



Notice of Funding Opportunity Concept Note

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COVER PAGE: NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY	6
I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION.....	8
1.1. Funding and Duration.....	8
II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	9
2.1. Background.....	9
2.2. Development Problem Statement.....	10
2.3. Theory of Change	11
2.5. Innovation Applied.....	12
2.6. Cross Cutting Principles.....	12
2.7. Illustrative Approach.....	13
2.8. Illustrative Results.....	13
2.9. Illustrative Indicators.....	13
III. ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS	14
3.1. Eligibility criteria.....	14
3.2. Other Grant Application Considerations	16
CALL FOR CONCEPT NOTES	17
IV. APPLICATION PROCESS	17
4.1. Stages of Application	17
4.2. Proposed Timeline	18
4.3. Submission Instructions	18
V. CONCEPT NOTE TEMPLATE	20
5.1. Concept Note Template for Tier 3 (Large) Companies.....	21
VI. CONCEPT NOTE EVALUATION	26
6.1. Evaluation Criteria	26
6.2. Administrative Eligibility for Entities	26
6.3. Administrative Eligibility Criteria for Activities	27
6.4. Technical Evaluation of Concept Notes.....	28
6.5. Notice	28
VII. ANNEXES.....	29

7.1.	Annex 1. List of energy sector activities	29
7.2.	Annex 2. List of databases of non-eligible entities	30
7.3.	Annex 3. Declaration of Compliance Template – to be signed	31

ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

AE	Accountable Entity
CBO	Community Based Organization
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DG	Director of Grants
MCA	Millennium Challenge Account
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NOFO	Notice of Funding Opportunity
PGG	MCC Program Grant Guidelines
RFA	Request for Application
SC	Selection Committee
SL	Sector Lead

Adjacent Sector	Sectors that share core competencies or skill sets needed for the energy sector. These include, inter alia, construction trades such as welding and masonry, plumbing, and water-related trades such as pipe fitting and heating and cooling systems. More details are in Annex 1.
Applicant	An entity that submits an Application asking for an MCC-funded Grant from an MCA Entity.
Application	The written document, including all subsequent additional information and modifications, submitted by an Applicant as required to assess the technical merit of the Application, the capability of the Applicant and the proposed budget.
Co-Creation	The process of collaboration between the MCA Entity and potential Grantee(s) in designing Grant Programs or developing documents. This contrasts with Discussions, which is a tool to provide feedback on an entity's submission so that the entity can, acting on its own, improve subsequent submissions.
Compact End Date	The last day of the Compact Term (as defined in the Compact).
Cost Share	The resources a Recipient contributes to the total cost of the Grant Activities. Cost Share is not a mandatory or uniform requirement for MCA Grant Programs generally but could be a deemed mandatory requirement for a specific MCA Grant Program.
Discussions	A process of dialogue between an MCA Entity and a Proposer or an Applicant aimed at improving the entity's subsequent submissions. Discussions provide feedback on an entity's submission so that the entity can, acting on its own, improve its subsequent submissions as

	compared with Co-Creation during which the MCA Entity cooperates with the entity on the development or modification of a submission (Concept Note or Application).
Energy Sector	Includes all activities related to the generation, transmission, distribution, transport, storage, sale, resale, purchase and supply of electric energy, thermal energy, energy derived from all forms of gas, and renewable energy.
Grant	A transfer of MCC assistance in cash or in kind made for a specific purpose by an MCA Entity under any form of Grant Agreement defined in these Grant Guidelines.
Grant Activities	The actions that a Grantee undertakes to carry out a Grant using its best efforts to fulfill the purpose of a Grant including in-kind, Cost Share or Leverage plus any actions promised by the MCA Entity under a Grant Agreement that includes in-kind assistance.
Grant Agreement	The written legal document that establishes the relationship between the MCA Entity and the Grantee. It sets forth the commitment of the MCA Entity to transfer funding assistance to the Grantee for a specific purpose subject to satisfaction of conditions for disbursement and other applicable terms and conditions.
Grant Award	The award of MCC funding assistance made by the MCA Entity to an entity under the terms of a Grant Agreement.
Grant Budget Narrative	The explanation of the estimated costs by line item or category set out in the Grant Budget. The Grant Budget Narrative should set forth a detailed breakdown of costs and explain how the costs associated with each line item or category relate to carrying out the Grant Activities.
Grant Guidelines	The MCC Program Grant Guidelines.
Grant Manager or Grant Facility Manager	The personnel hired or a firm contracted by the MCA Entity to manage one or more Grant Programs.
Grant Program	A program of assistance that the MCA Entity is implementing to achieve certain objectives, results, indicators and targets set out in the Compact and its implementing documents. It may take the form of a Grant Facility, an individual Grant or multiple Grants that each serve a public purpose.
Grantee or Recipient	The entity that receives a Grant from an MCA Entity.
MCA Entity	The entity designated by the government of the country receiving assistance from the MCC as responsible for the oversight and management of implementation of the Compact on behalf of the government. MCA Entity includes any predecessor entity designated to represent the government during Compact development and up until the formal MCA Entity is set up and any successor entity that might be set up to represent the government until final closeout of the Compact. MCA Entity also means any entity designated by the government to implement a Threshold Program.

Merit Review	The formal process of reviewing and analyzing the technical merit of an Application and may also be used to review technical merit of a Concept Note or a Concept Paper.
Milestone Disbursement Schedule	The schedule for disbursing Grant funding assistance to a Grantee based upon the designated milestones achieved in carrying out the Grant.
Notice of Funding Opportunity	An announcement publicly advertised by the MCA Entity requesting submission of Concept Notes. This is the first step in the Two-Step Concept Note/RFA Grant Award Procedure.
Proposed Grant Award	The decision taken by the MCA Entity to make a Grant to an Applicant subject to negotiation of a Grant Agreement.
Proposer	An entity that originates, develops and submits a Concept Note or a Concept Paper.
Recipient	An entity that receives an assistance award.
Request for Applications	The document that sets out all of the requirements for submitting an Application. When used for Simplified Grants and in the One-Step RFA Grant Award Procedure, this document will be publicly advertised. When used as the second step in two-step Grant Award Procedures, this document will be sent to selected Proposers.
Selection Committee	The group of individuals who identify Applicants for Proposed Grant Award taking into consideration the Application Appraisal Reports and the Grant Program Policy Factors and in compliance with the principles and requirements set out in these Grant Guidelines. In making this determination, the Selection Committee will prescribe the terms and conditions for negotiating Grant Agreements. This group also determines, taking into consideration Concept Paper Appraisal Reports or Concept Note Appraisal Reports, which Proposers will be invited to submit Applications.
Subaward	An award of funding assistance by a Recipient, serving as a pass-through entity, to another entity, the Sub-recipient.
Sub-grantee or Sub-recipient	the entity that receives a Subaward. This does not include an individual that is a beneficiary of a Grant.
Two-Step Concept Note/RFA	A Grant Award Procedure that begins with a Notice of Funding Opportunity requesting Concept Notes followed by a Request for Application inviting Applications from selected Proposers based upon review of Concept Notes.



COVER PAGE: NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

MCA Entity	MCA-Kosovo
Project Name	Just and Equitable Transition Acceleration (JETA) Project
Grant Program	Energy for Equality Grants Program
Award Procedure:	Two-Step Concept Note/RFA
Grant Application Reference number	24-7002
Publication Date	December 9, 2024
Submission Deadline	January 29, 2025

The Millennium Challenge Account-Kosovo has received financing from the Millennium Challenge Corporation toward the cost of the JETA project and its Inclusive Energy Sector Workforce Activity (IESWA) implemented by Tetra Tech and intends to apply part of the proceeds towards grant funded activities under Energy for Equality Grants Program.¹

MCA-Kosovo now invites Concept Notes from eligible proposers for activities which promote gender equitable practices among energy and adjacent sector employers and/or provide technical assistance to help increase the representation of women and women from ethnic minority communities in energy companies in Kosovo, and/or support networking, mentoring, and other educational and learning opportunities for women. The final aim is to increase women’s employment, retention, and promotion in the energy and adjacent sector workforce.

The MCA-Entity has determined that Two-Step Concept Note/RFA is the best procedure for the funding disbursement and will expect Grantees to administer grant funding based on the MCC Program Grant Guidelines (PGG).

Interested Proposers may submit questions by e-mail to e4e.grants@mcakosovo.org. The deadline for submitting questions is December 16, 2024.

Written responses to questions will be posted on the website <https://www.energyforequality.com/>.

¹ ‘Energy for Equality Grants’ refers to the ‘Women in Energy Grants’ sub-activity as part of the ‘Inclusive Energy Sector Workforce’ (now referred to as ‘Energy for Equality’) under the JETA project in the Compact.

Contact Information:

The address(es) referred to above is (are):	MCA-Kosovo Str. Migjeni 21 (Ex-Ljubljana Bank Building), 8th and 9th floors, Pristina, Kosovo
Attn:	Karimullah Hanifi, Grants Manager and/or Meriha Manojlovic, Team Leader. Rexhep Mala 28A, 10000 Prishtina, Republic of Kosova
Tel:	+383 45524320
E-mail:	e4e.grants@mcakosovo.org
Website:	https://www.energyforequality.com/

DocuSigned by:
Florina Duli Sefaj
CE28501EE862464...

12/8/2024

Florina Duli Sefaj, MCA-Kosovo CEO

Date



I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The Government, acting through the Millennium Challenge Account – Kosovo (MCA-Kosovo), intends to apply a portion of the MCC Funding to eligible recipients to increase employment of women and women from ethnic minority communities among energy and adjacent sector² employers in Kosovo through the implementation of policies, projects and initiatives that advance inclusivity for which this Call for Concept Notes is issued. Any disbursement made by MCA-Kosovo under the proposed agreement will be subject, in all respects, to the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement and related documents, including restrictions on the use and distribution of MCC Funding. No party other than the Government and the MCA-Kosovo shall derive any rights from the Grant Agreement or have any claim to the proceeds of MCC Funding. Information regarding the Compact and its related documents can be found on the MCC website (www.mcc.gov) and on the website of MCA-Kosovo: www.mcakosovo.org.

1.1. Funding and Duration

This Call for Concept Notes is expected to award up to 2 Grants for Tier 3 (Large) Companies for a maximum amount of 110,000 EUR for each grant, and cost share will be required by Grantees in the amount of at least 25% for Tier 3 (Large) Companies..

The Grants are expected to have a duration of 12-24 months. The duration of the Grant shall not exceed the Compact end date of April 30, 2029.

² See definitions of “Energy Sector” and “Adjacent Sector” in the Definitions table beginning on page 3. See also Annex 2 in this document for a list of energy sector activities.

II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

2.1. Background

The Inclusive Energy Sector Workforce (IESW) Activity is part of the Just and Equitable Transition Acceleration (JETA) Project by the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) - Kosovo.

The JETA Project is based on the theory of change that workforce training and targeted workplace gender interventions will lead to more skilled workers in the labor force and a more diverse and equitable workplace in the energy sector, particularly for women, which will support the growing energy sector to be well resourced and inclusive. This is expected to facilitate the Government of Kosovo's energy transition. The objectives of the JETA Project are to (1) produce graduates who are hired in relevant jobs in the energy and adjacent sectors; and (2) increase employment of women among employers participating in the Inclusive Energy Sector Workforce Activity.

The Inclusive Energy Sector Workforce Activity publicly referred to as Energy for Equality is comprised of the following components:

1. Energy for Equality Awards
2. Energy for Equality Grants
3. Energy for Equality Pathways for Women in Energy

The Energy for Equality Grants Program was identified (through the root cause analysis during Compact Program development) as a solution to the problem of the low representation of women in the workforce of energy and adjacent sectors in Kosovo. The Energy for Equality Grants Program was designed to directly achieve the objective of supporting IESWA grantees implement workplace initiatives by providing financial grant incentives to achieve greater gender equality in the workforce among participant companies.

Achievement of this objective is expected to support the Project goal of increasing employment of women among employers participating in the Inclusive Energy Sector Workforce through grants provision for the implementation of gender equitable workplace policies, projects, and initiatives within grantee companies in the energy and adjacent sectors.

By providing financial support to facilitate women's empowerment in the workplace, this sub-activity will contribute to strengthening women's hiring, retention, promotion, and network building through the development of inclusive and gender-friendly working environment for women.

As research has shown, companies with gender equality in senior management and leadership positions reap the benefits of higher profit and improved company performance.³ A global survey in 2010 found that companies with the greatest proportion of women on their executive

³ McKinsey & Company. March 2018. "Still looking for room at the top: Ten years of research on women in the workplace." <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/gender-equality/still-looking-for-room-at-the-top-ten-years-of-research-on-women-in-the-workplace>.

committees earned 47% higher return on equity than did those with no female executive members.⁴ Other advantages companies expect from the measures include increased staff retention and an energized and motivated workforce. A study on Kosovo also revealed that increasing the number of women in senior leadership positions may help reduce corruption, because according to the survey, women were much less likely to participate in corrupt activities, compared to men.⁵

The economic benefits of grants program will be tied to overall program activities that build on each other to address the identified barriers for women's low representation in the workforce. Specifically, grants will contribute to accelerating changes in employers' policies, practices and infrastructure that will produce the following results:

- Improved conditions for women in the workplace in energy sector participant companies.
- Improved recruitment process among participant companies that intentionally seek to increase women and minority representation in the workforce.
- Increased awareness among participant companies about the harms of discrimination in the workplace.
- Increased awareness among participant companies about the benefits of gender integration in the workplace.
- Increased awareness among participant companies on how to integrate gender equality in the workplace into policies and practices (especially those policies and practices that are being awarded).

According to gender equality and social inclusion best practices, the above results will contribute to the increased hiring, retention, and promotion of women in the energy sector workforce, which in turn contributes to firms benefiting from these results. The benefits include savings in employee turnover, improved firm reputation, and higher return on equity.⁶⁷

2.2. Development Problem Statement

Women's representation in the energy and adjacent sector in Kosovo is under 30%, which reflects a global trend in the energy sector where women are underrepresented. To create a more sustainable and inclusive energy sector, the IESW Activity aims to address women's low level of participation in this comparatively high-paying sector. Specifically, the Inclusive Energy Sector Workforce Activity aims to:

⁴ McKinsey & Company. March 2018. "Still looking for room at the top: Ten years of research on women in the workplace." <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/gender-equality/still-looking-for-room-at-the-top-ten-years-of-research-on-women-in-the-workplace>.

⁵ Open Data Kosovo. May 2019. "More Women in Leadership Would Probably Reduce Corruption." <https://opendatakosovo.org/portfolio/more-women-in-leadership-would-probably-reduce-corruption-but-is-there-a-more-effective-way/>.

⁶ McKinsey & Company. March 2018. "Still looking for room at the top: Ten years of research on women in the workplace." <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/gender-equality/still-looking-for-room-at-the-top-ten-years-of-research-on-women-in-the-workplace>.

⁷ Open Data Kosovo. May 2019. "More Women in Leadership Would Probably Reduce Corruption." <https://opendatakosovo.org/portfolio/more-women-in-leadership-would-probably-reduce-corruption-but-is-there-a-more-effective-way/>.

- i. promote gender equitable practices among energy sector employers,
- ii. provide technical assistance to help increase female representation in energy companies in Kosovo, and
- iii. support networking, mentoring, and other educational and learning opportunities for women.

As Kosovo transitions towards a greener energy sector, against the backdrop of challenges related to finances, it would be fair to assume that there may not be enough capacity to dedicate toward gender mainstreaming activities and programs that target increasing the representation of minority communities the energy sector. Additionally, since the concept is niche, companies may not have adequate guidance to undertake long-term efforts and implement policies focused on gender and social inclusion. Key underlying effects related to poor representation of women and minority communities and institutional roadblocks can be resolved by investing in grants contributing toward improving gender equality at the company level. These grants can be utilized to instill change in hiring and recruitment practices to be more inclusive and transparent and can also be used to develop and implement policies that project energy sector employers to be perceived as companies of choice by women. For example, Salary Equity policy can be instated to improve wage transparency and reduce gender wage gap. Similarly, investment can be made to promote more women role models in technical fields in the energy and adjacent sectors to encourage participation of women in STEM careers and active enrollment in STEM education.

2.3. Theory of Change

If companies adopt a more inclusive and gender-friendly work environment, *then* employment of women among employers participating in the Inclusive Energy Sector Workforce Activity will be increased.

2.4. Illustrative Interventions

The potential measures for grant financing are grouped into three types of measures: Policies, Projects, and Initiatives.

Policies: Grants will support companies' efforts to design gender equality related policies. Policies are formal documents, approved by the organization leadership, their implementation is measured, and their relevance is evaluated to ensure the policy is current and serving its desired purpose.

Projects: Grants will support companies' tangible projects that involve the provision of hardware, equipment, construction, or physical facilities that advance gender equality in the workplace.

Initiatives: Grants will support companies' programs that through training, internships, mentorship, networking, scholarships, or other initiatives advance gender equality but that do not involve physical facilities, hardware, or equipment.

The list of measures in each category can be expanded and adapted to the priorities of each participant employer and the grant proposals are expected to include actions in one or more categories.

Policies	Projects	Initiatives
Grants to finance consulting for the development of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender Policy/equal opportunity recruitment / equal pay • Anti-harassment policy • Flex time and home-office policy • Policies addressing care responsibilities (including paternity leave, child-care, elderly care) • HR (development) policy with equal career path management support • Back to work policy (re-integration and re-skilling) • Gender Equality Certification (e.g., EDGE, UN Gender Equality Seal, etc.) • Any other policy that aims to improve gender equality in the workplace 	Grants for the financing of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation program: vehicles, standing contracts with transportation service providers, leasing of vehicles or financial support for safe transportation • Changing rooms and bathroom facilities • Lactation rooms • Day-care facility or monetary support for childcare • Software and platforms for remote learning • IT equipment to enable home office (laptops and similar) • Systems/equipment for monitoring of flex time • Software and IT platform for gender equality data base and monitoring system • Any other project that aims to improve gender equality in the workplace 	Grants for the financing of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internships (at least 6 months' salary) and mentorship programs (2-3 days) • Training & skills qualifications • Advocacy activities (promoting role models) • Gender sensitivity and inclusivity campaigns • Leadership programs • Setting up internal or external networking initiatives • Re-skilling training • Scholarships • Any other initiative that aims to improve gender equality in the workplace

2.5. Innovation Applied

In addition to the illustrative interventions above, the proposers are also encouraged to ideate and propose innovative solutions, which may include among others, measures toward the inclusion of women from ethnic minority communities; measures towards the inclusion of women with disabilities into the energy sector workforce; innovative measures to integrate gender inclusion into their business models, etc. These are some of the suggestive innovative approaches and ideas, and the Concept Note proposals should not limit to those listed above.

2.6. Cross Cutting Principles

Proposers are encouraged to also suggest cross-cutting principles such as:

Inclusion of women from diverse backgrounds: In addition to overall inclusion of women, this grant program intentionally addresses issues related to the underrepresentation of women from diverse backgrounds in the energy sector workforce. All Concept Notes and Proposals are expected to include strategies to integrate women from diverse backgrounds into the proposed

grant activities. These can include a focus on women from ethnic minority communities, inclusion of women with disabilities, and/or integration of other underrepresented groups.

Environmental considerations: Proposed grant activities should consider their environmental impacts and strive to prevent and/or mitigate negative contributions to the natural environment, biodiversity ecosystems, local communities, and the effects of climate change. Where pertinent, grant activities are encouraged to perform an environmental impact assessment as well as suggest adaptation measures.

Do no harm: Proposed grant activities must not, intentionally or otherwise, cause any harm to individuals and communities, including exacerbating existing conflicts or inequalities.

2.7. Illustrative Approach

To facilitate information, approach and proposal design, proposers are encouraged to check some of the illustrative approaches such as: organizational gender assessment, training and action planning following good practices for gender integration in the workplace. Participants may check the following frameworks: UN Women’s Empowerment Principles, the USAID Engendering Industries Approach, UNDP Gender Seal for Public institutions or Private Sector, and the Millennium Challenge Corporation’s Gender and Inclusion Policy.

2.8. Illustrative Results

Below are presented some illustrative milestones and activities include the following, which Proposers are encouraged to confirm or adjust.

Activity	Milestone Numbers and Dates (if known)
Policies	Illustrative example: 1 new organizational gender policy developed by December 2026
Projects	Illustrative example: 1 new lactation room installed and made available to employees by January 2027
Initiatives	Illustrative example: 1 technical training on renewable energy and climate change held with 30 women employees at the company by October 2025

2.9. Illustrative Indicators

- a. # of women hired (disaggregated by women among ethnic minority communities and disability status, if appropriate)
- b. # of women retained (disaggregated by women among ethnic minority communities and disability status, if appropriate)
- c. # of women promoted (disaggregated by women among ethnic minority communities and disability status, if appropriate)

- d. % (or ratio) of women employees (disaggregated by women among minorities and disability status, if appropriate)
- e. # of gender equality and social inclusion policies developed and implemented
- f. Increased employee's awareness about gender equality and social inclusion

III. ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS

3.1. Eligibility criteria

MCA-Kosovo welcomes Concept Notes from all eligible institutions. Some of the main eligibility criteria for the proposers are presented below, but a completed list of eligibility criteria and evaluation criteria, please refer to the section VI in this document.

The following entities are eligible to apply:

- Registered and operating in Kosovo.
- Companies registered for energy generation, energy transmission, energy supply, or energy distribution.

The following organizations are NOT eligible for MCA-Kosovo grant funding:

- Individuals.
- Organizations that are not legally registered in Kosovo.
- Political parties, groups or institutions, their subsidiaries, or affiliates.
- Organizations that promote or engage in illegal or anti-democratic activities.
- Faith-based organizations.
- Public International Organizations.
- Entities that have been declared ineligible, debarred, suspended and prohibited from different World Bank and United States funding.⁸
- Any organization that is deemed to have a conflict of interest with MCA-Kosovo.⁹

There are other special Eligibility Criteria that are specific requirements for different Tiers as part of the Energy for Equality Grant Program:

- Companies with more than 200 employees
- Must be registered for energy generation, energy transmission, energy supply, or energy distribution.

⁸ All proposers will be screened if ineligible, debarred, suspended and prohibited from different World Bank and United States funding, as per the lists/databases presented in Annex 2

⁹ Conflict of interest is understood and includes entities serving as the MCA Entity's agents for fiscal, procurement and Grants, and the MCA-Kosovo Grant Manager.

- Companies that have been active in business for at least one year.

3.2. Other Grant Application Considerations

The table below contains other grant application considerations that Proposers should take into account when developing Concept Notes and Proposals.

Tier 3 (Large) Companies	
Maximum Grant Amount	110,000 EUR
Cost share	At least 25%. In-kind contributions can be considered.
Grant application frequency	Can apply for a grant every year, provided the measure to be financed is part of the gender equality action plan.
Grant activity restrictions	None. Can apply for all three types of Grant measures
Grant length requirement	None. The length of the grant will depend on the proposed measures to be implemented, with an expected timeframe of 1-2 years of implementation.
Other	<p>Will be supported with a professional gender assessment and development of a detailed gender equality action plan.</p> <p>Proposed activities must be fully implementable and sustainable within the scope of funding provided under this solicitation, without reliance on additional external funding sources.</p>

CALL FOR CONCEPT NOTES

IV. APPLICATION PROCESS

4.1. Stages of Application

The application process under this Call for Concept Notes will take place in two stages with a possible Co-creation and discussion process at the end of Stage I.

1. Stage I – Concept Note.

- a. Submission of Concept Notes.
- b. Review of Concept Notes and Selection.
- c. Proposers who pass Stage I may go into a Co-Creation or Discussions phase or will receive a Request for Applications.
 - i. Co-Creation – Co-Creation may be a meeting, series of meetings or conversations (both in person and in-writing) between designated Selection Committee Members and representatives of the Proposer to collaboratively design or significantly modify the Concept Note response. Some, all or none of the Proposers will enter into a Co-Creation process.
 - ii. Discussions –The review panel may provide feedback to the Proposer on any portion of the Concept Note so that the Proposer can, acting on its own, improve its subsequent submissions.
- d. Proposers who pass Stage I will be required to fill out an assessment document and participate in a 6 days (Tier 3) training for proposers’ better understanding of gender equality and social inclusion concepts and proper proposal development.¹⁰ The training will be provided in two modalities (online and in person) during the period of February 17, 2025 to March 17, 2025 in Pristina, Kosovo. Three participants (mixed men and women) shall participate from each entity.

2. Stage II – Full application.

- a. Shortlisted candidates from the Concept Note stage will receive a Request for Applications.
- b. Full Applications will be submitted by the applicants and evaluated by the Selection Committee.
- c. Applicants who pass Stage II will be notified for negotiations.
- d. Signed Grant Agreements.

¹⁰ Proposers may be exempted from the training stage if they have received a similar training and have already developed a Gender Assessment and Action Plan in the past.

4.2. Proposed Timeline

The following schedule indicates the deadlines for the different activities for the Call for Concept Notes and Request for Applications:

ACTION	Timing
Stage 1	
Call for Concept Notes	December 9, 2024
Questions or Clarifications Deadline	December 16, 2024
Concept Note Submission Deadline	January 29, 2025
Notification to shortlisted Proposers	February 17, 2025
Assessment and Training	February 17, 2025 to March 17, 2025
Co-Creation or Discussions, Workshop or Meetings	March 18, 2025
Stage 2	
Request Full Application	April 9, 2025
Full Application Submission Deadline	April 25, 2025
Selection Notification	May 26, 2025
Award Negotiation and Signature	June 23, 2025

4.3. Submission Instructions

- a) **Concept Notes are due by January 29, 2025, 13:00 Central European Standard time.**
- b) **The Template for Concept Notes** is available in Section V as part of this document for proposers to prepare for submission
- c) **Electronic submissions through email are required.** The completed Concept Note template, along with other requested documents must be submitted attached to an email, sent to e4e.grants@mcakosovo.org.
- d) **Concept Notes will only be accepted in the English language.** Templates are also provided in Albanian and Serbian languages, but Concept Note proposals are only accepted in the **English** language.
- e) **Printed hard copy submissions or incomplete submissions are NOT permitted.** Any incomplete submission may mean non-processing, significant delay in processing of the application, or rejection.
- f) All Proposers should retain, for their records, a copy of their application and all accompanying enclosures.

- g) Proposers are kindly requested to only submit one application per entity. If a single entity submits multiple applications, the first application submitted by the company will be evaluated.

V. CONCEPT NOTE TEMPLATE

The Concept Note application for energy companies is organized according to the different chapters, with associated length limits. A detailed budget should **not** be submitted, though a rough, estimated top-line budget number is requested in the Financial information section of the Concept Note template.

The submission format will be through email using the template with five modules: A) General information, B) Company History, C) Grant Project Idea, D) Financial information, E) Staffing, and F) Appendices. The tables below are for reference only and include the information that proposers will be required to prepare. Proposers need to fill out the PDF template and attach all required appendices in the same email submission. PDF forms are available for download here:

- Tier 3: <https://www.energyforequality.com/grants-tier3>

5.1. Concept Note Template for Tier 3 (Large) Companies

CONCEPT NOTE

A. General information

Name of company		
Full address of company		
E-mail address of company		
Telephone number of company		
Company website (or indicate N/A)		
Company Registration Number		
Type of company	<input type="checkbox"/> Private company <input type="checkbox"/> Public company <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please explain):	
Company activity/ies select all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> Energy generation <input type="checkbox"/> Energy transmission <input type="checkbox"/> Energy distribution <input type="checkbox"/> Energy supply <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe):	
Year company was founded		
Number of company branches/offices		
Please list the cities where the branches/offices are located		
Gender representation in the Board of Directors or Senior Leadership or equivalent highest decision making structure	Number of women in the Board/Senior Leadership Team or equivalent	Number of men in the Board/Senior Leadership Team or equivalent
Company size	<input type="checkbox"/> Tier 3 (200 employees or more)	
Total number of employees (2023)		
Employee information (2023)	<i>Women employees</i>	<i>Men employees</i>
	<i>Women employees from ethnic</i>	<i>Men employees from ethnic</i>

	<i>minority communities</i>	<i>minority communities</i>
	<i>Women employees with disabilities</i>	<i>Men employees with disabilities</i>
Point of Contact (name, position title, phone number, e-mail address)		
If applying in consortium with other partners, Names, addresses, and contact information for consortium partners.		
Signature of authorized representative of the Proposer (Check box)	<input type="checkbox"/> By checking this box I confirm the contents are accurate and that the entity I represent has the capacity to fulfill the anticipated grant project.	
Name and title of authorized representative of the Proposer		
How did you hear about the Energy for Equality Grant program?	<input type="checkbox"/> TV <input type="checkbox"/> Radio <input type="checkbox"/> News portal <input type="checkbox"/> Informational session <input type="checkbox"/> Social media <input type="checkbox"/> MCA-Kosovo and/or Energy for Equality Website <input type="checkbox"/> Economic chambers <input type="checkbox"/> Energy-related entities/Associations <input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):	

B. Company History

<p>Company History In the box below, briefly describe your company’s history and development, listing key milestones since the company foundation. Include current and/or past activities related to gender equality, if any. (Maximum 3,000 characters)</p>

C. Grant Project Idea

Grant Project Title	
Please select for which Energy for Equality Grant Category you are applying. Proposers can select more than one category, and the category can be changed later during the grants process.	
Grant for POLICIES (select one or more policies listed, or select “Other” and describe)	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender / equal opportunity recruitment / equal pay <input type="checkbox"/> Anti-harassment/sexual harassment policy <input type="checkbox"/> Flextime and home-office policy <input type="checkbox"/> Policies addressing care responsibilities (including paternity leave, child-care, elderly care) <input type="checkbox"/> HR (development) policy with equal career path management support <input type="checkbox"/> Back to work policy (re-integration and re-skilling) <input type="checkbox"/> Gender equality certification <input type="checkbox"/> Others (please describe):
Grant for PROJECTS (select one or more projects listed, or select “Other” and describe)	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation program: vehicles, standing contracts with transportation service providers, leasing of vehicles (e.g., grant can be used for a down payment to reduce leasing rate), parking subsidies or financial support for safe transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Locker rooms and bathrooms (separate for men and women) <input type="checkbox"/> Lactation and infant changing rooms <input type="checkbox"/> Other infrastructure measures to increase accessibility <input type="checkbox"/> Day-care facility or monetary support for childcare <input type="checkbox"/> Software and platforms for remote learning <input type="checkbox"/> Systems/equipment for flextime work <input type="checkbox"/> Software and IT platform for gender equality database and monitoring system <input type="checkbox"/> IT equipment to enable home office (laptops and similar) <input type="checkbox"/> Others (please describe)
Grant for INITIATIVES (select one or more initiatives listed, or select “Other” and describe)	<input type="checkbox"/> Regular training on gender equality <input type="checkbox"/> Networking facility <input type="checkbox"/> Gender-sensitive mentoring schemes <input type="checkbox"/> Regular training schedules tied to career management

	<input type="checkbox"/> Special leadership training for women, including for management, leadership and board positions <input type="checkbox"/> Certification courses <input type="checkbox"/> Development of monitoring and tracking systems for the industry <input type="checkbox"/> Development of publications/ blogs for sharing knowledge about best practices <input type="checkbox"/> Expanded internship programs for women <input type="checkbox"/> Outreach programs targeting women to promote technical careers in schools and universities <input type="checkbox"/> Others (please describe):
--	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Concept Note Idea

In the box below, you must show how you are interested in improving the number of women employed, retained and promoted in your company.

With no more than **10,000 characters**, please structure your Concept using the following outline:

1. General Concept (what measures, when, how, expected benefits for the business from the measures)
2. Overall Objective to be achieved by the company with the use of the grant.
3. Main Activities:
 - i. Description of activities connected to selected measures
 - ii. Indicators (up to three)
 - iii. Implementation plan, including staffing plan for grant management and/or implementation
4. Anticipated impact

While you write this Concept, please ensure that you are answering the following questions:

- Did you describe **which measures** you would like and need support in order to achieve the objective?
- Did you describe if **you have already undertaken** any measures in the past to adopt such measures?
- Did you elaborate briefly on **how** you think each measure will contribute to the objective?

--	--

Project location (for all measures including infrastructure projects)	
------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

D. Financial information

High-level budget amount (in EUR, including cost-share amount)	
% of cost-share	
Amount of cost-share (in EUR)	

E. Staffing

	Name	Title
List three staff members and their titles at the company who will work on the design and management of the grant. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least two of the three staff listed should have a managerial role. • At least one of the three staff listed should be in the HR Department. • The proposed team should include both men and women. 		

F. Appendices

Appendix 1: Business Registration Certificate
Appendix 2: Fiscal Number Certificate
Appendix 3: Proof of employee numbers (one year extract from the Tax Administration of Kosovo)
Appendix 4: Signed declaration of compliance (Attach a signed and completed version of MCA-Kosovo’s Declaration of Compliance - found in Annex 3 of the Notice of Funding Opportunity document)

VI. CONCEPT NOTE EVALUATION

6.1. Evaluation Criteria

Concept Notes will be reviewed on administrative eligibility (for entities and activities) and technical evaluation.

The Stage I Concept Note Review takes place across two progressive steps: administrative eligibility and technical evaluation. Proposers must pass administrative eligibility to proceed to technical evaluation. Technical evaluation comprises pre-set merit review criteria and uses a scoring method of up to 100 points.

6.2. Administrative Eligibility for Entities

The eligibility of each Proposer will be verified by Tetra Tech and MCA-Kosovo. The eligibility of each organization listed as party to the concept note or potential partnership will be verified (“partial eligibility verification”). If the proposers are eligible based on this check, they will receive a “pass” and may proceed to the next step in the review process. If the proposer does not fulfill the eligibility criteria, they will receive a “fail” and will not proceed to the next step in the review process. If a record(s) for one or more firms is identified in the Eligibility Verification Procedures, additional research will be conducted to determine whether the result may be a “false positive.” At this stage MCC will be notified and consulted prior to a final determination to disqualify a proposer.

6.2.1. Eligibility criteria for all Entities

All entities that **ARE eligible** to apply must be:

- Registered and operating in Kosovo.
- Companies registered for energy generation, energy transmission, energy supply, or energy distribution.

Entities that are **NOT eligible** for MCA-Kosovo grant funding are:

- Individuals.
- Organizations that are not legally registered in Kosovo.
- Political parties, groups or institutions, or their subsidiaries, or affiliates.
- Organizations that advocate, promote or engage in illegal or anti-democratic activities or illegal activities under local law.
- Faith-based organizations.

- Entities that have been declared ineligible, debarred, suspended and prohibited from different World Bank and United States funding¹¹.
- Public International Organizations.
- Any organization that is deemed to have a conflict of interest with MCA-Kosovo¹².

6.2.2. Eligibility Criteria for Entities as per the Tiers

The following table provides the eligibility criteria per each of the Tiers. Each company/CSO will be evaluated to comply with the criteria of its corresponding Tier.

- Companies with over 200 employees.
- Must be registered for energy generation, energy transmission, energy distribution, or energy supply.
- Companies that have been active in business for at least one year.

6.3. Administrative Eligibility Criteria for Activities

These criteria will be used to assess those activities performed by the proposers. Entities performing any of the following projects or activities will not be eligible for funding:

- The project and/or activity involve involuntary physical resettlement or involuntary economic displacement;
- The project and/or activity involve trafficking in persons or people subject to trafficking in persons;
- The project and/or activity involve the employment of children below age 15 or children performing any work that is economically exploitative or does harm;
- The project or activity support any costs associated with military equipment;
- The project/activity support surveillance equipment;
- The project/activity support commodities and services specifically for law enforcement;
- The project/activity support abortion equipment and services;
- The project/activity support luxury goods and gambling equipment;
- The project/activity support or condone violence;
- The project/activity support political activity include the education or training of partisan candidates;
- The project/activity support or condone activity declared illegal under local law;
- The project/activity support any costs that are unallowable under the MCC Cost Principles for Government Affiliates;

¹¹ All proposers will be screened if ineligible, debarred, suspended and prohibited from different World Bank and United States funding, as per the lists/databases presented in the Annex 2

¹² Conflict of interest is understood and includes entities serving as the MCA Entity's agents for fiscal, procurement and Grants, and the MCA-Kosovo Grant Manager

- The project/activity support any activities prohibited under the MCC Compact.

6.4. Technical Evaluation of Concept Notes

Once eligibility is determined for each Entity, Concept Notes will be reviewed on the following technical criteria:

1. Strategic fit of proposed grant activity with Energy for Equality Objective (30 points)
2. Clearly defined measures and implementation approach to address gender inequalities in the workplace. (30 points)
3. Anticipated benefit/impact to project beneficiaries (30 points)
4. Past performance of the proposer describing previous experience related to gender and inclusive approaches and how their company/organization conducted support activities as per the objective of the proposed grants activities (10)

A maximum of 100 points will be assigned to each evaluated proposer. Proposers will be ranked per scoring and the number of awardees will be determined by the quality of the pool and number of funds available.

6.5. Notice

Proposers not selected for funding will be notified. Debriefings on unsuccessful applications can be requested by writing to MCA-Kosovo at e4e.grants@mcakosovo.org, or at Str. Migjeni 21 (Ex-Ljubljana Bank Building), 8th and 9th floors, Pristina, Kosovo. Please note that many or all design documents created through this Concept Note round would not be considered proprietary to the Proposer.

Successful Proposers at the Concept Note stage will be invited to the Request for Applications for full proposals and other steps as presented in Section 4.

VII. ANNEXES

7.1. Annex 1. List of energy sector activities

Core Energy Sector Activities
Energy generation
Energy supply
Energy transmission
Energy distribution

7.2. Annex 2. List of databases of non-eligible entities

List of databases of non-eligible entities to be verified at the Administrative Eligibility and compliance stage are:

- System for Award Management (SAM) Excluded Parties List [SAM.gov | Exclusions](#)
- World Bank Debarred List <https://www.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/procurement/debarred-firms>
- US Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control, Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) List <https://sanctionssearch.ofac.treas.gov/>
- US State Department, Directorate of Defense Trade Controls, AECA Debarred List https://www.pmdt.c.state.gov/ddtc_public?id=ddtc_kb_article_page&sys_id=c22d1833dbb8d300d0a370131f9619f0
- US State Department, Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO) List <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/>
- US Department of Commerce, Bureau of Industry and Security, Denied Persons List <https://www.bis.doc.gov/index.php/the-denied-persons-list>
- US State Department, Executive Order 13224 List <https://www.state.gov/executive-order-13224/>
- US State Sponsors of Terrorism List <https://www.state.gov/state-sponsors-of-terrorism/>

7.3. Annex 3. Declaration of Compliance Template – to be signed

Declaration of Compliance

I, the undersigned, hereby affirm and declare that:

1. The organization/company I represent satisfies all eligibility criteria outlined in the grant guidelines and has provided all required supporting documents and accurate information as stipulated in this grant Concept Note form.
2. The information provided in this Concept Note is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. Any false statements or misrepresentations may result in disqualification and potential legal consequences.
3. Grant funds will be used solely for the purposes described in the grant proposal.
4. The organization/company will manage the funds responsibly and in accordance with the financial regulations set by the grant provider.
5. The organization/company confirms that the investment project does not involve activities listed on the Exclusion List of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) or MCA-Kosovo, as specified in the MCC Cost Principles <https://www.mcc.gov/resources/doc/guidance-cost-principles-government-affiliates/> and Compact Agreement <https://assets.mcc.gov/content/uploads/compact-kosovo.pdf> restrictions on the use of program funds (Compact Agreement, Section 2.4).
6. The organization/company agrees to participate in monitoring and evaluation activities conducted by MCA-Kosovo, MCC, or their representatives.
7. The organization/company will submit timely and accurate reports on fund usage, project progress, and outcomes as required by the grant agreement.
8. The organization/company will comply with all relevant laws, regulations, and ethical standards in executing the grant-funded project.
9. The organization/company will uphold principles of transparency, accountability, and integrity in all grant-related activities.
10. The organization/company has disclosed any potential conflicts of interest related to the grant-funded project.
11. The organization/company will take appropriate measures to address and prevent any conflicts of interest during project implementation.
12. The Gender Self-Assessment training provided by the implementation consultants is mandatory and free of charge. The organization/company or its vendors/suppliers will neither offer nor request payment from the implementation consultants.

13. The organization/company acknowledges that MCA-Kosovo may suggest alternative suppliers to comply with MCC and MCA-Kosovo procurement regulations.
14. The organization/company affirms that no other grant support has been or is expected to be received for the aforementioned investment project.
15. The organization/company consents to MCA-Kosovo, MCC, and its implementation consultants publishing information about the project, including naming the organization/company as a beneficiary under the MCA-Kosovo Energy for Equality Grant Programme.
16. The organization/company will use the grant exclusively for an eligible project. In the event of grant misuse, the organization/company understands that it must refund the grant.
17. The organization/company will obtain all necessary consents and statutory approvals (e.g., building control, town and country planning) and has the authority to install technologies on the site, including permission from the facility owner if applicable.
18. The organization/company agrees to provide MCA-Kosovo or their designated agents (e.g., implementation consultant) with access to relevant information and records related to the investment project, as well as to the premises where the project is implemented for verification purposes.
19. The organization/company confirms it has sufficient funds to cover the 'own contribution' of the investment and any applicable taxes and customs charges. The organization/company understands that the MCA-Kosovo grant is exempt from taxes and customs duties as per the Compact Agreement.
20. The organization/company affirms that the information provided in this Concept Note Form is accurate, complete, and filled out to the best of my knowledge.
21. By signing below, I certify that I am authorized to sign on behalf of the organization/company and that the information provided in this declaration is true and accurate.

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____