**Guidelines for the Panel of Experts**

(subject to refinement during the cycle)

Seventh Cycle

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2018-2019

**Content Page No**

1. Introduction 3
2. Qualifications 3
3. Selection cycle 3
4. Evaluation criteria 4
5. Roles and responsibilities 5
6. Feedback loops 6

**Annexes**

Annex 1: Nomination form 7

Annex 2: Evaluation criteria 8

Annex 3: Statement of Undertaking 9

Annex 4: Scoring and comments rubric 10

1. Introduction

The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD) have collaborated on a joint Project Facility to support technically, economically and financially feasible, replicable, scalable and transformative renewable energy projects with the potential for positive development impacts in developing countries. ADFD committed USD 350 million in concessional loans, over seven annual funding cycles, to renewable energy projects recommended by IRENA.

IRENA administers a project screening process to recommend technically, economically and financially feasible, replicable, scalable and/or transformative renewable energy projects with the potential for positive development impacts in developing countries.

Projects were selected for funding in January 2014 in the first cycle. ADFD soft loans cover up to 50% of the project costs. USD 214 million of ADFD loans have been allocated by ADFD for 21 renewable energy projects recommended by IRENA. Over USD 420 million is being provided by other co-funding sources to cover the rest of the project costs.

IRENA carries out its project screening and recommendation process through two bodies: a strategic Advisory Committee (Committee), appointed annually by the IRENA Assembly, and an independent Panel of Experts established by the Committee.

IRENA decision [A/4/13 “IRENA/ADFD Project Facility – General Principles”](http://www.irena.org/-/media/Files/IRENA/Agency/About-IRENA/Assembly/Fourth-Assembly/A_4_13_ADFD_General-Principles.pdf?la=en&hash=7BCEF4AB210F4F5C30C678FEAED3C14B2DD0D7ED) guides the implementation of the Facility.

The Director-General of IRENA, on the basis of the Secretariat’s knowledge of experts in the field and Members and Signatory countries’ submission of the names of qualified experts, recommends a list of candidates for the Panel of Experts to the Committee in each cycle who evaluate the project proposals submitted by the applicants.

1. Qualifications

The experience and expertise of the Panel of Experts needs to cover:

* various renewable energy technologies;
* renewable energy resource qualification;
* relevant developing country experience;
* knowledge of procedures and practices of development funds including economic analysis and financial assessment of projects;
* project design, development, implementation and management;
* project analysis, monitoring and evaluation; and
* technical, commercial and socio-economic impact assessments.

See expert nomination form in Annex 1 for further details of qualifications needed.

1. Selection cycle

There are two stages of project evaluation facilitated by IRENA. In the first stage, the experts must evaluate, score and shortlist Executive Project Summary submissions. The Committee selects from this shortlist. Selected summary applicants are invited to submit a Full Project Proposal in the second stage. Experts evaluate and score the Full Project Proposals that are submitted. The Committee recommends projects to ADFD from this scored list. See Diagram 1 for the schedule and approximate number of projects considered at each stage from estimates from previous cycles. However, ADFD would like many more projects to be selected and recommended through the process. ADFD is advising that the Committee submit at least around 13 projects to them by the end of September 2019.

1. Evaluation criteria

The Panel of Experts carries out technical reviews of project proposals based on the following criteria at the Executive Project Summary stage and Full Project Proposal stage. See Annex 2 and Annex 4 for details on the evaluation criteria at these respective stages.

Projects must have:

* technical merit, including through appropriate design, management capability, project deliverables;
* economic and financial viability, including through an appropriate business plan, demonstrated economic feasibility, revenue plans/offtake contracts and co-finance and
* socio-economic and environmental impact, including through achieving development goals e.g. equity, health and gender impacts.

Projects must also:

* be transformative (expected to have a significant positive impact on the energy landscape, society, environment and/or business situation);
* be replicable (show an effective, efficient business model for the given technology that can be replicated, and/or involve a "solid and tested" approach);
* improve energy access (expressed in number of people to gain new access to clean energy, new connections to the grid or megawatts added to the power supply);
* address energy security (expressed in terms of how the project contributes to the diversification of energy supply, saving scarce energy resources, or reducing grid outages and/or in the number of people or systems with reduced reliance on traditional biomass, diesel, etc.).

The Committee carries out a strategic review of the scored and shortlisted projects so that projects selected and recommended to ADFD must be geographically spread, technologically diverse and aligned with government priorities including the provision of a government guarantee.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Each expert will be informed once the Panel of Experts is established by the Committee in mid to late January 2019. Experts can serve on the Panel for more than one year, bearing in mind a principle of rotation and ensuring a certain level of continuity. Appointed experts will be asked to sign a Statement of Undertaking (enclosed in Annex 3).

The first activity that the IRENA Secretariat will engage the experts on is in the appointment of two Chairs: one from a developing country and one from a developed country. The Panel will work electronically and meet virtually. Roles and responsibilities of each expert are set out in Table 1 for both the Executive Project Summary and Full Project Proposal stage.

**Table 1: Tasks for the Panel of Experts**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **No** | **Tasks** |
| **1** | **Conflict of interest check\*:** Each expert checks if there is any conflict of interest on any of the projects allocated and informs the Secretariat at adfd@irena.org . Allocation of projects is carried out based on the geographic and technology experience of the expert. |
| **2** | **Experts\*\* score and comment individually on the three main sections of each of the** 20 Executive Project Summaries and around 5 to 6 projects at the Full Project Proposal stage through an online interface that the Secretariat will provide reflecting the rubric in Annex 4.  |
| **3** | **Experts view each other’s scores and comments on the same projects and convene to discuss and adjust their evaluations if needed and scores are also normalised for comparison**. The purpose of this is to come to a common understanding on the evaluation process amongst the experts, reduce any bias in the scores due to differences between the assessors in terms of their generosity in scoring and their perceptions of the relative merit of each project. |
| **4** | **Lead expert\*\*\* to add lead Comments** (Joint explanatory statement that covers assessment of three sections – technical, economic/financial and socioeconomic development as well as how the project is replicable, scalable and addresses energy access and how the project can be improved) in consultation with experts scoring that project. |
| **5** | **Experts prepare a project shortlist from the scored and ranked list**. |
| **6** | **Co-Chairs provide overall report to Advisory Committee** summarizing the lead expert comments on the highest scoring list of shortlisted projects. |

\* An expert cannot score and/or comment on projects where there is a potential conflict of interest. If such a situation arises, another expert from the same region that does not have a conflict of interest for that project will be asked to assume the responsibilities of the expert.

\*\*Three experts evaluate each project.

\*\*\*The lead expert is recommended by the Secretariat for lead scoring of a particular project that is also scored by two other experts.

The role of the Panel of Experts is to score and comment on and shortlist projects based on their technical, economic/financial merit and potential socio-economic development impact. Experts consider improvement of energy access and addressing energy security in project shortlisting. The potential for replicability, scalability and transformative impact of the projects is also assessed. IRENA will provide the scoring approach and scheme that aims to create a standard of scoring across the different expert groups and their assigned projects (Annex 4).

The following webinars will be carried out to assist in the selection process:

* A webinar for experts will be carried out in February 2019 to guide experts on how to score and evaluate projects and to answer any questions on the process.
* In March after the scoring and shortlisting of the summary proposals is carried out, a webinar will be convened between the Co-Chairs of the experts and the Committee to present the shortlist of projects.
* Likewise, at the second stage a webinar for experts on how to evaluate full proposals will be carried out in July 2019. (Note that ADFD have a one-page note on what needs to be in the feasibility study to assist applicants – this is available online.) At the end of August, the ranked and scored list of full proposals will be presented in a webinar to the Committee to help them in their recommendation of projects to ADFD. ADFD selects from this recommended list.

Note that if the experts would like to ask any questions of the project proponents during the process to seek clarification, they must contact the IRENA Secretariat to facilitate this.

6. Feedback loops

* The comments provided by the experts to improve projects will be provided in a generalized set of feedback to applicants between the Executive Project Summary and Full Project Proposal stage to help improve proposals.
* Experts will be asked to provide feedback on the evaluation rubric after its use in April and then August 2019 to help to improve it further.

Annex 1

**Expert Nomination form for the Seventh Cycle of the IRENA/ADFD Project Facility**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Personal information** | **Country nominating (if applicable)** | **Expert nominated** |
| Salutation (Mr./Mrs./Ms. etc.) |   |   |
| Country |   |   |
| Surname / Family Name |   |   |
| First Name / Given Name |   |   |
| Institution |   |   |
| Division / Department |   |   |
| Job Title |   |   |
| Current responsibilities |  |  |
| Email address |   |   |
| Phone (including country and area code) |   |   |
| Education (highest degree attained and conferring institution) | Not applicable |   |
| **Describe and indicate experience and expertise of nominated expert in the five sections below** |
| **Experience and expertise** | **Yes/No** | **Specify where applicable (Max 20 words)** |
| **1. Mandatory requirements**: primary area of expertise and experience (minimum 6 years) in technical, socio-economic and environmental economic and/or financial assessment of projects (including co-financing) in developing countries covering various renewable energy technologies.  | Technical assessment  |  |  |
| Economic/ Financial assessment  |  |  |
| Socio-economic and environmental assessment  |  |  |
| Other |  |  |
| **2. Additional requirements:** experience in project analysis, development and implementation, management, capacity building, risk mitigation, improving energy access, addressing energy security, project analysis, monitoring and evaluation of projects, and transformative, replicable and/or innovative renewable energy projects, stakeholder engagement and working with governments in developing countries. Knowledge of procedures/ practices of development funds. | Project development and implementation, resource assessment |  |  |
| Management, capacity building  |  |  |
| Risk mitigation  |  |  |
| Improving energy access |  |  |
| Addressing energy security |  |  |
| Project analysis |  |  |
| Monitoring and evaluation |  |  |
| Stakeholder engagement, worked with governments |  |  |
| Procedures of development funds  |  |  |
| Other |  |  |
| **3. Experience in renewable energy technologies.** | Solar |  |  |
| Wind |  |  |
| Hydro |  |  |
| Geothermal |  |  |
| Biomass |  |  |
| Other |  |  |
| **4. Experience in different size and types of projects:** (capacity and investment size, on-grid, mini-grid, off-grid). | On-grid (above 5MW) |  |  |
| Off-grid or minigrids |  |  |
| Other |  |  |
| **5. Experience in geographies and areas.** | Country (specify) |  |  |
| Region (specify) |  |  |
| Rural |  |  |
| Urban |  |  |
| Peri-urban |   |   |
| Other |   |   |

Please send this form to adfd@irena.org including a CV by 30 October 2018 at the latest. If you are interested to be a Lead Expert as well (see Table 1), please indicate this in the body of the email.

For further information visit [www.irena.org/adfd](http://www.irena.org/adfd)

Annex 2

**Evaluation criteria**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Applications** | **Evaluation by experts** (% weights) | **Advisory Committee selection and recommendation** |
| **Technical merit(40%)** | **Economic/****financial viability****(30%)** | **Socio-economic & environmental impacts(30%)** | **Overall project characteristics** |
| Executive Project Summary – **applicants submit mid-Nov 2018 to mid-Feb 2019** | -Objectives-Design-Management | -Project cost-Revenue sources-Business plan | -Social, economic and environmental benefits-Stakeholder engagement | -Transformative-Replicable/Scalable-Innovative business model -Improve energy access-Address energy security | -Geographic spread-Diversity of technologies-Alignment with government priorities |
| Full Project Proposal including **full feasibility study**– **shortlisted applicants submit early May to end June 2019** | -Detailed project design and output-Resource assessment-Implementation plan and operational arrangements-Technical risk mitigation measures-Organisational and management capabilities-Monitoring and evaluation | -Full economic/financial feasibility study-Co-finance agreements-Economic/ financial risks and mitigation options | -Stakeholder engagement -Accessibility-Affordability-Job creation-Energy security-Environmental / health-Other/ gender/ transformation/ replicability/ scalability/ innovation-Risk mitigation |

Annex 3

**STATEMENT OF UNDERTAKING**

**Panel of Experts**

**Seventh cycle of the IRENA/ADFD Project Facility**

As a member of the Panel of Experts for the seventh project selection cycle of the IRENA/ADFD Project Facility, I confirm and undertake that:

(a) I will independently and objectively review and evaluate the project proposals submitted in the seventh funding cycle of the IRENA/ADFD Project Facility, based solely on their technical, economic/financial and socio-economic development merit. I will not represent or be guided by the interests of the entity(ies) for which I work, or by any personal or financial interest.

(b) I will be available in the time periods indicated to evaluate projects i.e., at the Executive Project Summary stage and the Full Project Proposal stage.

(c) I will ensure the confidentiality of project information which I may receive in my capacity as Expert in the seventh project selection cycle of the IRENA/ADFD Project Facility, and will not disclose such information to third parties unless required as part of the evaluation or selection process, or with the consent of the Applicant.

(d) I will declare any actual or potential conflict of interest on evaluating the projects.

I acknowledge and understand that no remuneration will be provided to the members of the Panel of Experts.

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Name, Signature and Date

Annex 4

**Overall helpful hints provided to applicants**

* **Clear and simple presentation** of your project proposal. Explain in as simple terms as possible exactly what your project is, its objective and structure. For example, provide relevant technical details, energy produced, grid-connection, engagement of end-users and potential sustainable development impacts. **Ensure consistency** in your application on figures and structure of your project.
* **Tried and tested technologies are supported** through the Facility. Therefore, there needs to be a certain technical maturity to the project. The Facility is focused to facilitate the implementation of projects with an impact on energy access, CO2 emissions, social and environmental factors.
* **Management team needs to** **indicate relevant experience/track record/references** and identification of important stakeholders and approaches to ensure the project will be taken to implementation. There needs to be institutional support and a commitment from the local authorities, for example, beforehand to maximize the chances of completion. (Note that as ADFD requires a government guarantee be provided by the entity involved in international borrowing affairs for the host country, the profile of applicants tends to mostly be public or semi-public institutions that are looking for funds. The private sector can apply but must be able to obtain a government guarantee.)
* **The structuring of the rest of the co-funding needs to be clarified.** It is important to raise the co-funding for the total project costs not covered by the ADFD loan i.e. the other 50% or more before or during the application process. Evidence of co-financing efforts needs to be provided in the application. (If this funding is not secured from national government funding, applicants could reach out to the local offices of development institutions in the country.)
* **Important to have well-defined** [**feasibility study**](http://bit.ly/ADFDFeasibility) **particularly at the second Full Project Proposal stage but this can also be provided at the Executive Project Summary stage**. Projects need to be sufficiently technically and financially feasible. The project needs to be extremely well elaborated and very concrete – location, technology, prices, business model, potential partners, expected results, management of the implementation in all phases, key milestones. Experienced consultants/institutions can be approached. Experts recommend to have first discussions with the private sector to extract as much information as possible on costs etc., having in mind that anyway there will be a tender to select the consultant and companies responsible to provide the equipment or to provide a turnkey solution. (ADFD [post selection](http://www.irena.org/ADFD/Project-Facility/ADFD-requirements) stages are available on the website.)

# Expert evaluation rubric

1. On each expert consideration **statement** corresponding to the questions posed in the Executive Project Summary and Full Project Proposal application forms, the experts agree or disagree according to the following likert scale and comment on and justify their decision.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|  |  |  |  |  |

1. On the **OVERALL** section at the end of each of three sections of the application forms (Technical merit, Economic/financial viability, Socio-economic and environmental impacts), the experts use the scoring guidelines below and justify this scoring. This is multiplied by the weighting for each section to derive the overall score for each project.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Score** | **Description** |
| 5 | Excellent and thorough understanding of issues, experience and capability to deliver effectively. |
| 4 | Understanding of issues, good level of experience, capability to deliver. |
| 3 | Understanding of issues but limited experience and capability to meet all delivery requirements. |
| 2 | Insufficient understanding of issues, low level of relevant experience and capability to deliver. |
| 1 | Poor understanding of issues, inadequate demonstrations of relevant experience and capability to deliver. |
| 0 | Complete failure to understand issues or demonstrate capability to deliver. |

# Executive Project Summary stage statements made

# Technical merit (40% weighting)

1. Project objectives and structure are well articulated, identified and appropriate.
2. Technology used is applicable and suitable for location and market.
3. The output (e.g. MWh/year) for the technology type in this project is reasonable given the amount of loan requested.
4. Technical design is the best setup to utilize the renewable resources available.

Technical design provides most benefit to the local community.

Technical design is potentially replicable or scalable. (Note: replicable or scalable means the project shows an effective, efficient model for the given technologies that can be replicated or scaled up, and/or involves a solid and tested approach.)

1. Management approach is suitable to ensure project success. (Note: management approach includes level of experience of management, monitoring and evaluation plan for successful operations.)
2. Technical and management risks adequately taken into account.

# OVERALL: The project is technically feasible.

# Explain the main strengths and weaknesses of the project from a technical perspective.

# Economic/financial viability (30% weighting)

1. Project costs estimated and broken down appropriately.

Project is cost-effective in relation to the projected outputs and benefits.

1. Revenue plan is adequate to ensure the economic sustainability of the project.
2. Economic/financial risks adequately taken into account.
3. Business model is innovative.

Business model is potentially transformative, replicable or scalable. (Note: transformative means is expected to have a significant positive impact beyond the project itself on the energy landscape, society, environment and/or business situation. Replicable or scalable means the project shows an effective, efficient business model for the given technologies that can be replicated or scaled up, and/or involves a solid and tested approach.)

**OVERALL: The project is economically/financially feasible.**

Explain the main strengths and weaknesses of the project from an economic and/or financial perspective.

# Socio-economic and environmental impacts (30% weighting)

1. The project is aligned with national socio-economic development priorities.
2. Stakeholder engagement is appropriate to ensure success of project and sustainable development.
3. Socio-economic and environmental risks adequately taken into account.
4. Project improves access to energy.

Project reduces reliance on non-renewable energy resources.

Project provides economic benefits. (Note: economic benefits include savings on fossil fuel costs, job creation, income generation.)

Project is environmentally beneficial. (Note: reduced deforestation and emissions, reduction in particulates, waste management, water conservation.)

Project provides social benefits. (Note: social benefits include improvements in health, education and gender empowerment.)

Socio-economic and environmental impacts are potentially transformative. (Note: transformative means is expected to have a significant positive impact beyond project itself on the energy landscape, society, environment and/or business situation.)

# OVERALL: The project has provided a clear brief on socio-economic and environmental impacts and improves energy access and energy security.

# Explain the main strengths and weaknesses of the project from a socio-economic and environmental perspective.

# Full Project Proposal stage statements made

# Technical merit (40% weighting)

1. The technology is appropriately defined and is suitable for the project location and market.
2. The list of components for the technology in this project is adequate.

The specifications for the list of components in this project are adequate.

1. The specific project site location coordinates appear appropriate.
2. Land acquisition plans and/or other plans are adequate for this type of project.
3. The estimated amount of renewable resource available in this project is reasonable and is adequately measured.
4. The project implementation plan is adequate (reasonable planned start and finish dates for project activities).
5. The risks reported are all the risks that can be expected in this project. The mitigation measures for the reported risks in this project are adequate.
6. The technical KPI’s given are adequate for this project (all significant KPI’s are listed). The target values for the given technical KPI’s are suitable for this project.
7. The full feasibility study provided meets the ADFD requirements.
8. The capability and/or experience reported for this organisation is adequate to deliver on this project effectively.
9. The management capabilities reported for this project are adequate to ensure project success. (Level of experience/qualifications for the project management team and capability to successfully complete the project.)
10. The monitoring, reporting and evaluation plan for this project is adequate.

# OVERALL: The project is technically feasible.

# Explain the main strengths and weaknesses of the project from a technical perspective. (Does it have appropriate technology specifications? Is there a reasonable resource assessment? Is it managed by competent project managers and team for successful project completion? Is it potentially transformative or replicable?)

# (Note: transformative means is expected to have a significant positive impact beyond the project itself on the energy landscape, society, environment and/or business situation. Replicable or scalable means the project shows an effective, efficient business model for the given technologies that can be replicated or scaled up, and/or involves a solid and tested approach.).

# Economic/financial viability (30% weighting)

1. The levelised cost of energy in this project is reasonable and the full details of the cost items included in the calculation are defined. The method of calculation has been appropriately outlined.
2. The detailed technology costs for this project are adequate.
3. The detailed other project costs are appropriate.
4. The percentage of the total project costs that will be sourced locally for this project is adequate.
5. The economic/financial model for this project is detailed and suitable enough.
6. The EIRR or IRR for this type of project is reasonable.
7. The offtake agreement/revenue sources for this project are adequate.
8. The status of co-finance for this project is reasonable.
9. The debt to equity ratio in this project is adequate.
10. The cost of the debt portion of the leveraged finance in this project is reasonable.

**OVERALL: The project is economically/financially feasible.**

Explain the main strengths and weaknesses of the project from an economic and/or financial feasibility perspective. (Is it an adequate economic model? Are the project costs too high and does the business model provide enough revenues for the sustainability of the project? Does the project have an innovative business model?)

# Socio-economic and environmental impacts (30% weighting)

1. The level of stakeholder engagement in this project in sustainability aspects (i.e. economic, environmental and social) is appropriate. This point may be captured in the KPI table in the following sections.
2. The socio-economic and environmental KPIs given are adequate for this project (all significant KPIs are listed). The target values for the given socio-economic and environmental KPIs are suitable for this project. Monitoring methods used are appropriate for this project.

# OVERALL: The project has very positive socio-economic and environmental impacts and improves energy access and energy security.

# Explain the main strengths and weaknesses of the project from a socio-economic and environmental perspective. (Are there environmental issues with the design? Will the project significantly improve well-being? Is the project potentially transformative, replicable and/or scalable and will it also improve energy access and address energy security?)

Any questions email adfd@irena.org

END