**Questions on the M4D Utilities Innovation Grants:**

If you were familiar with our previous “Mobile Enabled Community Services” innovation fund, please take note of the updated term sheets and frequently asked questions below.

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 energy and water and sanitation 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 utilities\_grants@gsma.com.

**Eligibility**

1. **Will you accept innovations in mobile enabled sanitation?** Yes we are interested in proposals that leverage mobile to improve sanitation services.
2. **Are there examples of projects supported by the fund?** While previously funded projects are not necessarily indicative of what will be selected, you can review our previously funded projects here:
	* 1. <http://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/mecs-awards-second-round-of-innovation-fund-grants>
		2. <http://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/mecs-awards-first-round-of-innovation-fund-grants>
3. **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.
4. **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**

1. **For Market Validation grants, do we need to have a mobile operator partnership agreed when we submit the concept note?** Please see Term Sheets.
2. **For Seed grant do I have to apply for the staged funding?** No, please refer to the term sheet. Also, the concept note form asks applicants to specify if this is needed. However, it is at the discretion of the GSMA and Fund Manager to require this structure where necessary.
3. **For the Seed grant, if I apply for staged funding, how long should the first and second stage be?** While we estimate that this might be six months for the first stage and 12 months for the second stage, timeframes remains flexible depending on the proposal and the discretion of the GSMA and Fund Manager.
4. **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 Mobile for Development Utilities team recommends you submit draft concept notes (and applications) for review.

Please send your draft concept notes to utilities\_grants@gsma.com *The last day to send the concept note for feedback is the Wednesday prior to the deadline date for concept note submission*

We will provide feedback in the form of a 20-minute discussion.

1. **Can concept notes be submitted in a language other than English?** Applications must be written in English, however, our Mobile for Development Utilities team can support discussions in French, Spanish, Hindi and Gujarati.
2. **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 after this round?** 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. **Can** **previous grantees or their partners apply?** New proposal from these organisations will be considered where they meet the criteria described in the terms sheets, though the objective of the fund is to learn insights from a wide variety of actors in different markets.

**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 at least one additional round of funding.

14. **Will there be enough time to be awarded a seed grant and then apply for the market validation grant?** As our fund is currently structured, no. However, early stage proposals may wish to apply for a seed grant in a staged approached with a first stage to focus on prototype development and a second stage to focus on piloting.

**Finances distribution and Matching:**

1. **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.
2. **Will funds be delivered in local currency or GBP?** Currency will be distributed in either US Dollars or Pounds Sterling (GBP).
3. **For the match 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 or in cash, but must be spent during the one-year lifecycle of the grant.
4. **Are there any restrictions on where the match funding component comes from, such as another donor?** No. It is acceptable for the matching funds to come from any source including another donor.
5. **Can an organisation invest more than the match funding requirement?** As identified in the Term Sheets this is a minimum.
6. **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:**

1. **Are we required to have a mobile operator as a partner?** As stated in the Term Sheets this is required for the market validation grant.
2. **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 MOU.
3. **Can there be more than two organisations in a partnership?** Yes,See Term Sheets.
4. **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.
5. **Can utilities be the lead applicant on the utility partnership grants?** No. While these grants are targeted at improving utility services, they must be led by a third party in partnership with a utility and/or government agency.