and sustainability, alongside better alignment between budgets, activities and expected outcomes. Importantly, the support also strengthened internal capacity, equipping teams with skills they could apply to future funding

opportunities. These outcomes were consistently reflected in participant feedback, with respondents noting improvements in both the technical understanding and strategic framing of proposals (Quote 23). Additionally, 3 out of the 22 local partners secured grant financing under the TEA open calls, securing a total of £328,034 (US\$440,333).

Quote 23: Short-term outcomes of the technical assistance facility

“The rigour of our responses to the questions has significantly improved.”

“We now understand what grant application reviewers really look for.”

“The budgeting module really stood out. This was a real challenge before.”

3.4.2 Intermediate outcomes

Beyond the immediate application cycle, evidence suggests that the technical assistance contributed to enhanced grant readiness that extends beyond the specific funding calls supported. Local partners have continued to apply for grants post the technical assistance. This aligns with the technical assistance facility’s objective of providing skills useful in grant applications beyond the TEA open calls, as demonstrated by Quote 24. Participants described the skills and tools gained as transferable, enabling them to approach future applications with greater structure, confidence, and internal coordination. The organisations also reported improvements in internal processes related to budgeting, storytelling, and impact framing, indicating that learning was being absorbed at an organisational level rather than remaining solely with individuals.

Quote 24: Intermediate outcomes of the technical assistance facility

“We have used the material and templates provided to train other staff members who were not able to attend the sessions. This has helped standardise our internal approach to project design and financial planning.”

“The organisation has applied the proposal development approach, budgeting frameworks, and the use of templates to other funding applications and internal project planning. The insights gained have also strengthened internal decision-making around project design, cost justification, and compliance readiness.”

“We have applied lessons from the budgeting and financial planning module to create more tailored and donor-accepted budgets while accounting for every part of the project.”

3.4.3 Long-term intended impact

While it is too early to assess long-term impacts, early evidence suggests that this type of technical assistance can contribute to sustainable changes at both individual and organisational levels, provided it is designed with institutional learning in mind. At the organisational level, the reusable templates, standard operating procedures, and documented compliance practices represent a durable asset. These tools remain with the organisation beyond the TEA funding cycle and can be adapted for other donor opportunities, reducing dependency on external consultants over time. At the individual level, staff involved in the technical assistance facility gained practical exposure to donor expectations, budget formulation, and compliance requirements. This experiential learning is more likely to be retained and applied than stand-alone training sessions, particularly when staff are directly responsible for preparing and submitting applications.

However, sustainability is not automatic. The technical assistance will most likely create lasting change where organisations:

- i. Have stable core teams able to retain institutional knowledge;
- ii. Integrate new tools and practices into their internal processes; and
- iii. Continue to pursue funding opportunities beyond TEA.

This highlights the importance of coupling technical assistance with organisational commitment and internal ownership. A consistent qualitative outcome was that the technical assistance facility strengthened organisational systems beyond immediate grant submissions. Local partners reported that subsequent applications improved significantly, becoming clearer, better structured, and more aligned with donor expectations. The technical assistance was credited with enhancing confidence, efficiency, and the ability to interpret funder requirements more accurately, as demonstrated by Quote 25.

Quote 25: Long-term intended impact

“Following the tailored technical assistance, our experience with subsequent grant applications has improved significantly.”

“The support increased our confidence and efficiency during the application process.”

“The organisation has applied the proposal development approach, budgeting framework, and use of templates to other funding applications and internal project planning.”

“Enhanced monitoring and evaluation planning: We began strengthening our M & E framework by defining indicators, outcomes, and impact pathways more precisely.”

Local partners also reported applying the learning to internal systems such as budgeting processes, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) planning, and project design frameworks. Partners described strengthening their monitoring and evaluation approaches through improved indicator definition, clearer outcomes mapping, and stronger impact pathway articulation. This suggests that the technical assistance

facility contributed to broader institutional strengthening and improved operational readiness for donor reporting.

Over the longer term, this technical assistance is expected to improve local organisations’ chances of securing grant financing and strengthen their competitiveness within the clean energy ecosystem. By building internal proposal development capacity, the intervention aims to reduce reliance on external consultants and foster the emergence of more resilient, locally led actors capable of engaging confidently with diverse funders.

Case Studies

Before commencing the virtual interviews, permission to record the interview session and feature their organisations as case studies in the report was sought from the respective local partners, who all consented. The case studies illustrate the outputs, outcomes, and impacts of the technical assistance facility, based on the lived experience of the local partners. The report features case studies derived from the semi-structured interviews conducted with three local partners: Ajat Solar Systems from Nigeria, Masontsika from Madagascar, and Munakyalo Agrofresh (currently ClimaVault Africa) from Uganda.

4.1 Case study 1: Ajat Solar Systems, Nigeria

4.1.1 Background

Ajat Agro-Allied Limited received technical assistance and submitted a proposal to the ZE-Gen open call. The company operates under the brand Ajat Solar Systems in Nigeria and is on a mission to transform energy access across Africa. The company provides sustainable, globally certified solar solutions, replacing noisy, polluting fossil-fuel generators with clean energy alternatives. Serving households, farmers, and small businesses, the company distributes Verasol and International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC)-certified equipment, bridging gaps in the energy sector while actively reducing carbon emissions.



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Following a partnership with the Global Disability Innovation (GDI) Hub, Ajat Solar Systems has expanded its social impact initiatives. This expansion followed the completion of the technical assistance programme and the implementation of a self-funded pilot solar initiative supporting persons with disabilities through selected Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs). In collaboration with Dot Glasses, the company now distributes eyeglasses to improve literacy, inclusion, and economic opportunities for persons with disabilities in underserved communities in Nigeria.

4.1.2 Prior to the technical assistance

Despite its technical prowess, Ajat Solar Systems struggled to grow due to the Chief Executive Officer's (CEO) limited managerial and financial experience. With a background in Applied Physics, the CEO excelled at solar technology but lacked the skills to navigate business management, grant processes, and financial strategy. Financial expertise, such as conducting audits, was outsourced at high cost without sufficient internal understanding, leaving the CEO unable to discuss financials with investors confidently. Operational gaps, stock losses, and the absence of structured monitoring, evaluation, and key performance indicators hindered operational efficiency.

4.1.3 The intervention

The technical assistance facility implemented a holistic capacity-building programme designed to address the company's structural weaknesses, not just its immediate operational needs. The intervention included managerial training that strengthened leadership capabilities and strategic planning, helping the CEO transition from a technical expert to an organisational leader. Improved financial literacy, which led to in-house financial management and the development of KPIs, has reduced dependence on external consultants. Ajat Solar Systems has integrated gender-sensitive practices into its governance and workforce composition and is leveraging AI to operationalise financial templates and support internal decision-making.

4.1.4 The outcome

The company's participation in the TEA technical facility led to significant progress in its organisational capacity to develop proposals and form partnerships. The company successfully submitted a proposal to the ZE-Gen open call, which aligned with the TEA open calls. In a separate success, the company was awarded US\$25,000 under the Economic Community of West African States Regional Off-Grid Electricity Access Project (ECOWAS/ROGEAP) grants for the first time, marking a major milestone in its growth. The ECOWAS/ROGEAP project focuses on electrifying rural households in the Olomo/Oloro community using Solar Home Systems. It is aimed at improving access to reliable and sustainable energy for underserved communities. Furthermore, the integration of AI-assisted financial documentation has improved reporting efficiency, reduced audit costs, and strengthened profit margins. Enhanced monitoring systems have minimised stock losses and improved operational efficiency.

Strategic partnerships with Dot Glasses expanded the company's social impact beyond energy solutions, while the inclusion of females on the board and the recruitment of



The ECOWAS/ROGEAP project focuses on electrifying rural households in the Olomo/Oloro community using **Solar Home Systems**, aiming at improving access to **reliable and sustainable energy for underserved communities**.



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female field officers strengthened governance and inclusivity. Additionally, Ajat Solar Systems received support under the 60 Decibels' Inclusive Energy Opportunity call. This opportunity was shared by the technical assistance facility with all the local partners, emphasising the importance and value of the already established network. Following the receipt of the technical assistance, Ajat Solar Systems secured its first grant funding, a clear indication of its progress towards institutional transformation. This milestone was driven by several factors: the technical assistance facility's holistic approach, which strengthened core organisational foundations for lasting change; the CEO's vision and determination to address Africa's energy challenges, which motivated the adoption of new managerial and financial skills; and the technical assistance facility's team's responsive guidance and mentorship, which helped turn training into tangible operational improvements.

4.1.5 Challenges

Ajat Solar Systems continues to operate within Nigeria's challenging business environment. High debt interest rates, reportedly reaching up to 60%, combined with stringent collateral requirements, make traditional debt financing largely untenable for most local partners. Additionally, limited investment capital constrains the company to a project-based model, restricting its ability to procure and stock products in the volumes required to meet growing customer demand.

4.1.6 Enduring impact

Despite not being awarded a ZE-Gen grant under the TEA programme, Ajat Solar Systems has taken steps to strengthen and formalise its operations. By shifting from outsourced audits to AI-assisted in-house financial management, the organisation has built a cost-effective, scalable internal structure. Furthermore, board diversification and gender-inclusive hiring practices have provided governance resilience. With multiple grant applications in the pipeline, the company is now well-positioned to scale operations, expand social impact, and sustain these financial and operational improvements.

4.1.7 Conclusion

This case study underscores the importance of bridging technical expertise with managerial and financial literacy within small and medium-sized enterprises. By empowering the founder of Ajat Solar Systems with the tools, knowledge, and confidence needed to manage operations strategically, the technical assistance facility not only enhanced grant readiness but also enabled the organisation to expand its social impact footprint. Today, Ajat Solar Systems stands as a professional, audit-ready, gender-inclusive enterprise capable of driving long-term environmental and social change across Nigeria.

4.2 Case study 2: Masontsika, Madagascar

4.2.1 Background

Founded in 2021, Masontsika is a social enterprise delivering solar home systems through pay-as-you-go and rental models in Madagascar. While the company itself is relatively new, it builds on over a decade of experience through its sister organisation, Tanatech, which has operated in Madagascar's solar market since 2008. Despite possessing strong technical expertise and deep local market knowledge, the organisation had no prior experience with international grant funding. Seeking to diversify revenue streams and strengthen long-term sustainability, it applied for funding under the Powering Healthcare Innovation Fund open call.

4.2.2 Prior to the intervention

At the time of its first application, the company faced working capital constraints typical of pay-as-you-go solar enterprises. Revenues had stagnated, margins were tight, and scaling required new funding sources. Although technically capable, the organisation lacked experience in proposal structuring, donor positioning, and compliance requirements.

4.2.3 The intervention

The technical assistance provided structured support across the entire grant lifecycle. The application module strengthened the company's ability to define measurable outcomes, align proposals with donor expectations, and professionalise written communication. Critically, the post-award module introduced cost-based budgeting, compliance standards, and financial accountability mechanisms, preparing the organisation not only to win grants but to manage them effectively.

4.2.4 The outcomes

The impact was immediate. Masontsika secured its first-ever grant from the Powering Healthcare Innovation Fund open call.

This enabled the implementation of the Masontsika Bazary (Powerhub project), which is a hybrid model that combines Energy as a Service (EaaS) with a Pico PV pay-as-you-go system (PAYG) across 12 health facilities in Madagascar's off-grid villages. The installed solar PV systems power essential medical equipment while also supporting energy access by charging Pico lights for the PAYG rental and operating a mobile phone charging station (Photo 1). This generates income for the health facility, consequently sustaining the operation and maintenance of the Bazary. Following this first grant was a second major award, worth around €450,000, from EEP Africa. Within one year, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) submitted eight proposals, with two awarded and others declined primarily due to capacity constraints rather than proposal quality. The organisation significantly improved its proposal clarity, reporting standards, and overall credibility within the donor ecosystem, as explained by the participant in Quote 26

Quote 26: Post technical assistance use of resources provided by the technical assistance facility

"And just to let you know that I used the same materials to be successful in the submission of the project, which is called the EEP Africa as well. We got that one as well. So, it was my second submission. We submitted other projects after, for PREO. And there was another one with AFD. However, they did not accept our proposals because we already had two contracts signed with one ongoing project with the Powering Healthcare Innovation Fund and the other one with EEP that was being signed as well. So, they didn't want us to manage a lot of different projects, but they told us that our project was very interesting, and they even encouraged us to submit to future openings. Yes, it was module four and even module six as well, the post-grant award management, because once we got awarded, I went through this as well to understand how I should behave, how the company should behave in terms of making the right steps to be in accordance with the guidelines of the donors. Because it was our first ever project and we understood that it's our opportunity to show the type of people that we are and the type of company that we are to get a good background. And a good background experience to gain more trust with future donors and to get luckier with other grant submissions as well."



Photo 1: Masontsika project pictures

Grant implementation triggered broader institutional reforms. The Powering Healthcare Innovation Fund grant required a shift from margin-based commercial thinking to strict cost-based project management. The larger EEP Africa grant demanded stronger procurement systems, enhanced fraud controls, and more rigorous financial documentation. Leadership engaged a local consultant to strengthen internal policies, improve reporting systems, and formalise supplier selection processes. Staff were retrained to ensure compliance systems were embedded across the organisation. Success was driven by the structured and comprehensive nature of the technical assistance, leadership's openness to reform, and a deliberate investment in internal capacity strengthening. Rather than treating donor requirements as temporary obligations, the organisation institutionalised these improvements within its governance and operational systems.

4.2.5 Challenges

Operational challenges remain, including currency devaluation and bank transfer discrepancies that complicate financial reporting. Managing multiple grants simultaneously also strained administrative capacity. A key lesson learned is that securing funding is only the first step; robust systems,

governance structures, and financial controls are essential for sustainable growth.

4.2.6 Enduring impact

Today, Masontsika views grants as catalytic capital rather than core revenue. With strengthened procurement systems, improved financial management, and enhanced grant management capacity, the organisation is better positioned to pursue larger funding opportunities and scale responsibly. The transformation reflects not only funding success but the development of a resilient institutional foundation capable of supporting long-term energy access expansion across Madagascar.

4.3 Case study 3: ClimaVault formerly Munakyalo Agrofresh, Uganda

4.3.1 Background

Formerly Munakyalo Agrofresh, the Ugandan social enterprise rebranded as ClimaVault Africa. The company provides Internet of Things (IoT)-enabled cold storage solutions, which help farmers preserve produce for up to 21 days.



Photo 2: ClimaVault project pictures.



Serving over **120,000 customers** in Uganda, ClimaVault Africa is now expanding into Tanzania and Rwanda, aiming to **reach more farmers and communities**



Serving over 120,000 customers in Uganda, ClimaVault Africa is now expanding into Tanzania and Rwanda, aiming to reach more farmers and communities. Through the technical assistance facility, the company applied for grant funding under the PREO open call.

4.3.2 Prior to the intervention

Before the technical assistance, ClimaVault Africa struggled to scale. Their grant-writing experience was limited to smaller sums of around US\$20,000, often producing proposals with inconsistent currency or financial reporting. Bookkeeping was unstructured, and gender and youth inclusivity had not been integrated into their business model, limiting both impact and access to larger funding opportunities.

4.3.3 The intervention

Through hands-on, interactive technical assistance sessions, ClimaVault strengthened key areas of its operations. The team learned to develop detailed budgets that accurately reflected both their technical solutions and day-to-day operational realities. They also received guidance on donor-focused grant writing, mastering the “language” of funders, demonstrating traction, and crafting proposals that stood out in competitive funding processes. Additionally, the sessions introduced strategies to actively engage women and young people across the agricultural value chain, ensuring that inclusivity became a core part of the business model.

4.3.4 The outcome

The impact of the technical assistance was immediate and measurable. The company successfully submitted a proposal

to the PREO open call. Another outcome of the technical assistance facility was the adoption of Zoho Books, which digitised the company’s bookkeeping, enabled real-time tracking of operations, streamlined monthly reporting, and provided instant access to financial data for investors and donors. Operational strategies also shifted to focus on market hubs, which successfully drove three major outcomes:



Increased female customer base: A rise in female customers from 40% to 65%;



More inclusive hiring: Five of the seven new employees hired were women; and



Improved revenue: Financial gains achieved by targeting the most active participants in the post-harvest chain.

Within a year, ClimaVault Africa successfully secured four new grants. These include US\$100,000 from GIZ Uganda, US\$50,000 from IEEE Empower a Billion Lives, US\$50,000 from the Z Zurich Foundation, and an additional US\$50,000 support from the Irish Embassy. In addition, the company has gained the confidence to compete for highly competitive US\$100,000 grants and has since secured one such grant from Acumen.

4.3.5 Conclusion

The technical assistance facility gave ClimaVault Africa the tools to professionalise, scale, and compete internationally. Financial systems, inclusive practices, and refined grant-writing capabilities transformed the company into a credible, competitive agri-tech player. The organisation recommended integrating technical assistance into all grant programmes to help local partners maximise impact and meet donor requirements.

Conclusions, Lessons Learnt and Recommendations

This self-evaluation set out to answer three core research questions.



First, “What lessons did the Transforming Energy Access platform and EED Advisory Ltd learn that can inform future technical assistance programmes and ensure that they deliver value for money, are timely, and are beneficial to local partners?”

We found that for technical assistance to generate value for money, it needs to be demand-driven and must address the immediate needs of local partners. Local partners are often at different stages of their growth cycles and therefore present different needs. Thus, tailoring the technical assistance to fit their specific needs is core to the process. The technical assistance facility has demonstrated that it has the potential to generate value for money when considering the investment across the portfolio of trained local partners. For instance, for every pound that was invested in the technical assistance facility, the local partners raised £2.33 through the TEA open calls. This is calculated as a ratio of the investment in the technical assistance facility (£141,016.35) to the total funding (£328,043) secured by local partners from the TEA open calls. However, the outcomes of the technical assistance facility, as illustrated by the case studies, go far beyond the TEA open calls, as some local partners have secured funding outside of the TEA platform, indicating an increase in value for money. It is important to note that the success of the technical assistance facility was not determined by the number of grants awarded from the TEA partners, but by the quality of technical assistance delivered to the 22 local partners, which, in relation to our section question, can act as a springboard for change.



Our second question was, “Does grant pre-application technical assistance create sustainable change for local partners?”

Our findings illustrate that sustainable change is not automatic but is most likely to occur when the technical support results in institutional strengthening. This encompasses both organisational and individual capacity enhancement, establishing internal structures for proposal development and project management that can be sustained beyond the TEA technical assistance facility. While it is still early to claim long-term impacts, the local partners who received technical assistance are on a pathway to long-term sustainability. However, this question must be revisited in subsequent TEA evaluations to fully understand and track the long-term impacts.



The final research question was, “To what extent did the technical assistance strengthen local partners’ capacity to develop competitive grant applications for future grant opportunities?”

have shown that the technical assistance facility plays a crucial role in enhancing the capabilities of local partners to access grant financing. Insights provided indicate that local partners have strengthened their proposal development. The evidence suggests that local partners are capable of generating narratives that demonstrate their impact, have learned the art of aligning their budgets and activities, are sensitive to donor language, and can measure project impacts by setting the key performance indicators.

The following lessons learned and recommendations are drawn from the answers to these questions and underscore a critical link between the technical assistance delivery model and its efficacy, as shaped by the research questions that informed the self-evaluation.

5.1 Lessons learnt

5.1.1 Value of the tailored support

A critical lesson from the technical assistance facility is based on the mode of its implementation and delivery. While the standardised modules provided useful information and knowledge to local partners, some participants found them to be too general. However, the one-to-one component that involved proposal review was consistently identified as the most valuable aspect of the technical assistance facility. This hands-on approach enabled the local partners to address the areas of weakness identified in the review process, such as refining their statements of need, aligning their budgets and work plans, and demonstrating impact. This finding suggests that while the standardised modules can play a role in establishing a foundation, their effectiveness is enhanced when complemented by hands-on support provided to local partners developing their proposals.

5.1.2 International grant processes are often inaccessible to local partners

Across the 22 organisations surveyed, a key finding is that perceived complexity and inaccessibility in international grant processes significantly curb local participation. Many local partners described grant application processes as intimidating and overwhelming due to strict guidelines, extensive documentation requirements, and complex compliance frameworks associated with international funding mechanisms. Local partners' internal teams are often small and technically focused, with limited administrative capacity to manage the level of documentation required in many grant calls. As a result, organisations may hesitate to pursue larger international funding opportunities, even when their solutions are technically strong. This highlights the importance of technical assistance programmes that demystify grant processes, build confidence among local organisations, and provide structured support to navigate donor requirements.

5.1.3 Proposal narrative development and donor alignment are key challenges for local partners

The results highlight that many local clean-energy organisations require targeted support to translate technical innovations into donor-aligned proposal narratives. Before

the technical assistance, many organisations struggled to move beyond general descriptions and translate innovative clean-energy solutions into structured donor language. Key weaknesses included difficulty articulating coherent problem statements, developing strong theories of change, defining measurable outcomes, and linking activities to credible key performance indicators (KPIs). The technical assistance facility is therefore essential in shifting organisations from concept-driven storytelling to structured funder-aligned proposals that demonstrate feasibility and measurable impact.

5.1.4 Need for clear communication by funders

The TEA programmes with open calls need to be clear in their messaging and, where necessary, conduct a more pre-emptive communication about major changes in opportunities to attract the right local partners. For instance, PHIF Round 1 focused on installation, which likely attracted grantees who expected to apply for PHIF Round 2 to undertake similar installation projects. However, PHIF Round 2 changed its focus from installation to data and financing models. This shift in focus made it challenging for many of the local partners to align their proposals with the requirements of the PHIF open call.

5.1.5 Language barrier

A further lesson relates to the importance of language accessibility in regional technical assistance programmes. Linguistic barriers were particularly evident among Francophone organisations in countries such as Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Madagascar, as well as in other non-Anglophone contexts. This experience highlights the need for multilingual technical assistance delivery, including French translation and tailored support for Francophone and Lusophone organisations, to ensure equitable participation and stronger knowledge transfer. In addition, most proposal submissions were required to be in English, which created a barrier for non-English speakers, as additional time was required to translate the documents, compounding the existing constraint of tight proposal development timelines.

5.1.6 The risk of creating executive silos in technical assistance programmes

A related lesson concerns the risk of executive silos in capacity-building programmes. In many cases, only one or two senior staff members, often CEOs or directors, participated in the technical assistance sessions. Conversely, one organisation had five team members attending the sessions, which successfully embedded the knowledge more broadly. Encouraging broader participation across organisational teams

helps ensure that proposal development skills are retained and reduces dependency on a single individual.

5.1.7 Organisational systems and tools for proposal development are key in developing high-quality grant proposals

In addition, the lack of internal organisational tools hindered proposal development. Several local partners lacked standardised internal templates, guidance notes, and structured processes for developing and reviewing proposals. To overcome this challenge, the technical assistance facility provided the local partners with these templates. Furthermore, organisations often had limited experience in managing consortium arrangements, including partnership agreements, governance structures, joint budgeting, and role clarity among partners. These gaps meant that proposal development was frequently ad hoc and highly dependent on individual staff members, resulting in inconsistent proposal quality. This highlights the importance of a holistic approach to technical assistance, which encompasses supporting organisations not only with proposal writing skills but also with practical tools and internal systems, such as templates, checklists, and structured workflows that enable teams to consistently apply learning across multiple funding opportunities.

5.1.8 Collaboration between the different stakeholders is key to delivering high-quality technical assistance

The close working collaboration between EED Advisory Ltd, Carbon Trust, and TEA partners offering the open calls was critical. For instance, during the set-up phase, it was necessary to work closely with the funders when designing the eligibility criteria to ensure that there were no unintended biases when developing the call for proposals. One such bias discussed was the requirement set by a TEA partner for local partners to submit audited accounts during the application process. To ensure inclusivity and flexibility, the technical assistance facility negotiated with this TEA partner to allow local partners to submit either standard financial statements or audited accounts. During these discussions, it was noted that requiring audited financial statements excluded many local partners due to the expenses involved and the complexities surrounding the process, which many small, less mature companies would not be able to meet.

5.1.9 Strengthening the understanding and articulation of value for money

Many local partners struggle to demonstrate value for money (VfM). Therefore, they need additional support to understand

its practical meaning and, consequently, articulate it effectively in their proposals. There is limited clarity on how to translate VfM into concrete metrics, cost justifications, and outcome-oriented narratives. They struggle to clearly demonstrate the link between cost, efficiency, and expected impact, which ultimately weakens what would otherwise be strong proposals. This underscores a clear need for technical assistance programmes to provide hands-on support on how to present the VfM of proposed projects, thereby enhancing applicants' ability to present strong, compelling, and competitive proposals.

5.2 Strategic recommendations for future technical assistance facilities

5.2.1 High-priority recommendations

i. Provide deeper financial and sustainability support

Financial planning remains one of the biggest gaps for local organisations. While the budgeting module was appreciated, its delivery was limited by short timelines. It would therefore be worthwhile for the technical assistance to go deeper by including stronger training on financial modelling, co-financing, cash flow planning, sustainability forecasting, and scenario planning. These skills are essential for building credible proposals and demonstrating to funders that projects by local partners are financially realistic and can survive beyond the grant period.

ii. Add post-award compliance and grant management support

Winning a grant is only the first step, and many local organisations struggle with what comes next. Therefore, providing post-award training on compliance, reporting requirements, donor systems, and grant management software would deepen the confidence of local partners, as these are often the areas where organisations face the most pressure once funding is secured. Strengthening this aspect would improve long-term readiness and reduce implementation risks.

iii. Improving the feedback loop for unsuccessful grant applicants

Local partners often receive little to no feedback on the submitted proposals or the reasons for their rejections, limiting their ability to improve their proposal-writing skills. Therefore, providing concise, structured feedback to local partners on the proposals reviewed, specifically focusing on the weaknesses and reasons for their rejection, would enable them to better understand and identify the areas for improvement.

iv. Simplify and streamline the grant application process

Many local partners described grant application processes as intimidating and overwhelming due to strict guidelines, extensive documentation requirements, and complex compliance frameworks associated with international funding mechanisms. It is, therefore, imperative that programmes offering grants undertake internal reviews of their application processes to reduce the burden of applying for grant applications on local partners. While maintaining the due diligence and accountability standards, programme managers need to streamline documentation requirements, clarify guidelines, and adopt more user-friendly application formats. Such measures could include simplifying templates, providing guidance notes, and basing compliance requirements on grant size and risk. This would enhance the participation of local partners without compromising the integrity of the selection process.

v. Reinforce the implementation of the structured technical assistance and proposal review

In addition, this experience suggests that while standardised technical assistance modules are necessary to establish a common baseline, they are insufficient on their own to significantly improve proposal competitiveness. Consequently, technical assistance programmes need to integrate these modules with proposal reviews to provide additional support to local partners. Reviewing draft proposals and providing feedback before submission gives local partners a practical opportunity to identify areas of weakness, ask clarification questions, and receive real-time guidance. This iterative process ultimately builds their confidence in developing and submitting proposals.

5.2.2 Long-term recommendations

i. Start the technical assistance earlier

The TEA technical assistance facility was a first-of-its-kind pilot programme that focused on pre-application support and was therefore bound to have some limitations. A key limitation was that the technical assistance often commenced too close to submission deadlines. While the content was highly valued, the limited time constrained deeper learning, internal coordination, and multiple rounds of proposal refinement. Consequently, technical assistance needs to be structured and deployed much earlier. Beginning support at least two to three months before the submission deadline would give organisations enough time to properly absorb the learning,

consult internally, and improve drafts through multiple review rounds. Tight timelines often forced teams to rush, limiting the quality of proposals and reducing the benefit of the iterative support process. However, implementing this recommendation heavily depends on open call logistics and funders' timelines. Donor organisations are typically reluctant to release the details of the calls before their official launch, which naturally restricts the window for pre-application support. Nevertheless, even when provided early, the technical assistance cannot guarantee funding outcomes due to the competitive nature of the grant process.

ii. Enhance tracking of technical assistance delivery

As the programme scales, future technical assistance facilities should incorporate systems for disclosing which applicants received support. The limited visibility into which applicants received support made it difficult for the TEA partners to assess their contribution to proposal quality. Improved visibility would enable a robust assessment by the TEA partners on the link between the technical assistance facility and proposal quality, thus helping to identify what works and areas of potential improvement.

iii. Create peer learning and mentorship opportunities

For long-term impact, the TEA platform could consider incorporating peer learning. Learning directly from organisations that have successfully won and implemented similar grants would be beneficial for local partners. Setting up structured peer mentorship sessions where past grantees can share real-world experiences, practical lessons, and strategies for navigating both proposal writing and donor expectations would add significant value to the technical assistance facility. This would make the process less intimidating and help local organisations understand what success looks like in practice.

iv. Incorporate post-award technical assistance

Many local partners face post-grant award implementation challenges, mainly related to the implementation of planned project activities, monitoring and evaluation, and financial accountability. Therefore, in addition to providing pre-application support, there is a need to expand the scope of the technical assistance to include the post-award phase for successful applicants. This is expected to help local partners transition from proposal development to effective project implementation, thereby enhancing their likelihood of achieving the intended project outcomes and sustained impact over time.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1: List of templates

#	Name of template
1	Gender policy
2	Inclusion and Safeguarding Policy
3	Proposal template
4	Environment and Sustainability policy
5	Data Security policy
6	Anti-bribery, corruption, and related issues policy
7	Budget and workplan template

Annex 2: End of technical assistance feedback form

Welcome to the evaluation of the technical assistance component of the TEA Local Partnership Inclusion Project, administered by Carbon Trust and delivered in partnership with EED Advisory.

The TEA (TEA) platform, funded by UK Aid, is a strategic initiative aimed at catalysing transformative change in the energy access landscape. The TEA platform focuses on supporting innovative approaches and partnerships to accelerate access to affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy solutions in developing countries. Through technical assistance, TEA aims to empower local communities, businesses, and organisations

to drive impactful change, particularly in areas where energy access remains a challenge.

Having completed the technical assistance, we are embarking on an evaluation of the facility to gather insights for its enhancement. This evaluation is crucial in refining the technical assistance facility to ensure optimal outcomes in future programmes. Your valuable feedback will therefore play a pivotal role in this process. Please take a moment to share your thoughts and suggestions through the questionnaire provided. All responses will be treated anonymously.

#	Questions
A. Contact details (optional)	
1	Name of the organisation
2	Your Name
3	Email Address
4	Phone Number
5	Physical Address
B. Pre-program expectations	
6	What were your main objectives for applying to the technical assistance facility?
7	On a scale of 1-10, how well did the technical assistance facility objectives align with your expectations? (with 1 being the lowest score and 10 being the highest)
C. Content and material	
On a scale of 1-10, please score the following. (Where 1 is the lowest score and 10 is the highest score)	
8	How was the quality of the technical assistance modules provided?
9	How relevant were the modules to your needs?
10	How clear and understandable was the content of the modules?
D. Program delivery	
On a scale of 1-10, please score the following. (Where 1 is the lowest score and 10 is the highest score)	
11	How would you rate the overall delivery of the technical assistance?
12	How well were the sessions organised and structured?
13	How effective were the trainers?
14	How useful were the additional resources provided? (templates?)
E. Engagement and Interaction	
On a scale of 1-10, please score the following. (Where 1 is the lowest score and 10 is the highest score)	
15	What was the level of interaction during the sessions?
16	How encouraged were you to ask questions and participate in discussions?
F. Practical application	
17	Please describe how the technical assistance facility has been useful in providing practical skills and knowledge in your current proposal application process.
18	Please describe how the skills and knowledge gained will be applied in your future grant application processes. (This can be related to organisational aspects that are necessary for a grant application that may not have been required by the current call).

G. Overall satisfaction

19	On a scale of 1-10, How satisfied are you with the technical assistance program? <i>(Where 1 is the lowest score and 10 is the highest score)</i>
20	Given a chance, would you consider applying for technical assistance again? - <i>Give reasons for your response</i>
21	Would you recommend this program to others? -Yes -No <i>Give reasons for your response</i>

H. Suggestions and improvements

22	What did you like most about the technical assistance facility?
23	Which additional topics would you like covered by the technical assistance facility?
24	What are your suggestions for the improvement of the method used to offer technical assistance?
25	Any additional comments or feedback?

Annex 3 : Technical assistance tracker

1	Name of open call:		
2	EED Facilitator Name		
3	Company Name of local partner supported		
4	Country		
Participants' details (indicate who the lead was where multiple people attended/participated)			
	Name	Designation	Gender
1			
2			
3			
Modules covered			
	Module name	Date	
1	Understanding Grant Financing		
2	Budgeting and Financial Planning		
3	Gender, Inclusion, and Social Equity		
4	Understanding Grant Review		
5	Post Grant Award Management		
Key areas of attention needed by the local partner			
Tracking of the application and review process			
1	Application submitted for review	Yes/No	
2	Number of times reviewed		
Highlights from the reviewed application			
1	Proposal submitted to (Name of the open call)	Yes/No	
2	If not submitted, the reason for not submitting		
Key highlights/takeaways of the overall technical assistance			
Additional observations			

Annex 4: Technical assistance facility local partner evaluation questionnaire

Thank you for participating in this survey.

This survey aims to evaluate the grant pre-application support provided by EED Advisory as part of the Transforming Energy Access (TEA) technical assistance facility for TEA open calls. The purpose is to gather feedback from local partners that received the pre-application support on the relevance and quality of the support received before submitting your grant application to either Powering Healthcare Innovation Fund (PHIF), Powering Renewable Energy Opportunities (PREO), Zero Emission Generators (ZE-Gen), or PHIF Round 2.

Through your responses, we will learn how the pre-application support provided influenced your understanding and approach to the grant application. Your honest responses will help us understand what worked, what did not, and how to improve future technical assistance to ensure they are more effective in supporting grant applicant access to funding opportunities.

Responses are confidential and will be analysed in aggregate. Individual data will not be attributed to specific respondents in any reporting.

The survey takes about 10 minutes.

#	Questions	Notes/Responses
Organisation profile		
1	Name of organisation	Insert name of organisation
2	Email (for follow-up)	Insert email
3	Type of organisation	• NGO • CBO • Government Agency • Academic Institution • Private company • Other (Specify)
4	Stage of the company	• Early stage (0-3 years) • Mid-stage (3-7 years) • Mature (7+ years)
5	If your proposal was successful, how much funding did you receive?	Figure
6	Was co-funding required?	• Yes • No
7	If yes to Q6, if yes, what level of co-funding did your organisation contribute?	• ____ USD/GBP (amount) • ____ % of total project budget
8	If not successful, what areas of improvement have you identified based on the learnings from TEA technical assistance?	Open-ended
9	Please share the exact feedback or comments you received from the reviewers who assessed your proposal. <i>To insert respective open calls applied to: PHIF R1, PREO, ZE-Gen, PHIF R2)</i>	Open-ended
Prior Grant Application Experience		
10	Before the technical assistance provided by EED, had your organisation submitted similar grant applications before?	• Yes • No
11	If yes, were the proposals funded?	• Yes, all proposals were successful • Yes, some proposals were successful • No, none were successful
12	From your experience, what aspects of the grant application and management present the greatest challenge? <i>(If they received the grant, where Q7 indicated passed).</i>	• Identifying a suitable funding opportunity • Proposal writing (crafting the project idea and budgeting) • Interview • Documentation (company registration, financial statements, audited financial statements) • Due Diligence • Grant monitoring and reporting

Participation

13	On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate the overall application process for the technical assistance facility	• 1 – Very Poor • 2 – Poor • 3 – Fair • 4 – Good • 5 – Excellent
14	Reason for your rating in Q11	Open ended
15	What could be improved on the application process	Open ended
16	Approximately how many individuals from your organisation participated in the TEA technical assistance facility?	Figure:
17	Please indicate the categories (job grade/levels) of staff that participated and an approximate number from each:	• Directors: _ • Senior managers: _ • Managers: _ • Associates: _ • Analysts: _ • Other: _
18	Which departments or functional areas from your organisation were represented at the technical assistance facility? (e.g., finance, monitoring and evaluation, business development, etc.) Please indicate the approximate number of participants from each department.	• Finance: ____ • Monitoring and Evaluation: ____ • Business and Development: ____ • Other: ____
19	On a scale of 1-5, how well did the timing of the TEA technical assistance facility support align with your needs during the grant application process? <i>(For example, was the support provided early enough to inform proposal drafting and submission?)</i>	• 1-Not aligned • 2-Slightly aligned • 3-Moderately aligned • 4-Well aligned • 5-Perfectly aligned
20	Please explain your rating in Qn 17 above	Open ended

Usefulness of the technical assistance

21	Which technical assistance sessions did you participate in: a. Module 1: Understanding grant financing b. Module 2: Budgeting and financial planning c. Module 3: Gender inclusion and social equity d. Module 4: Understanding grant review e. Module 5: Post-grant ward management f. Proposal Review and Feedback: Follow-up virtual sessions to provide feedback and discuss the draft proposal and concept <i>Select all that apply</i>	
22	On a scale of 1-5 how did the TEA technical assistance sessions increase your capacity to prepare or submit a competitive grant application? a. Module 1: Understanding grant financing b. Module 2: Budgeting and financial planning c. Module 3: Gender inclusion and social equity d. Module 4: Understanding grant review e. Module 5: Post-grant ward management f. Proposal Review and Feedback: written comments and follow-up virtual sessions to provide feedback and discuss the draft proposal and concept g. Templates <i>Question to be answered for a-g</i> <i>Rating is to be done for the modules participated in in Q19</i>	• 1 – Not at all • 2 – Slightly • 3 – Moderately • 4 – Significantly • 5 – Very greatly
23	Reason for rating above Q21 is to be asked for each module/session rated in Q20	Open-ended
24	What were the most useful aspects of the technical assistance support?	Open ended

25	Have you applied for any other grant funding after receiving technical assistance?	• Yes • No
26	If yes, elaborate on your experience with the grant application process following the tailored technical assistance. Specifically, were there any areas where the support significantly improved your understanding or approach? Describe them.	Open-ended
27	In what other ways, if any, has your organisation applied the support received through the TEA technical assistance? <i>Please give examples</i>	Open-ended

Suggestions

28	Based on your experience, were there any aspects that the technical assistance facility did not fully address	Open-ended
29	Which areas do you feel additional support would be helpful for future technical assistance programmes?	Open ended
30	What other areas/topics/aspects should be included to improve future technical assistance support?	Open ended
31	Any additional comments about how the support affected your organisation (positive or negative)?	Open-ended

Follow-up/Case study participation

32	Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up case study? <i>Note</i> <i>The case study will involve a more in-depth conversation to better understand your experiences and insights. Your participation would be voluntary, and all information will be treated with confidentiality.</i>	• Yes • No • Maybe/Not sure yet
33	If yes, provide your email address for further discussion	Email address

Annex 5: Technical assistance facility TEA partner evaluation questionnaire

Dear TEA Partners,

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

This is part of the end-of-programme evaluation of the pre-application support provided by EED Advisory under the Local Partnership Inclusion Project as part of the Transforming Energy Access Technical Assistance Facility. The purpose of the survey is to evaluate your experience as an organisation that had an open call under the technical assistance facility. The survey aims to help us gather feedback that will help evaluate how effectively the technical assistance facility supported the grant applicants.

The responses you provide will be crucial in evaluating the effectiveness of the technical assistance facility, thus helping us identify what worked well, while also acknowledging the opportunities to improve future pre-application support provided to local partners.

Your responses will be treated with confidentiality and used purposely to improve the effectiveness of pre-application support. The survey takes about 5-7 minutes.

#	Questions	Notes/ Responses
Overall quality		
1	On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate: a. The overall quality of the proposals you reviewed for the grant calls b. Strategic Alignment with the funder's priorities c. The statement of need d. The proposed methods/approach e. The implementation feasibility (timelines) f. Financial Value for Money g. Monitoring, Learning, and Impact h. Risk Mitigation Plan i. Team Capability and Governance j. Communication <i>The rating should be given for a-i (separate questions on the platform to enable rating of the various sections)</i>	• 1 – Very Poor • 2 – Poor • 3 – Fair • 4 – Good • 5 – Excellent
2	Please elaborate on your reasons for the rating above <i>(Responses should be for all the options in Q1)</i>	Open-ended
3	Were there any notable strong/positive elements in the applications you received? Please describe <i>(For example, strong statements of need, rational budgets, strong organisational capacity, carefully thought-out project risks/mitigation)</i>	Open-ended
4	Please list up to five elements that distinguished the winning proposals from those that were not successful.	Open-ended
5	Based on your experience, how would you rate the grantee's preparedness and performance in the following areas? a. Clarity and depth of problem understanding b. Ability to respond to questions with confidence and coherence c. Quality and completeness of supporting documentation for due diligence d. Overall preparedness for the interview process e. Ability to deliver/implement the project f. Governance systems Financial management	• Very poor • Poor • Fair • Good • Excellent
6	From your assessment of grant applications submitted by local partners, what were some of the common challenges or gaps you observed?	Open-ended
7	Due diligence and interview During the due diligence process, what aspects of the supporting documentation most strongly influence your funding decision?	Open-ended

8	For proposal review that includes an interview, what characteristics or behaviours during the interview signal to you that the grantee is well-prepared and likely to deliver on the project?	Open-ended
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Perceived value of support

9	To what extent do you agree that the technical assistance support helps improve the quality of grant applications	• Strongly disagree • Disagree • Neutral • Agree • Strongly agree
10	Give a reason for your answer above.	Open-ended
11	In your view, which aspects of proposals most need technical assistance to be stronger in the future?	Open-ended
12	In what ways could the technical assistance facility be improved to better support grant applicants in the future?	Open-ended

Post-grant management

13	What are some of the main challenges that funders experience after providing grant financing to the recipients?	• Report writing • Implementation of the planned project • Monitoring and Evaluation • Accounting for the Budget • Communication of project progress/ updates • Others: specify
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Annex 6: Case study interview guide

Thank you for taking the time to join us for this interview.

This interview is part of the end-of-programme evaluation of the pre-application support provided by EED Advisory under the Local Partnership Inclusion Project as part of the Transforming Energy Access technical assistance facility.

The purpose of the interview is to evaluate and understand your experience as an organisation that received technical

assistance support. Your insights will be used to shape future technical assistance facilities based on lessons learnt, success stories, and areas for improvement.

We request your permission to record the interview for note-taking. The recording will not be shared externally without your consent.

Consent to record: [Y/N] _____

Do you consent to have your story featured as part of the report: [Y/N] _____

The interview will take about 30 minutes.

Introduction / Interviewee Metadata (to be prefilled)	
1	Interviewee name:
2	Role/title:
3	Organisation:
4	Country:
5	Date of interview:
6	Technical assistance facility engagement period (<i>month/year to month/year</i>)
Context and baseline (baseline constraints)	
7	In 1–2 minutes, what does your organisation do (<i>mission, main activities, target beneficiaries/markets</i>)?
8	Before technical assistance facility support, what were your top 2–3 binding constraints in pursuing grants?
Inputs and activities (technical assistance facility support received)	
9	What were the most important support components you received?
10	Which component had the strongest fit to your needs, and why?
11	What worked well in delivery (<i>clarity, responsiveness, practicality, timing</i>)
Outputs (direct results) what changed immediately?	
12	After the support, what tangible outputs improved or were created? (<i>Probe: Proposal narratives, Theory of Change, budget template, value for money narratives, development of financial model, due diligence pack, policies, reusable templates, impact narratives, visibility.</i>)
13	What can your team do now that it could not do before the technical assistance (<i>skills developed/capabilities enhanced</i>)? What aspect of the organisation has changed since the technical assistance?
Outcomes (medium-term changes), so what happened next?	
14	Since the technical assistance facility support, has your grant application behaviour changed? (<i>More calls pursued, better targeting, more confidence in making applications, more/better collaboration, etc.</i>)?
15	What funding outcomes have occurred since (<i>awarded/shortlisted / in due diligence / rejected</i>)?
16	To what extent do you attribute these outcomes to technical assistance facility support?
17	Did the technical assistance change how you address gender and inclusion in programme design, targeting, staffing, or monitoring and evaluation?

18	Quantification (<i>where feasible</i>): # applications submitted since technical assistance; # shortlisted; # awarded; total funding value; time saved; reach achieved.
Grant process inclusivity/exclusion	
19	i) Which donor requirements were most difficult to meet? ii) Which felt unnecessarily exclusionary?
20	What would a more inclusive grant process look like while still managing donor risk?
21	If you did not win funding, what aspects of the process contributed most, and what would have improved your chances? (<i>To be asked to the local partners who did not receive the funding</i>)
Closing / Recommendations	
22	What are your top 2 recommendations for improving future technical assistance facilities?
23	Is there anything else we should include to accurately represent your experience?

Annex 7: Data collection approach

i. Literature review

The literature review, embedded into the background section, synthesised findings from practitioner reports, donor guidance, and program evaluations to identify best practices in technical assistance for local partners in similar contexts (such as embedded advisors, cohort-based learning, mentorship, and learning-by-doing), the assumptions underlying their design, and the contextual factors that influenced effectiveness. Particular attention was given to evidence on capacity strengthening and localisation as well as how technical assistance was tailored to the constraints faced by local organisations in low- and middle-income countries. The review critically assessed reported outcomes, measurement approaches, and gaps in the evidence to inform more equitable, context-responsive technical assistance strategies for grant development in the energy access field.

ii. Local partner application and Feedback Forms

As part of each round of the technical assistance, the local partners were required to provide information at two stages: first, through the application forms when applying to the technical assistance facility, and second, through feedback forms at the close of each technical assistance round. The application forms, which were always contextualised to the respective TEA open call, and the feedback forms (Annex 3) were reviewed by the project management team to ensure clarity, coherence, and completeness. The application forms requested information on organisational details, challenges experienced in making grant applications, technical assistance needs, proposed project idea, documentation (financial statements, registration documents), gender considerations, evidence of impact, and sustainability plans. The information provided in the application forms was used during the screening process to select the local partners for the technical assistance facility.

Whilst the application forms were more focused on the organisation and potential project idea, the end-of-round feedback forms were focused on evaluating the support that was received from the technical assistance facility. The anonymised feedback included feedback on the application process, technical assistance delivery

(e.g., content, timing, delivery approach), and areas for improvement. This data was used for two purposes: first, as a method of improving the technical assistance facility for future TEA partner rounds (both in terms of content and the approach of the trainers), and second, to feed the immediate insights from local partners into this technical assistance facility evaluation report. However, only 19 out of the 22 (86.36% response rate) local partners submitted the feedback forms.

iii. EED trainer insights

In addition to the learnings and insights captured by the local partner feedback forms, all the EED Advisory Ltd trainers submitted their own reflections after each round of technical assistance. Each trainer was provided with an internal tracker (Annex 4) to document the training dates, whether the local partner submitted a proposal for review or not, whether the proposal was submitted or not, and any additional observations and insights from the sessions. These insights provide a different perspective and help to contextualise the local partner feedback against the specific organisations. This information was also used throughout the technical assistance to improve the nature of the training content, the structure of the sessions, and the approach to reviewing/supporting completed proposals.

iv. Online survey for local partners

The technical assistance facility evaluation conducted by local partner survey (Annex 5) allows this report to balance immediate insights (from end-of-technical assistance feedback forms) with longer-term reflections, as well as giving the local partners time to implement not only new approaches to proposal writing but also organisational evolutions that support these new approaches. Trainers often saw local partners updating their internal processes to create a more sustainable pipeline for grant proposal writing. Hence, these responses are crucial in evaluating the effectiveness of the technical assistance facility, thus helping with the identification

of what worked well, while also acknowledging the opportunities to improve future pre-application support provided to local partners. The online surveys requested information on organisation profile, prior grant application experience, participation, usefulness of technical assistance, and suggestions for future technical assistance. These surveys were reviewed by the project evaluation steering committee.

v. Online survey for TEA partners

The other data collection tool was an online survey for the TEA partners (Annex 6), who ran open calls, which were supported by the technical assistance facility. Data collected in these surveys included the overall quality of the applications received in the call, perceived value of support, and post-grant management challenges. However, whilst these surveys help understand the TEA partners' perceptions of the technical assistance facility, these partners did not know which applications/organisations received pre-application technical assistance. Therefore, the feedback provided by the TEA partners provides a general perspective based on all the applications **received, and not targeted to those that received technical assistance.**

vi. Case studies

Based on the results of the online survey for local partners and as per the terms of reference, three organisations were selected for a 1-hour semi-structured interview to develop a case study for this report. The selection was based on the willingness of the local partner to be engaged in an interview, as provided by responses in the online survey, their availability, and the outcome of their application, so as to include those that were awarded and those not awarded grants from the TEA open calls. Whilst the high-level themes were outlined in the semi-structured interview guide (Annex 7), the interview content was primarily led by the interests of the local partner, as it was important to capture the lived experience of the local partners, both through the technical assistance and how it had affected their proposal writing and organisational structure. The interview guide was designed to capture the outputs, outcomes, and impacts of the technical assistance (in line with the project theory of change). However, given that the technical assistance was conducted recently, it is challenging to quantify the impacts of the technical assistance on the local partners beyond the colloquial.

Annex 8: Data analysis approach

i. Quantitative data analysis

To summarise key patterns and trends from the data provided in the application forms, end-of-round technical assistance feedback, and online survey, descriptive analysis was conducted. This included calculating averages, frequencies, and percentages, and the findings were presented using charts and tables to provide nuance to the qualitative analysis.

ii. Thematic analysis

Key themes were extracted and compiled from the local partner application forms, feedback forms, EED Advisory Ltd trainer insights, and the online surveys for the local partners and TEA partners. The data was manually coded to identify

the themes, and the results were organised using a thematic grid. An inductive and deductive approach was applied to this thematic analysis. The deductive approach included the use of pre-existing high-level themes based on the key outputs of this report (Technical Assistance Delivery, Key Achievements and Outcomes as well as Challenges and lessons Learnt), while the inductive component involved populating these themes with sub-themes generated from the data. This approach ensured alignment with the strategic objectives of the evaluation while also integrating potentially unknown perspectives from the data. The data analysis framework table provides the final data analysis framework, which was used to create the findings section.

iii. Data analysis framework

Theme	Sub-Theme	Description
Partner motivation and expectations for applying to the technical assistance facility	Proposal writing	Captures information about the structure of the proposals and how to align applications with donor expectations
	Financial planning	Reflects challenges in preparing realistic and compliant budgets, justifying costs, and linking financial plans to project activities
Experience of the technical assistance process	Organisation process	Describes the application guidance and session structure. It reflects how instructions, the sequencing of modules, and the materials that made up the proposal writing process.
	Supportive delivery	Describes the communication, coordination, and environment where participants engaged in discussions
	Practical resources	Resources, both practical and actionable, covering the usefulness of templates, examples, budgeting tools, and other materials that participants can directly apply to strengthen their proposals.
	Learning from the technical assistance modules	This theme reflects the knowledge and skills participants gained from the technical assistance modules and how these contributed to stronger proposals and improved readiness.
	Value of proposal review and feedback	This theme focuses on how personalised feedback and proposal review sessions had an impact on the quality of applications
Challenges, lessons learnt, and recommendations	Operational and procedural challenges	This captures the key challenges that limited organisations' ability to fully engage with the technical assistance and compete effectively for international grant funding
	Technical and capacity	Technical and capacity barriers relate to gaps in proposal development skills and technical articulation. Organisations struggled to clearly define problems, develop strong theories of change, articulate measurable outcomes and key performance indicators (KPIs), and demonstrate a credible impact pathway
	Structural and institutional challenges	Captures systemic barriers within organisations and the broader ecosystem. such as language barriers
	Recommendations for improving the technical assistance	Recommendations, outlines, and suggestions given to improve the design, timing, inclusivity, and depth of future technical assistant programs

Data collection followed a strict ethical process in which the personal data of local organisations was protected as per the Kenya Data Protection Act, 2019, Chapter 411C, Revised Edition, 2022, with the data used for purposes of providing the required technical assistance. During online surveys and case study interviews, the goal and objectives of the data collection

and evaluation were clearly stated to all the respondents. Where recording of the interview was required, consent was sought from the respondent. In addition, the inclusion of the case study within the report was granted by the respective local partners.

iv. Case study analysis

The case study analysis aims to create three standalone case studies from the semi-structured interviews, which illustrate the outputs, outcomes, and impacts of the technical assistance facility as defined by the theory of change, in a real-world context. As above, semi-structured interview transcripts were coded using an approach that combined deductive and inductive coding. Deductive codes were derived from the Theory of Change, specifically focusing on predefined outputs, outcomes, and intended impacts of the technical assistance facility. Inductive coding was used to capture emergent themes, unanticipated effects, and contextual factors that were not explicitly articulated within the Theory of Change but were important to participants’ accounts. Each case study

was analysed independently to preserve its integrity as a standalone narrative.

v. Study Limitations and Mitigations

As with most research studies, there are several limitations that affect the replicability, reliability, and quality of the work. Several approaches have been used to mitigate these limitations, as illustrated by the table below, to reduce the effect on the output.

vi. Limitations and mitigation strategies

Limitation	Mitigation
Bias and positionality	Researcher bias and positionality were addressed through ongoing reflexive practice, with critical reflection on assumptions and analytical decisions documented throughout the analysis. A hybrid deductive–inductive coding approach was used to mitigate confirmation bias by allowing unanticipated themes and disconfirming evidence to emerge alongside Theory of Change–informed codes. Analytical transparency was supported through systematic documentation of analysis decisions and the grounding of interpretations in participants’ own accounts.
Limited number of TEA partner interviews	As the technical assistance facility only supported three TEA Partner funding rounds, there were limited responses in this data collection method. We mitigated this through both understanding that this limited data set did not restrict its quality and, where possible, triangulating data through the other data collection methods.
Data collection over holiday periods limited responses in the online surveys with local partners	Given the timing of the project and technical assistance facility evaluation, the online surveys were sent to local partners in December 2025 – January 2026, which is typically a period where there are significant holidays. Our approach to generating more replies was three-fold: Email from the EED Advisory Ltd team lead who was managing the project; A follow-up email from the specific EED trainer who worked with the local partners; and WhatsApp message from the respective EED Advisory Ltd trainer. This resulted in 50% of local partners responding to the online survey.
Timing of the technical assistance facility evaluation report on understanding the impacts of the technical assistance facility	It is too early to start talking about impacts as these can take years to materialise. Our approach in this evaluation was to understand the outputs and outcomes of the TA and then, by linking these to a theory of change, predict the potential impacts of this work. More work is needed in the future to fully understand the impacts of the technical assistance facility.
Self-evaluation could potentially introduce bias	A steering committee was established to oversee the evaluation process. The committee reviewed and provided written comments on the evaluation methodology, online survey delivered to local partners, and TEA partners

