

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Invitation to submit an expression of interest for financial and technical support to improve access and affordability of liquid oxygen for medical use in West & Central Africa

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1. Eligibility & Scope

Q: Which companies are eligible to present a proposal under the CEI?

A: Companies operating in the supply of liquid oxygen and gaseous oxygen space, across production, distribution, and delivery activities. Companies must:

- 1. Be willing and able to expand production and/or distribution capabilities, and supply bulk liquid medical oxygen in domestic and/or regional markets, either within or outside West and Central Africa. It is not required that Companies are currently supplying liquid oxygen in West and Central Africa, but Companies must be willing to and have capacity to expand operations at either a national or regional level in this region.*
- 2. Be able to supply, or have capacity to start supplying, bulk liquid oxygen with purity levels acceptable for medical use. Only Companies that can meet this requirement, and demonstrate that they can meet this requirement, will be engaged.*
- 3. Have a relevant track record as 1) a manufacturer of high-purity oxygen operating Air Separation Unit(s) with liquid and/or gaseous output for medical or industrial use; OR 2) a merchant supplier / distributor of liquid oxygen for medical or industrial use. The company must be able to clearly demonstrate that they are currently manufacturing, supplying or distributing liquid or gaseous oxygen.*
- 4. Have a valid business trading license. Companies responding to the CEI must already be operating as a gas supplier and have all necessary requirements to operate as a business. Companies that do not have a valid business trading license for countries*

- in the West and Central Africa region, but outside this region and can meet all other eligibility criteria are still welcome to respond to the CEI.*
- 5. Meet the relevant quality assurance standards for their business activity. Companies must have the capacity to meet the required standards to supply medical grade oxygen in their local markets (and other relevant markets included in the CEI proposal).*
 - 6. Be willing to engage with Unitaid, CHAI and the Global Oxygen Alliance ([GO₂AL](#)) partners to increase the availability and affordability of medical oxygen in domestic and/or regional markets, noting that technical and financial support could be made available to companies committing to these objectives. Companies will be required to commit to more affordable, sustainable pricing and see feasible pathways for achieving this desired outcome. At this stage, companies are required to indicate a willingness to commit to these conditions.*

Q: Will priority be given to companies that already have operational Air Separation Units (ASUs) in West & Central Africa, or are new entrants also equally encouraged?

A: Both existing operators and new entrants are encouraged to apply. Proposals will be evaluated based on alignment with the CEI objectives, potential for impact, and feasibility, rather than prior presence alone.

Q: Is there a minimum production or distribution capacity requirement (e.g., MT/day of LOX)?

A: No fixed minimum capacity has been prescribed. Applicants should clearly outline their current or projected capacity and demonstrate how it will address regional demand.

Q: Does a large-scale regional LOX hub (e.g., across ECOWAS/WAHO member states) fall within scope?

A: Yes. Regional and cross-border supply chain models are within the scope of this CEI.

Q: Is there a limit to the number of countries for which an application can be submitted?

A: No. Applicants may propose multi-country projects provided they can demonstrate feasibility and operational capacity.

2. Technical Requirements

Q: Do the Partners have preferred specifications for LOX delivery?

A: No specific format is prescribed. Applicants should align with international medical oxygen standards and national regulatory requirements.

Q: Will CHAI/Unitaid provide technical assistance for regulatory approvals?

A: Limited technical assistance may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Applicants are expected to demonstrate regulatory compliance.

Q: Can investments in infrastructure (e.g., cryogenic tankers, cylinders, on-site storage) be included in the CEI submission?

A: Yes. Proposals may include enabling infrastructure that supports LOX production, distribution, and use.

Q: Are there recommended specifications for VIE tanks and vaporizers in facilities with MGPS?

A: Applicants should propose appropriate specifications based on international standards and country context. No standard design will be prescribed at this stage.

Q: How many facilities in the target geographies are already equipped with MGPS suitable for bulk LOX?

A: This information varies by country. Applicants should outline their assumptions and how they plan to verify facility readiness.

Q: Will training of biomedical engineers or facility operators on handling LOX be part of the project scope?

A: Yes, capacity-building is within scope. Specific training deliverables (e.g., man-hours, frequency, language) will be agreed during later stages.

Q: Will PSA plant procurement also be considered, or only LOX-focused projects?

A: The CEI is primarily focused on LOX production and distribution only.

Q: Can renewable energy solutions (e.g., solar-hybrid power) be integrated into proposals?

A: Yes, energy resilience is encouraged, provided it enhances sustainability of oxygen production and distribution.

Q: Will the scope of supply be limited to product only, or will it also include infrastructure, installation, and other related components?

A: The scope of supply is not limited to product. Applicants may include infrastructure, installation, and related components as part of their proposals, provided they align with CEI objectives. It should also be commensurate with benefits of long-term price reduction vis-à-vis planned proposal

Q: Does the CEI have expectations regarding pricing of the medical grade oxygen?

Specific price targets will vary according to the market(s) in scope for each submission and will be discussed in the next step, for the development of a more detailed investment proposal. A primary goal of the CEI is to understand the current and potential market for liquid oxygen in West and Central Africa, and the types and level of investment required for the best options in terms of value for money and long-term sustainability. The aim of this initiative is to mitigate risks of investing in expanded supply of medical oxygen in West and Central Africa, allowing for an adequate return of investment to suppliers, but also aiming at making oxygen more affordable for public procurers both in the short-term, but also over a longer period to ensure sustainable access and uninterrupted supply.

Q: Is the company expected to be already supplying medical grade oxygen?

Not necessarily. We are looking to identify companies that are supplying medical or industrial gases as their business activity and will have the ability to supply medical grade oxygen with the required quality assurance standards when the proposal is executed.

Q: Does the company need to comply with relevant ISO or GMP standards before the submission of the proposal?

The expectation is that the Company complies with the quality assurance standards that are required for the current business activity in the markets where it operates. Please include the standard operating procedures for quality assurance in the proposal. However, successful proposals will be required to comply with the relevant quality assurance standards to supply medical grade oxygen to health facilities in the markets in which the Company proposes to operate. For additional information, please contact gempurchase@clintonhealthaccess.org.

3. Financial & Commercial Support

Q: What type of financial support will be prioritized (e.g., debt, guarantees, advance purchase commitments)?

A: A mix of instruments may be considered, including concessional debt, guarantees, and technical assistance. Applicants should propose the structure most suitable for their proposed model. The funding structure will be tailored independently to each Company's

proposal and business needs. Any investment by Unitaid and CHAI will be time limited, with a clear start and end date. The aim is to facilitate a sustainable financing structure, achieving increased availability and affordability of medical oxygen in West and Central Africa, while the Company remains commercially viable. Certain components are out of scope for funding, including ongoing operational expenditure (outside of working capital loan facilities). The financial instruments that are available for support are as follows:

Debt financing:

- *loans at concessional interest rates to fund i) working capital needs, and / or ii) capital investments for supply capacity expansion.*
- *loan guarantees to improve financing terms with local lenders.*

Volume guarantees:

- *guarantee of minimum sales volumes over an agreed timeframe, in exchange for the Company's commitment to selling medical grade oxygen to public procurers at a ceiling price. The Company receives a shortfall payment if sales fall below the guaranteed level.*

Grants:

- *Limited grantmaking **may** be available to fund infrastructure for the expansion of distribution capabilities, and / or*
- *to fund technical assistance required by companies, such as financial planning capabilities, quality assurance, market intelligence, navigation of regulatory affairs and participation in tenders, etc.*

Q: Will CHAI/Unitaid/GO₂AL commit to long-term procurement agreements or minimum purchase volumes?

A: At this CEI stage, no commitments will be made. Procurement strategies will be considered in subsequent phases.

Q: For ex-works product pricing, should applicants quote prices inclusive or exclusive of taxes?

A: Prices should be quoted exclusive of taxes, with applicable taxes clearly listed separately.

Q: Which taxes are applicable, and are exemptions available?

A: Applicable taxes vary by country (e.g., VAT, import duties). Some exemptions may exist for medical oxygen or equipment; applicants should indicate assumptions.

Q: Is there guidance on minimum cylinder inventory for reliable supply chains?

A: No specific minimum is prescribed. Applicants should propose appropriate levels based on projected demand and distribution strategy.

Q: Is there a minimum or maximum value of financial support available?

A: No fixed thresholds are defined. Support will depend on the scale, feasibility, and expected impact of the proposal.

Q: What is the timeline for approval and prerequisites?

A: The CEI is an exploratory step. Further details on timelines and prerequisites will be shared if the process advances to an RFP or partnership stage.

Q: Will concessional debt financing be arranged through DFIs?

A: Potentially. Applicants may also propose blended financing models. ROI and repayment terms will be determined in collaboration with financing partners.

Q: Are applicants expected to demonstrate secured demand volumes at this stage?

A: No. Demand mapping can be undertaken in collaboration with Partners at later stages. However, any demand commitments or letters of intent may strengthen applications.

Q: Will CHAI/Unitaid be co-investing directly in manufacturing plants?

A: This CEI is exploratory in nature. While co-investment models may be explored at later stages, applicants should not assume direct equity investment by CHAI/Unitaid at this stage. However, they may request for support in the application if justified.

Q: Do you have indicative target price points per kilogram for each of the regions?

A: No indicative pricing benchmarks have been set at this stage. Applicants are expected to propose pricing structures based on cost realities and sustainability considerations.

4. Geographical Focus

Q: Which countries in West & Central Africa are included in this solicitation?

A: The CEI covers the broader West & Central Africa region. Applicants should identify priority countries based on their operational strengths and regional potential.

Q: Will regional scale-up projects (e.g., cross-border supply chains) receive preferential consideration?

A: Yes, proposals that strengthen regional integration and cross-border supply may be considered favorably.

Q: Within the identified countries, which specific cities or regions are expected to be covered?

A: No pre-defined list of cities/regions has been set. Applicants should outline geographic focus areas and provide rationale for their selection.

5. Submission & Process

Q: How do I submit a proposal?

A: Please follow the instructions in the CEI document. Proposals should be submitted to gempurchase@clintonhealthaccess.org

Q: Is there a template for submission?

A: Please follow the format presented in the Appendix of the CEI. If any section of the form is not applicable for the proposal, business model or operations of the Company, please make a note, and provide the requested information in a more appropriate format.

Q: How will I know that my submission has been received?

A: An acknowledgement of receipt will be sent once your submission has been received.

Q: How will I know if my submission is being considered?

A: You will be contacted directly if your proposal is selected for further consideration.

Q: Can a single supplier submit several proposals?

A: Yes. However, if the proposals are complementary, a single proposal is encouraged.

Q: Will feedback be provided to all respondents after CEI review?

A: Yes, general feedback will be shared. Individual feedback may be provided at the discretion of the Partners.

Q: How detailed are proposals expected to be?

A: The aim of this CEI is for Unitaïd and CHAI to identify potential partners that are interested and able to execute strategic investments with the ultimate objective of increasing access to medical oxygen in West and Central Africa. This is an exploratory phase, so eligible proposals can be high-level, however the expectation is that selected Companies will have the capabilities to develop a more detailed investment proposal (in conjunction with Unitaïd,

CHAI and GO2AL partners) or respond to a Request for Proposals independently, execute the proposed project and ensure its viability.

Q: Would it be possible to enter into a Non-Disclosure Agreement with Unitaid and CHAI, as the EOI requires confidential information on the businesses in each country in which my Company operates? This would ensure that all information my company submits would be kept strictly confidential.

A: It will not be possible to enter into an NDA with Unitaid and CHAI prior to submission of the EOI application. Applicants are encouraged to only include information they are comfortable sharing without an NDA in place. An NDA could be pursued in the future, if requested. Any confidential information submitted in the EOI should be clearly marked as such by the Company on the completed form. Unitaid and CHAI will take all reasonable measures to maintain the confidentiality of information marked confidential. Information marked confidential will not be shared with other entities or individuals outside Unitaid and CHAI, including GO₂AL partners, without the Company's written authorization. Please see the section on confidentiality in the CEI.

6. Evaluation & Next Steps

Q: What are the key evaluation criteria for CEI responses?

A: Proposals will be assessed on potential health and economic impact, feasibility, financial and technical soundness, affordability, and geographic reach.

Q: When is a potential RFP expected?

A: If advanced, a subsequent stage (e.g., RFP) may be launched based on the CEI outcomes. It would be difficult to predict any timelines now.

Q: Will targets for regional manufacturing capacity (e.g., tons/day) be specified?

A: Applicants should propose capacity expansion aligned with anticipated demand and the market demand in the proposed geography. There is flexibility with the applicants to use own forecast for such estimates.

Q: Are volume projections available—ideally broken down monthly, or alternatively, annually?

A: At this CEI stage, no official volume forecasts will be provided. Applicants should propose estimates based on market analysis, with demand validation to be refined collaboratively in later stage.

Q: What are the anticipated timelines for implementation and key milestones?

A: Timelines will depend on CEI outcomes and project structures. It will depend on the scope of RFP.

Q: What are the next steps after the proposal submission?

A: Unitaid and CHAI will evaluate each CEI response and determine whether to launch a Request for Proposals (RFP) or to request Companies to develop a more detailed plan (in conjunction with Unitaid, CHAI and GO₂AL partners). The next step, whether via an RFP or direct engagement, will involve assembling a more detailed investment proposal, including a clear funding structure that would be viable both commercially for the Company and to achieve the intended objectives of the CEI. All proposals will be subject to due diligence and evaluation by both Unitaid and CHAI, and negotiation of documentation for final approval and funding. Future Requests for Proposals (RFPs) may be issued, as necessary, in accordance with Unitaid and CHAI procurement policies and procedures. There are no concrete timelines for further engagement post CEI and this constitutes no commitment to any kind of support or collaboration.

7. Confidentiality & Data Use

Q: How will sensitive commercial information (e.g., pricing models) be safeguarded?

A: All information shared through the CEI will be treated confidentially and used solely for the purposes of assessment and program design.