



Open Roster of Expert Practitioners — MECS/CLASP eCooking Venture Building Programme

A standing call for practitioners with deep expertise across the skills needed to take early-stage eCooking businesses to scale in emerging markets.

DUE: 31 DECEMBER 2026 at 23:59 ET **QUESTIONS:** ventures@clasp.ngo

About CLASP

[CLASP](#) is the leading global authority on efficient appliances' role in fighting climate change and improving people's lives. With 25 years of expertise, CLASP collaborates with policymakers, industry leaders, and other experts to deliver clear pathways to a more sustainable world for people and the planet.

CLASP is a global non-profit with offices in Europe, India, Indonesia, Kenya, and the United States. We have worked in over 90 countries since our inception in 1999. We are mission-driven and committed to a culture of inclusion, transparency, collaboration, and impactful work. Find out more [about CLASP](#).

About MECS

[Modern Energy Cooking Services \(MECS\)](#) is a UK Aid-funded programme accelerating the shift from biomass to clean, modern cooking. Working across 16 countries, MECS partners with governments, industry, and researchers to build evidence on affordable, energy-efficient electric cooking and its role in wider energy transitions. By linking modern cooking with investments in reliable and renewable electricity, MECS helps countries plan for cleaner, more sustainable cooking futures. The programme is implemented by Loughborough University in partnership with CLASP and ESMAP.

Venture Building Program for eCooking Businesses

CLASP, as a [co-implementer of the MECS programme](#) is driving the shift to cleaner, healthier, and safer electric cooking (eCooking) by supporting market leaders, visionary founders, and impact-aligned businesses advancing modern eCooking solutions across Africa and Asia. We bring an applied R&D lens together with commercial discipline, offering targeted financial, technical, and business support to strengthen each company's path to scale.

Our aim is not only to help promising ventures grow into sustainable, commercially viable businesses, but also to generate evidence and practical learning that can reduce early risk, inform investors, shape policy, and strengthen the wider clean cooking sector. This means supporting ventures in ways that produce both business value and transferable knowledge for the ecosystem.

Introduction

This is a standing Request for Proposals (RFP), open for applications through 31 December 2026. CLASP is establishing an open roster of pre-qualified practitioners to provide targeted, time-bound support to businesses in the [MECS Venture Building portfolio](#). The portfolio currently comprises a small cohort of early-stage eCooking ventures operating across East, West, and Southern Africa, each at different stages of commercial and technical maturity.

CLASP is pre-qualifying a bench of practitioners across a defined set of skill areas. Successful

applicants will be placed on a standing roster and may be invited to respond to individual scopes of work as needs arise during the year. Placement on the roster does not guarantee a contract; individual engagements will be confirmed based on venture readiness, fit, and available programme funding.

Every engagement is expected to produce tangible, documented outputs—such as validated models, process playbooks, financial frameworks, pilot reports, evidence packages, creative dissemination assets, or implementation tools—that strengthen the venture’s capacity and investability. Practitioners are expected to work in a hands-on, build-and-transfer model, leaving ventures better equipped to operate independently after the engagement concludes.

We recognise that scaling modern energy cooking is not only a technical or financial challenge. It also depends on user trust, product desirability, behavioral change, narrative, cultural fit, and the strength of the enabling environment. For that reason, we welcome practitioners from technical, commercial, policy, research, behavioral, design, and creative disciplines.

Because this work sits within the MECS applied R&D and venture-building mandate, some assignments may involve experimentation, piloting, and structured learning to test new approaches, reduce uncertainty, and generate knowledge that can be used beyond a single company. Learning generated through venture support may inform MECS research, investor engagement, sector practice, and policy dialogue.

Background

The ventures in our portfolio operate in the riskiest stage between early-stage grants and commercial investment — specifically the USD 250k–1M gap needed to bridge proof-of-concept to initial scale. Existing funds have been slow to back eCooking businesses, often because they prioritise biomass alternatives, or require revenue traction that early-stage ventures cannot yet demonstrate.

Through MECS Venture Building, CLASP deploys non-dilutive repayable grants, combined with targeted technical assistance and innovation support. Practitioners on our roster are deployed to help ventures address specific gaps in their commercial, operational, financial, technical, behavioral, and market-facing capabilities.

The scope of support spans five broad areas:

- Technical and product validation — testing product performance, safety, durability, and system integration under real-world conditions.
- Carbon and results-based finance — assessing the practicality and economics of carbon credits and utilisation-linked payment structures.
- Market access and partnerships — piloting distribution models, financing integrations, and customer onboarding approaches, and demand generation pathways.
- Financial systems and collections — validating unit economics, payment collection systems, and financial assumptions under operational conditions.
- Policy and enabling environment — generating evidence to inform the policy levers that support eCooking adoption at scale.

Across these areas, MECS is also interested in support that helps ventures strengthen product desirability, consumer understanding, behavioural uptake, brand positioning, dissemination, and market confidence. We therefore encourage applications from practitioners who can combine analytical, operational, and creative methods to solve hard adoption and growth challenges.

For more information about the programme and the kinds of ventures we support, see the MECS

Timeline

Contract Timeframe: March 2026 – December 2026

Approximately 8–15 hours per week depending on skill area and phase. Effort is generally front-loaded during diagnostic and design phases.

Deadline for Application: 31 December 2026 at 23:59 ET

Application includes registering as a Consulting Partner and submitting the technical and financial proposals per the instructions below.

Deadline for Questions: 30 November 2026 at 23:59 ET

All questions must be addressed in English to Ventures at ventures@clasp.ngo. We request all inquiries be made to this e-mail address and not by phone.

Scope of Work

We are seeking practitioners who can bring deep, hands-on expertise across one or more of the following skill areas. Applicants should apply for the area or areas where they can offer the strongest contribution. Individual scopes of work issued to rostered practitioners will define specific tasks, deliverables, and timelines tailored to the venture and engagement context.

We frame these as skill areas rather than fixed roles because we are open to how expertise is packaged—whether by an individual practitioner, a small team, a studio, a collective, or a consultancy. What matters is the depth of relevant experience, the practicality of the approach, and the quality of outputs delivered. Proposals that demonstrate cross-functional capabilities across two or more skill areas are welcome.

We are particularly interested in multidisciplinary practitioners who can help ventures move from proof of concept to credible scale by combining technical rigour with commercial judgement, user understanding, strong communication, and implementation discipline.

Financial Systems & Investor Readiness

Building the financial infrastructure that early-stage impact ventures need to scale and attract follow-on investment. Relevant capabilities include:

- Designing financial management systems: accounting processes, cash-flow forecasting, budgeting, and expense controls.
- Building unit economics models, financial dashboards, and tracking systems for PAYGO or subscription-based revenue.
- Structuring blended finance instruments including tripartite bank agreements, PAYGO pricing models, and results-based finance mechanisms.
- Preparing investor-grade financial models, multi-year projections, use-of-proceeds narratives, and fundraising materials.
- Establishing governance frameworks including board reporting templates, financial controls, and audit-ready compliance processes.
- Supporting financial due diligence preparation and investor engagement.

<p>Operations & Organizational Systems</p>	<p>Building the operational backbone of early-stage ventures preparing for scale. Relevant capabilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing and implementing standardized processes for manufacturing, installation, onboarding, servicing, and field operations. • Building supply chain and logistics management systems: vendor management, inventory control, and quality assurance. • Developing operational playbooks, SOPs, performance dashboards, and monitoring tools that internal teams can sustain independently. • Designing governance frameworks, organizational structures, hiring plans, and onboarding guidelines. • Establishing risk management protocols and contingency plans for supply chain, technical, and operational risks.
<p>Market Access & Commercial Development</p>	<p>Go-to-market strategy, distribution, and partnership development for eCooking products in emerging markets. Relevant capabilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing and testing last-mile distribution models: agent networks, institutional sales channels, and retail partnerships. • Structuring and negotiating financing partnerships (e.g., with banks, MFIs, cooperatives) to enable affordable customer access. • Developing and testing customer acquisition, onboarding, and retention approaches including behavioural nudges and after-sales support. • Identifying and addressing barriers to adoption including delivery costs, default risk, and customer feedback loops. • Supporting tender preparation, pipeline tracking, and partner outreach.
<p>Carbon Finance & Results-Based Finance</p>	<p>Carbon markets and results-based finance (RBF) mechanisms as applied to clean energy and eCooking ventures. Relevant capabilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selecting and applying carbon methodologies (e.g., Gold Standard, Verra/VCS) appropriate for eCooking and off-grid energy contexts. • Designing MRV and digital MRV (dMRV) systems for high-integrity credit issuance. • Assessing the commercial feasibility, transaction costs, and risks of carbon and RBF revenue streams. • Supporting off-take negotiations and engagement with carbon buyers, including compliance and voluntary market participants. • Integrating carbon and RBF revenue assumptions into financial models and investor materials.
<p>Impact Measurement & Evidence Generation</p>	<p>Designing and implementing systems to track, verify, and communicate impact credibly to investors, donors, policymakers, and the wider sector. Relevant capabilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing impact frameworks, M&E systems, and data collection protocols aligned with programme reporting requirements. • Building data collection tools and dashboards tracking utilisation, health outcomes, gender impact, and emissions reductions. • Producing pilot evidence packages, learning summaries, case studies, and impact reports suitable for investor, donor, and policy audiences. • Supporting carbon monitoring systems and baseline data collection for credit issuance. • Translating technical findings into formats that can inform uptake, replication, and broader sector learning.

<p>Product & Technology Advisory</p>	<p>Hardware and software product development, IoT systems, and technology validation for eCooking and off-grid energy products. Relevant capabilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Validating product performance, safety, and durability under real-world field conditions (grid, mini-grid, off-grid). Advising on product roadmap, modular design, and manufacturing process improvements. Supporting IoT monitoring system design, metering accuracy validation, and integration across device and PAYGO platforms. Advising on product certification pathways (e.g., IEC, VeraSol) and regulatory compliance.
<p>Legal, IP & Partnership Structuring</p>	<p>Legal and intellectual property frameworks relevant to early-stage ventures in East and Southern Africa. Relevant capabilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advising on IP strategy including patent filings, trade secrets, and IP portfolio management. Drafting and negotiating MoUs, tripartite agreements, distribution contracts, and financing term sheets. Supporting regulatory compliance including company law, tax obligations, and sector-specific licensing. Advising on corporate structure, equity arrangements, and SPV formation for project finance.
<p>Fundraising & Investor Relations</p>	<p>Supporting early-stage ventures through fundraising processes and investor engagement. Relevant capabilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing fundraising narratives, pitch decks, and investor materials for seed or growth-stage rounds. Building and managing investor pipelines across impact funds, development finance institutions, and blended finance vehicles. Supporting due diligence preparation, data room organization, and term sheet analysis. Advising on capital structure and sequencing of grant, equity, and debt instruments.
<p>People, Team & Organizational Development</p>	<p>Organizational design and people management in founder-led, early-stage ventures. Relevant capabilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designing organizational structures, role definitions, and team hiring plans aligned to growth-stage needs. Developing compensation frameworks, performance management systems, and staff onboarding processes. Supporting founder coaching and leadership development. Building internal capacity so teams can sustain systems independently after the engagement.

Policy, Advocacy & Sector Engagement

The policy landscape for eCooking and clean energy in Sub-Saharan Africa, and generating evidence that can influence it. Relevant capabilities include:

- Analyzing the impact of tariffs, taxes, subsidies, and regulatory frameworks on eCooking affordability and adoption.
- Engaging with government ministries, national energy agencies, and sector bodies to advance enabling policy conditions.
- Producing policy briefs and advocacy materials grounded in field-level pilot evidence.
- Supporting ventures in positioning their work within national clean cooking strategies and donor priorities.

Behavior, Culture, Storytelling & Market Transformation

Supporting ventures to build trust, desirability, user understanding, and stronger market uptake through behavioural, design, and creative approaches. Relevant capabilities include:

- Conducting ethnographic, qualitative, and user-centred research to understand cooking practices, aspirations, barriers, and decision-making.
- Designing and testing behaviour change approaches, awareness-building strategies, and customer education materials.
- Developing brand strategy, messaging, visual identity, and market positioning for emerging eCooking ventures.
- Producing compelling storytelling, documentary, digital, or campaign assets that communicate venture value to customers, partners, investors, and the wider public.
- Supporting product desirability through industrial design, experience prototyping, packaging, and design-for-adoption approaches.
- Translating technical and market evidence into accessible dissemination formats that can drive confidence, uptake, and replication.
- Designing participatory engagement processes with communities, users, distributors, or institutions to inform product and market development.

Individual scopes of work will be tailored to each venture and engagement. In general, engagements are expected to follow a four-phase structure. The deliverables below are illustrative; full statements of work will be shared with shortlisted rostered practitioners prior to contract confirmation.

Phase 1: Diagnose

- Rapid assessment of the venture's current challenge, opportunity, and readiness.
- Review of relevant existing data, systems, products, or market materials.
- A brief diagnostic memo or inception note that clarifies the problem, working assumptions, and proposed approach.

Phase 2: Design

- Development of a practical workplan, methodology, and agreed outputs.
- Co-creation with the venture team to ensure fit with internal capacity and business priorities.
- Identification of key learning questions, decision points, and any assumptions that need to be tested.

Phase 3: Implement/ Test

- Delivery of agreed technical assistance, tools, pilots, materials, systems, research, or market interventions.
- Iteration based on feedback, field realities, and emerging findings.
- Documentation of progress, challenges, and any mid-course corrections needed.

Phase 4: Transfer/ Close-Out

- Delivery of final handover-ready outputs.
- Practical orientation or training for the venture team, where relevant.
- Final summary of findings, recommendations, and next steps.
- Documentation of lessons that may inform wider MECS learning, investor readiness, or sector engagement.

Depending on the engagement, final outputs may include financial tools, governance templates, operating procedures, market strategy documents, pilot reports, evidence summaries, product feedback loops, user research findings, dashboards, partner materials, investor-facing content, design assets, or dissemination products.

Across all skill areas, we are looking for practitioners who bring:

- Experienced or specialist expertise in the relevant skill area, demonstrated through tangible outcomes in comparable contexts*.
- Experience working with early-stage or scaling ventures in climate tech, energy access, agri-tech, fintech, consumer products, manufacturing, distributed energy, or related sectors in Sub-Saharan Africa and/or South Asia
- Familiarity with East and Southern African market contexts, including regulatory, financing, procurement, and distribution environments.
- Familiarity with Asian manufacturing, technology transfer, assembly, or supply chain ecosystems where relevant to the skill area.
- A practitioner mindset: the ability to produce handover-ready tools, playbooks, systems, materials, or documented outputs rather than advisory work that ventures cannot act on independently.
- Experience building internal team capacity so that ventures can sustain outputs after the engagement concludes.
- Strong stakeholder management and communication skills, with the ability to work effectively in founder-led, resource-constrained environments.
- Cultural alignment with mission-driven organisations and a collaborative, hands-on working style.

Familiarity with PAYGO business models, Cooking-as-a-Service, carbon finance, or results-based financing is an advantage across all skill areas.

*We recognise that expertise can be demonstrated in different ways depending on discipline. For technical and commercial practitioners, this may include systems built, deals supported, funds raised, or products validated. For research, behavioral, communications, design, or creative practitioners, this may include portfolios, campaigns, films, exhibitions, publications, pilots, participation processes, or other documented examples of work with clear relevance to venture growth, adoption, dissemination, or market transformation.

We welcome applications from individuals, firms, studios, collectives, and interdisciplinary teams. We are especially interested in practitioners who can bridge functions e.g. finance and operations; product and user research; policy and evidence; or storytelling and dissemination.

Submittal

1. Register as a Consulting Partner

Interested parties must [register as a CLASP Consulting Partner](#).

2. Submission Instructions

Interested parties should submit proposals electronically, in English, via email to ventures@clasp.ngo (preferably in PDF format). The file should be named as per the following example:

[CONTRACTOR_NAME] _Venture Open Roster Proposal_ RFP YYYY-MM-DD

The proposal document should have two components:

i. Technical narrative

The length of the technical narrative should not exceed 3 pages and should include:

- applicant profile and relevant area(s) of expertise
- summary of relevant experience, including up to three examples of past work
- approach to providing practical, time-bound support to early-stage or scaling ventures
- relevant geographic, sector, and market familiarity
- delivery model and key personnel
- any cross-functional or multidisciplinary capabilities relevant to the roster

CV(s) or short bios of key personnel, work samples, and optional list of references should be included in an Annex and should not exceed 3 pages.

ii. Financial proposal

The financial proposal should be a short fee statement (1 page max) indicating the applicant's preferred pricing structure and indicative rate range. This may be provided as an hourly rate, daily rate, monthly retainer, milestone-based fee, deliverable-based fee, or other suitable structure. Applicants should clearly state the currency and note any assumptions or minimum engagement requirements.

Optional At This Stage – Fill Out Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ)

All contractors must complete the [Pre-Qualification Questionnaire \(PQQ\)](#) before they can begin work with CLASP. However, at the **RFP stage**, completing the PQQ is **optional** (i.e. you can decide to fill it out at a later stage, only if you are selected).

The PQQ is a comprehensive due diligence screening used to collect legal and financial information about potential partners or vendors. While **not required at the RFP stage**, it **must** be completed if a contract is awarded. Contracts are **contingent on successfully passing** this due diligence process.

If your organization has already completed the PQQ, you do not need to submit it again—unless there have been changes to your business structure and/or you submitted the PQQ more than two years ago. If you're unsure, please contact Andrea Testa at atesta@clasp.ngo for guidance.

Evaluation Procedure

A committee appointed by CLASP will evaluate applications on a rolling basis as they are received. Applications will be evaluated against the published qualification criteria for inclusion on the MECS/CLASP roster of experts.

This is a pre-qualification exercise, not a guarantee of contract award. The purpose of the review is to identify applicants that demonstrate the experience, capabilities, and alignment needed to provide high-quality support to ventures in supported through MECS Venture Building.

The technical and financial proposal will be evaluated on:

1. Relevant expertise and fit for the roster (35 points):

- The relevance and depth of expertise in the skill area or areas applied for (15);
- The applicant's understanding of the needs of early-stage ventures, innovation support, or related implementation contexts (10);
- The extent to which the applicant's capabilities align with the MECS venture-building and applied learning mandate (10).

2. Experience and track record (30 points)

- The quality and relevance of past work examples or portfolio evidence submitted (15);
- Demonstrated experience delivering similar support in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, or comparable markets (10);
- Evidence that the applicant has delivered practical outputs, systems, tools, research, campaigns, or other usable products with real-world application (5).

3. Delivery capacity and team Strength (20 points)

- The qualifications and suitability of the proposed lead practitioner or team members (10);
- The applicant's ability to deliver practical, time-bound, and handover-ready support (5);
- The clarity and credibility of the proposed delivery model, including interdisciplinary capability where relevant (5).

4. Cost evaluation (15 points)

While the overall Technical Evaluation is the key factor in reviewing the proposal, the cost evaluation is also an essential factor in determining the final contract award. The entire proposal will be evaluated for feasibility, completeness, and practicality.

As noted above, CLASP is a global nonprofit whose mission is to improve the energy and environmental performance of the appliances & equipment we use every day, accelerating our transition to a more sustainable world. CLASP's values and culture include transparency, collaboration, serving others, bringing positive impact to the world, providing equal opportunity, and fostering an inclusive environment without regard to individuals' background, identity or circumstances.

CLASP has found that partnering with entities with a demonstrated commitment to its values and mission leads to the best outcomes. Accordingly, we encourage you to include additional information you think shows why your organization would be a good partner for this project.

CLASP looks forward to reviewing your responses and would like to thank you in advance for your participation in this Request for Proposals. CLASP will notify all respondents who submit proposals when a decision has been made.