

USAID offering \$4m for solar startups in Africa

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The US Agency for International Development (USAID) has announced a US\$4 million funding initiative aimed at supporting innovative solar companies across sub-Saharan Africa.



Image by 123RF

[Disrupt Africa reported](#) in November USAID made eight investments – as part of the “Scaling Off-Grid Energy Grand Challenge for Development” programme – into companies disrupting household solar power worldwide, with two recipients based in Africa.

A further funding opportunity has now been announced, with US\$4 million to be made available to startups developing innovative technology solutions and business models across the household solar value chain in sub-Saharan Africa.

However, USAID will only be making investments based on a fund-matching model. Funding will go to early growth stage companies which can show a 2:1 private investor match; meaning that startups must be able to show a private investor is willing to commit twice the amount – on either an equity or debt basis – being requested from USAID.

The organisation said it expects funding granted to range between US\$500,000 and US\$1.5 million per company.

To be considered, applicants must be early growth stage companies active in one or more African markets; and should be

developing and scaling innovative solutions that will have broad reach across the sub-Saharan household solar market with the potential for high market impact.

Concept papers will be accepted on a rolling basis until April 30. Those interested are encouraged to contact the Scaling Off-Grid Energy team describing their solution and listing interested investors, prior to submitting a concept paper.

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