Questions on the Innovation Grants:

We have intentionally designed the grant eligibility and evaluation criteria to be inclusive of the various actors and approaches in the fields of mobile enabled water and energy services. However, where our language or intentions may have left you with questions, we have done our best to address these with the answers below. If you have further questions, please contact us at MECSgrants@gsma.com.

Eligibility

1. **Does early stage research and development as specified in the seed grant include pilot level implementation?**
   Yes, we welcome the implementation of pilots and consider this a type of research and development.

2. **Will you accept innovations in mobile enabled sanitation?**
   The requirement is for innovations in mobile enabled water and energy services. If sanitation is part of the water or energy services, than the innovation is eligible. However, if it is mobile and sanitation alone, this is not eligible.

   We are very aware that there are increasing innovations in the area of mobile and sanitation, we hope to learn about these and consider future opportunities to support such innovations.

3. **Are there examples of projects supported by the fund?**
   No. This is a new initiative and we have not yet awarded grants through this fund. We encourage you to review some of the resources on our programme webpage to see what times of projects we have researched.
   http://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/programmes/mobile-enabled-community-services

4. **How many people should the project reach?**
   The number of beneficiaries put forward by the applicant should be well evidenced and thought through in the Concept Notes/Applications. The numbers should fit logically with the delivery model and proposed market/context for implementation.
   The numbers proposed by the applicants should demonstrate a sufficient return on investment for the Fund, and as this is a competitive process, preference may be given to applicants that demonstrate the higher ratio between Fund allocation and beneficiary levels.

5. **Is the fund focused more on supporting applications that are used by the end customer as opposed to applications that improve the efficiency of the service provider?**
   Improving efficiency of the service provider is usually a first step to providing improved services to customers. However, there must be a quantifiable outcome in terms of the customers receiving improved/increased access to services.

Preparation of Concept Notes

6. **For Market Validation grants, do we need to have a mobile operator partnership agreed when we submit the concept note?**
   Please see Term Sheets.

7. **Can you review a draft concept note?**
   Yes, because we have an external Fund Manager and expert panel which will be carrying out the final review and awards, the MECS team can review draft concept notes (and applications). Please send your draft concept notes to MECSgrants@gsma.com.

   In advance of the 30 June deadline the last day to send in concept notes for feedback will be 27 June.

   We will provide feedback in the form of a 20 minute discussion. Please sign up for a timeslot through the link on our website.

8. **Can concept notes be submitted in a language other than English?**
   Applications must be written in English, however, our MECS team can support discussions in French, Spanish, Hindi and Gujarati.

9. **Can an organisation submit more than one concept note?**
   Yes, however, we are looking to support a diversity of grants through a competitive selection process of the most promising proposals.

10. **Can organisations re-apply?**
    At the concept note stage, applications may be declined, accepted, or suggested for resubmittal at next round with recommended changes.

    At the Application stage, the decision is very much at the discretion of the Panel who will take one or the following four options
    - Approve
    - Approve with conditions
    - Reject, but invite to resubmit – For this outcome the Applicant can revisit/amend their Application in line with feedback from the Panel, and re-submit an Application in the second call, without needing to resubmit a concept note.
    - Firm rejection – For this outcome the interested Applicant will have to submit a new concept note.

11. **What is the deadline for concept notes?**
    June 30th, 11:59 PM British Summer Time.

Fund and Grant Structure:

12. **Is there a quota for number of grants for each region?**
    No, but there will **not** be a dominance of one region over another.

13. **Since grants will be made on a competitive basis, is it possible that all the funds will be used after the first round?**

No, there will be a second round of funding, with calls for concept notes in September. We hope to inform you if there will be a third round by that point in time.

14. **Will there be enough time be awarded a seed grant and then apply for the market validation grant?**

As our fund is currently structured, no. But if additional funds are made available this would be considered.

Finances distribution and Matching:

15. **How are funds to be distributed?**

At the completion of milestones as negotiated during contracting phase. We expect that seed grants may need more upfront support.

16. **Will funds be delivered in local currency or GBP?**

Currency will be distributed in either US Dollars or Pounds Sterling (GBP).

17. **For the matching funding, can we apply funds that have already been spent on project/hardware development?**

No. Funds for the matching component can be either in-kind (through employee time working on the project) or in cash, but must be spent during the one-year lifecycle of the grant.

18. **Are there any restrictions on where the matching component comes from, such as another donor?**

No. It is acceptable for the matching funds to come from any source including another donor.

19. **Can an organisation invest more than the matching requirement of 25% for seed grants and 50% for market validation grants?**

As identified in the Term Sheets this is a minimum.

20. **How is financial health assessed and what if our organisation does not have 2 years of audited accounts?**

We understand applicants may be start-up organisations and if you do not have 2 years of audited accounts we will work on a case by case basis to assess financial health. Applicants must propose what they can show if not 2 years of audited accounts, for example, other investments, how current operating costs are covered.

Partnerships/consortiums and multiple applications:

21. **Are we required to have a mobile operator as a partner?**

As state in the Term Sheets this is required for the market validation grant.

22. **Are there any restrictions on the partnership?**

See the specific requirements in the Term Sheets regarding entities eligible to apply. A partnership must be legally bound, or agreed upon through an MNO.

23. **Can there be more than two organisations in a partnership?**

See Term Sheets.

24. **Can an NGO be the lead organisation on a market validation grant?**
Yes, but a key requirement for the market validation grant is to demonstrate a sustainable business model.