



NZC CESF Procurement RFP

CESF Procurement Document template to be published internally or externally for the purposes of procuring expert support for cities

NZC-PCP1-016-Leuven (ESCO)

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Abbreviations and acronyms

Acronym	Description
NZC	NetZeroCities
CESF	City Expert Support Facility
RFP	Request for Proposal
GARAC	Grant and Resource Allocation Committee
ESCO	Energy Service Company

Request for Proposal

For: Guideline template for public tendering and procurement process for energy renovations

Date: 03 March 2025

1 Overview

1.1 Executive Summary

This is a Request for Proposal (RFP) that details Climate-KIC's requirements for services to support cities in the NetZeroCities programme, through the NZC City Expert Support Facility. Please treat this document in accordance with the confidentiality obligations detailed further in this document.

Services and/or goods requested	Support in developing guideline template for public tendering and procurement process for energy renovations in Leuven
The legal entity requesting these goods and/or services	Stichting Climate-KIC International Foundation
Services and/or goods will be delivered to the following locations	Services will be delivered remotely to the following locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leuven, Belgium Some onsite services may be required at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leuven, Belgium
Climate-KIC Contract Manager for submitting proposals and inquiries	Mateusz Hoffmann and Radka Reil CESF Manager CESF@netzerocities.eu
Proposed contract term for successful candidates	3 months

Table 1: Procurement executive summary

1.2 Timelines

Climate-KIC has set the following indicative timelines for this RFP:

Planned Date*	Milestones
03.03.2025	RFP issued to bidders
14.03.2025	Deadline to submit questions
24.03.2025 (23:59:59 CET)	Bidders submit proposals / Submission Deadline
31.03.2025	Assessment results announcement, subject to finished evaluations and selection of a winner

Planned Date*	Milestones
07-14.04.2025	Expected contract start date

Climate-KIC reserves the right to amend this timetable during the RFP.

Table 2: Timeline table

Should you have any inquiries regarding the Request for Proposal (RFP), please submit them via email to CESF@netzerocities.eu by the deadline specified in the table above. We aim to respond in a timely manner wherever possible. To proceed, please submit a proposal following the requirements at Section 6 by the Submission Deadline stated at Section 1.2. NetZeroCities team will assess bids and notify bidders following the timeline at Section 1.2.

1.3 About Climate-KIC

Climate-KIC is Europe’s leading climate innovation agency and community, supporting cities, regions, countries and industries to meet their climate ambitions through systems innovation and place-based transformations.

Together with our partners, we generate, implement and integrate climate solutions by mobilising finance, testing business models, and opening pathways for institutional change and behavioural change. We orchestrate large-scale demonstrations that show what is possible when cycles of innovation and learning are deliberately designed to trigger exponential decarbonisation and build resilient communities. Climate-KIC is the project lead for NetZeroCities (NZC).

1.4 About NetZeroCities

NetZeroCities (NZC) is a project designed to help cities overcome the current structural, institutional, and cultural barriers they face to achieve climate neutrality by 2030. NZC recognises the need for cities to develop specific strategies that are tailored to suit local and regional contexts, and supports them by developing, promoting, and integrating new and existing tools, resources, and expertise into an online platform accessible to all cities (**Mission Platform**). The project – designed to **support cities that are part of the EU’s Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe supported Mission “100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030”** – tailors advanced capabilities related to systemic change, citizen engagement and democratic, participatory governance, capital and financial structuring, and social innovation, to ensure cities have access to expertise needed to address their challenges in becoming climate neutral.

1.4.1 NZC Climate City Contracts (CCC)

The **NZC Mission Platform** provides support in the co-creation of Climate City Contracts with local stakeholders and citizens. Drawing up, signing, and implementing Climate City Contracts is a central feature of the [EU Mission on 100 Climate Neutral and Smart Cities](#) by 2030. While not legally binding, these contracts represent a clear and highly visible political commitment. This commitment extends not only to the EC, national and regional authorities, but also to the citizens they serve. These contracts outline the city's path to achieve climate neutrality by 2030, accompanied by a comprehensive investment strategy.

1.4.2 NZC Pilot Cities Programme

The **NZC Pilot Cities Programme** supports large scale piloting activities to exploit, deploy, and scale R&I and systemic solutions combining social, cultural, technological, nature-based, regulatory, and financial innovation, and new business and governance models to underpin the climate transition. As such, the NZC Pilot Cities Programme and its subgrant-funded activities are an opportunity for Mission Cities to put into practise elements of their developing and/or finalised Climate City Contracts and the plans contained in them and learn by doing so in the process.

2 Confidentiality

All information provided in this Request for Proposal (hereinafter “RFP”) document and any information that may be subsequently disclosed during discussions, correspondence, and negotiations, is confidential and must not be disclosed to any other party or used for any other purpose whatsoever without the prior written permission of Stichting Climate-KIC International Foundation or relevant subsidiary (hereinafter “Climate-KIC”).

The Supplier must not disclose any such information, materials, specifications, or other documents to any third parties or to any other part of the Supplier’s group or use them for any purpose other than for the preparation and submission of a response to this RFP. The Supplier must not make any press announcements or publicise in any way Climate-KIC’s name, this document, the quotation process or any subsequent agreement without the prior written consent of Climate-KIC.

Climate-KIC may require the execution of Non-Disclosure Agreement as part of this RFP or for future commercial engagements. As part of preparation for the submission of the response and in any subsequent negotiations, the Supplier is allowed to disclose confidential information to others within the Supplier organisation, external advisors, or subcontractors, provided that the confidentiality conditions are adhered to.

Employees of either party who have access to confidential information must be notified of their obligations with regard to confidentiality and of the disciplinary proceedings which will result if confidentiality conditions are breached.

The scoring information (includes price) and the successful proposal will be shared with the City that is the beneficiary of the contract prior to contract execution. The unsuccessful proposals may also be shared with the city for feedback. Please make Climate-KIC aware if there are any potential issues with the dissemination of your proposal for the purposes of informing the city of the outcome.

3 Specification

3.1 Scope

NetZeroCities (NZC) and Climate-KIC are requesting a quotation for developing a guideline template that can be used for public tendering for the services of an Energy Service Company (ESCO) to realise energy renovations in the City of Leuven and by its partners. The primary target group for ESCO projects is the care homes sector, schools, and municipal buildings. Public tendering procedures will need to be followed, based on well-defined specifications, that these target groups have limited expertise and knowledge about.

The energy performance contract functions as a contractual framework for the implementation of a guaranteed energy cost savings. The executing party is often referred to as an ESCO. Energy performance contracts are often integrated contracts, which can comprise construction work in the building envelope, the supply of systems and energy, financing, management and maintenance services, and energy conservation guarantees. For the City of Leuven and its partners to invite tenders for an energy performance contract, there are several key questions they need to answer, including *what is the suitable tender procedure, the requirements, and the criteria for ESCO selection?* The complexity of many energy performance contracts causes the standard procedures, requirements, and criteria for invitations to tender to be less suitable and the entire procurement process to require more preparation.

A template document should provide a step-by-step description of the process of achieving an energy performance contract and procuring the services of an ESCO. This should include the applicable rules governing tenders, suitable procedures, and the criteria for selection and award for the invitation to tender (tendering phase).

The proposal should address (at least) the following:

- Development of an indicative list of information that is required before starting the tender, covering at least the typical data on building characteristics, tenancy, energy statistics, technological data, maintenance plans and costings, contracts needed, etc.
- Plan for ensuring sufficient data quality through review and confirmation of building-provided information in the data gathering tools for building owners.
- Development of criteria for selection of the ESCO service provider, e.g. financial and economic strength, technical and professional competence, etc.
- Development of award criteria e.g. NPV (Net Present Value) of cost savings, annual guaranteed energy savings, quality of plan, measures, monitoring/measuring/control systems, project team, etc.
- Plan for supporting the development of tender documents with terms, requirements, and criteria. Develop guideline template to support replication and scaling across different target groups.
- Testing of draft template with potential end users in Leuven through detailed engagement with care homes sector, schools, and municipal buildings.

To the degree possible, this work should seek to characterise the comprehensive set of interventions and solutions to deliver on Mission-level impacts, enhancing the value of an aggregated portfolio for procurement and improving the City's and its partners' position with respect to potential financial partners. A project model for the City and its partners would be useful for testing assumptions and highlighting the actions critical to developing an appropriate portfolio.

The following is an indicative timeline of activities:

Activity	Time frame
Desktop research	Week 1
Stakeholder engagement, including in-depth expert interviews	Weeks 2-5

Draft guidance template	Weeks 6-7
Testing of draft template with end-users and iteration	Weeks 8-10
Final guidance template	Weeks 10-11
Communication / replicability assets	Weeks 11-12

We anticipate that this assignment will have a duration of 3 months from April 2025 with an engagement of estimated 2-3 person months. Variation on this may depend on how engaged the selected supplier already is with the city and key stakeholders.

For clarity, the following services are specifically “Out of Scope”:

- The actual public tendering of projects.

The selected bidder is expected to engage with experts from the NetZeroCities consortium as well as engaging with the City and its key stakeholders. NetZeroCities experts (who are resourced already and do not have to be represented in a financial offer) are to be engaged (together with the City and its partners) on baseline briefings, the overarching strategic approach within which this assignment takes place. An explicit objective for NetZeroCities as a result of this scope of work is to enable Mission-wide communication in support of replication among other Mission Cities. At least 1 day of work should be assigned to communication (develop / deliver webinar, online assets), and collaboration with NetZeroCities is expected to ensure quality content for this peer-sharing.

3.2 Required Experience and Capabilities

The supplier will ensure sufficient financial, economic, technical, and professional capacity to deliver the services in an efficient and effective manner.

The team or individuals delivering the services should be able to demonstrate the following experience and capabilities:

- Experience in the development of procurement frameworks for public sector authorities to procure energy sector services
- Deep understanding of the energy sector and energy markets, in particular the topics of energy efficiency and energy performance contracting
- Deep understanding of how Energy Service Companies operate and deliver services to customers (specifically public sector clients)
- Experience in engaging with end users to understand nuanced needs and considerations, barriers to the adoption of new approaches and practices, and ways to drive take-up of the template amongst diverse actors in order to inform the development of genuinely user-friendly approaches.
- Financial and legal knowledge, particularly relevant local, national and European level procurement legislation and the rules governing public tenders.
- Adherence to evaluation professional ethics and quality standards
- Project and financial management demonstrating delivery of results on time and within budget
- Written and spoken English language. Local language competency in Dutch/Flemish.

3.3 Deliverables

The following deliverables are requested (at the end of the service):

Deliverable 1: Template & Guidance – Public Tendering for ESCO Services

A guidance template with accompanying guidance notes for the public tendering of ESCO services that can be utilised by care homes, schools, and similar public value

institutions, with attention to replicability in other sectors and other Mission cities. It should include:

- a template and/or method to follow up and monitor on ESCO projects during implementation,
- an approach or control system that avoids “cherry picking” and lock-in towards the future,
- reference to standards and/or standard documents that are common in ESCO contexts and projects (e.g. measurement and verification protocol),
- a realistic estimation of savings that can be achieved by a realistic ESCO.
- An English translation.

Deliverable 2: CESF Delivery Report

Requirements:

- Upon completion of the delivery of support, the appointed provider must submit the CESF Delivery Report. This report should be validated by the city in receipt of the support, as described in the Assignment contracted. It should serve as a brief but comprehensive report summarizing the entire process, outcomes and learnings, and any identified follow-on actions, next steps and/or deployment of/connectivity to NetZeroCities and Mission Platform services and offers.

Reports will be requested to be written at a suitably professional standard using a recognised (or specified) referencing style upon request. The reports are to be provided for unrestricted use by Climate-KIC and free from all third-party copyright restrictions. Climate-KIC will receive ownership of such work products and may make them available to other parties, publish online, or other at our discretion.

3.4 Eligibility

Climate-KIC reserve the right to reject proposals where the proposed supplier:

- Has insufficient technical, professional or financial capacity to deliver the services.
- Has been bankrupt or insolvent (last 7 years)
- Is sanctioned by a relevant authority
- Does not comply or has previously not complied with our [Ethical Standards for Contractual Counterparties](#)
- Has been convicted of crime, links to terrorism, breach of tax or social security obligations
- Is an individual prior employee of Climate-KIC or group entity (discretionary basis)
- Will continue to be a full-time employee of an EIT grant recipient or Climate-KIC partner during the contract term (discretionary basis)

If any of these scenarios apply, please make Climate-KIC aware in your submission.

3.5 Sustainability

In order to uphold our commitment to sustainability, Climate-KIC aims to minimise any negative impact we may have on the natural and built environment by effectively managing our resources.

In the efforts to procure in a sustainable manner with minimal impact, the following requests are made of the bidder:

- Where practical, the services are to be delivered digitally following a paperless policy
- For events and workshops, please strictly minimise the generation of waste. We ask our service providers to consider the greenhouse gas emissions from transport to our/city/partner offices and events. Cycling, walking, public transport and rail are preferable over air travel wherever possible.

- We love to hear what suppliers are doing to minimise impact. Feel encouraged to share your approach and policies if applicable.

4 Contracting (third parties)

4.1 Payment & Invoicing

- Payments will be made following provision of a correctly rendered undisputed digital (via email) invoice to Climate-KIC. Climate-KIC contract manager will inform the successful bidder where to submit invoices.
- Payment terms associated with delivery of the goods and/or services must be not less than net 30 days.
- Climate-KIC can provide a purchase order number to be referenced on invoices.
- Where Climate-KIC is requesting services over longer periods of time, bidders can invoice in a pay as we go model (e.g. a consolidated invoice based on work completed or completion of deliverables - to be clarified during contracting).
- Requests for deposit payments are generally not accepted.
- If the bidder is requesting any form of payment prior to delivery of goods and/or services, this must be raised with Climate-KIC.
- If submitting invoices for subscription services, please ensure these fees are itemised and priced at line level.

4.2 Contract Management

A one-off agreement is proposed for award of work.

Climate-KIC can share their standard terms and conditions and will consider the bidder's own terms and conditions on the basis that the bidder can incorporate the following:

- Climate-KIC requires that that service providers provide an indemnity to Climate-KIC for breach of third-party intellectual property rights;
- In addition, Climate-KIC will ask that service providers comply with the Ethical Standards for Climate-KIC Contractual Counterparties available at <https://www.climate-kic.org/policies>
- Service providers are required to comply with Climate-KIC's standard data protection clauses (can be provided in advance on request) and provide an indemnity for any breach;
- The liability of the service provider to Climate-KIC (and affiliates) to be uncapped in respect of breach of data protection clauses. For all other heads, liability of the service provider to Climate-KIC (and affiliates) may be capped at a reasonable multiple of fees not less than 2X. If applicable, Climate-KIC liability to service provider also be similarly capped;
- No indemnities extended by Climate-KIC to service providers.

5 Award Criteria

5.1 Evaluation across quality criteria

To ensure consistency across quality criteria evaluation, each criterion shall be scored on a scale of 0-5 using the following methodology. This score is to then be adjusted to align with the % weighting of the specific area being evaluated.

For example, if the specific criterion has a weighting of 15% and the supplier scores a 4 out of 5, the supplier will receive a weighted score of 12% for that specific criterion.

Score Awarded	Definitions	Commentary
0	An unacceptable response	No response at all or insufficient information provided in the response such that the solution is totally un-assessable and/or incomprehensible.
1	A poor response	Substantially unacceptable submission which fails in several significant areas to set out a solution that addresses and meets the requirements: little or no detail may (and, where evidence is required or necessary, no evidence) have been provided to support and demonstrate that the Bidder will be able to provide the services and/or considerable reservations as to the Bidder's proposals in respect of relevant ability, understanding, expertise, skills and/or resources to deliver the requirements.
2	A below expectation response	Weak submission which does not set out a solution that fully addresses and meets the requirements: response may be basic/ minimal with little or no detail (and, where evidence is required or necessary, with insufficient evidence) provided to support the solution and demonstrate that the Bidder will be able to provide the services and/or some reservations as to the Bidder's solution in respect of relevant ability, understanding, expertise, skills and/or resources to deliver the requirements.
3	A satisfactory response that meets expectations	Submission sets out a solution that largely addresses and meets the requirements, with some detail (or, where evidence is required or necessary, some relevant evidence) provided to support the solution; minor reservations or weakness in a few areas of the solution in respect of relevant ability, understanding, expertise, skills and/or resources to deliver the requirements.
4	A good response	Submission sets out a robust solution that fully addresses and meets the requirements, with full details (and, where evidence is required or necessary, full and relevant evidence) provided to support the solution; provides full confidence as to the relevant ability, understanding, expertise, skills and/or resources to deliver the requirements.
5	A very good response	Submission sets out a robust solution (as for a 4 score – above) and, in addition, provides or proposes additional value and/or elements of the solution which exceed the requirements in substance and outcomes in a manner acceptable to Climate-KIC; provides full confidence as to the relevant ability, understanding, expertise, skills and/or resources not only to deliver the requirements, but also exceed it as described.

Table 3 - Quality Criteria scoring table

5.2 Evaluation Criteria

5.2.1 Expertise / Experience (30%)

Expertise and Experience as a criterion determines whether or not the proposed supplier is able to actually deliver the services. The questions to be asked and evaluated in this criterion are:

1. Relevant Experience – does the suppliers response show a history of delivering on projects like the package currently being evaluated? (20%).
2. Relevant Expertise – do the individuals proposed for the delivery of this work have the relevant qualifications required to deliver this work? (10%)

5.2.2 Capacity to Deliver (30%)

Once it has been established that the supplier has the relevant expertise and experience, the next criteria examines whether the supplier has the capacity to take on the work. This criterion is to be addressed via the following questions:

1. Current Workload – The suppliers shall provide the current list of projects being delivered by the individuals proposed for this package, this shall include the effort required for existing work as a % of their time (20%).

2. Management Measures – The supplier shall provide detail into how they manage capacity issues as well as provide any additional resources or measures they have in place in the event of capacity issues, or if there is a need for scope increases or acceleration (10%).

5.2.3 Price Criteria (40%)

Price will consist of 40% of the evaluation weightings. The evaluation method will ensure that the lowest price total of the Pricing Schedule achieves the maximum available marks, with other Bidders scores calculated proportionately. The scoring methodology will be applied per pricing schedule section and combined to identify the overall lowest price submission. The lowest price submission will achieve the maximum available score with the other Bidders prices scoring points inversely proportionate to the lowest.

1. Pricing evaluation will follow the universally accepted formula of (Lowest Price / Tendered Price x Price Criteria Points (40)).
2. An example of how this formula operates in practice can be found below:

Description	Formula	Tenderer		
		T1	T2	T3
Tendered Price	A	€500	€490	€510
Lowest Price	B	€490		
Calculation	$C = B/A$	0.98	1.00	0.96
Convert to Points	$D = C \times 40^*$	39.20	40.00	38.43

* The conversion to points will be based on the weighting attributed to price in the total evaluation.

Table 4 - Example scoring methodology for price lots

6 Instruction to Bidders

6.1 Responding with your proposal

Climate-KIC are requesting the following are submitted to bid on this contract:

1. **A Proposal** that sufficiently details the bidder's solution and responds to the prompts and requests contained in this RFP. The bidder is, amongst other items, also kindly asked to provide:
 - their trading name, VAT or tax identification number (if applicable) and registered trading address (*please note, address is not required for an individual*).
 - website links to examples of work previously performed by the bidder if applicable (e.g. portfolios, work products or other).
 - professional references that can be reached by Climate-KIC to verify previous services delivery.
2. **A Quotation** that meets the requirements described at Section 6.2
3. **Resumes** of individuals that will be assigned to conduct the services described in this document.
4. The total submission (including attachments) must NOT exceed **30 pages total**.

Climate-KIC reserves the right to reject RFP responses that do not confirm with these guidelines. All responses shall be made to the Contract Manager via electronic copy, at CESF@netzerocities.eu

6.2 Quotation requirements

Climate-KIC request that bidders quote in the following manner, as appropriate to delivery of the services:

- Please provide itemised quotations in Euros and specify if the quote includes / excludes VAT or any other taxes;
- Provide a rate card for relevant grades of employment that will be conducting services (e.g. day rate) instead of averaged rates. These may be used for additional services.
- The quotation is requested to include a week-by-week resource plan with resolution on role title, days and day rates to reach a total proposed labour cost. Please refer Table 5 as an example.
- For External Suppliers (Non-NZC Consortium): Travel and subsistence for these services are strictly limited. Domestic travel and subsistence will not be reimbursed unless agreed in advance and in writing with Climate-KIC. If you require international transport and/or accommodation, please make this clear and estimate costs in your quotation. Time for travel will not be billable hours.
- Include all applicable costs or charges associated with providing the goods and/or services in your quotation.
- Please quote on a company letterhead or similar company form where possible with the resolution described in Table 5 at a minimum. Where a resource plan can be provided or explicitly requested, please refer the example in Table 6.

Table 5: Provided quotations to include the following details

Item and unit cost (in Euros excluding VAT)
Services ... as per Section 3
Deliverable 1 of ... as per Section 3.3
Deliverable 2 of ... as per Section 3.3
License fees (per user per month/annum, and in aggregate) if applicable
TOTAL (if applicable)
Rate card for services (per day/hour, in Euros excluding VAT):

Item and unit cost (in Euros excluding VAT)
Assistant – XX / day
Officer – XX / day
Specialist - XX / day
Project coordinator – XX / day
Consultant – XX/day
Principal consultant – XX/day
Partner – XX/day
...

Table 6: Example resource-based quotation for proposed labour

Section	Area	Resource	Task	Quantity (days)	Resource day rate (EUR excl. VAT)	Subtotal cost (EUR excl. VAT)
Service delivery	Workshop facilitation	e.g. Facilitator	e.g. Workshop preparation and delivery	e.g. 3	e.g. € XX.00	e.g. € XX.00
		e.g. Facilitator's assistant	e.g. Workshop delivery support	e.g. 1	e.g. € XX.00	e.g. € XX.00
...
Grand total						€ XX.00

6.3 Terms of this RFP

- Your proposal should be submitted according to the instructions as detailed in this section and should be valid for a period of at least six (6) months from the bid due date. Any proposal submitted outside the scope defined may be rejected without provision for re-submission.
- Any further information pertaining to this RFP, of whatever nature, must be directed to the Contract Manager detailed in Section 1.1. If a point of clarification materially affects the RFP, our response will be circulated to all bidders, otherwise the response will only be sent to the bidder seeking clarification.
- If any doubt exists concerning any element of this RFP, a clear statement should be made on the assumptions taken to arrive at your quoted costs, or alternatively contact us prior to submitting your proposal to seek clarification.
- Entering into contractual arrangements with Climate-KIC in connection with this RFP does not guarantee work will be awarded.
- Climate-KIC/GARAC reserves the right to reject any proposal(s) received after the submission date/time.
- Climate-KIC/GARAC reserves the right to undertake post-bid negotiations with none, all or a shortlist of bidders.
- Climate-KIC/GARAC, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to accept or reject any or all of the proposals received and not to award any business and shall not be bound to give reasons for any decision. Only the execution of a written agreement between a Climate-KIC entity and a supplier(s) will obligate a Climate-KIC entity in accordance with the terms and conditions contained in such agreement.
- Climate-KIC reserves the right to procure services from alternative suppliers(s) where the successful bidder is, or becomes, uncompetitive within the market. However, issues over pricing and specification will be resolved through discussion and mutual agreement between Climate-KIC and the supplier.
- Bidders are required to email soft copies of their proposal to the Contract Manager detailed in Section 1.1 based on the timeline at Section 0.
- As per above and where applicable, bidders must acknowledge receipt of this RFP by return email to the Contract Manager detailed in Section 1.1 confirming whether they intend to submit a proposal by the Submission Deadline.

11. This RFP does not commit or obligate any Climate-KIC company to pay any expenses incurred by you in the preparation of your Proposal. All such expenses are solely at the risk of the bidder and by submitting a proposal you automatically agree that proposal becomes the property of Climate-KIC.
12. Proposals are to be kept as clear and concise as possible and should be sequenced and numbered in accordance with the format of this RFP.
13. The formatting of this document and the attached response document should not be altered.
14. Whilst this RFP confers no legal rights on its addressees, it is not intended that any other persons acquire rights or obligations in respect of or arising under it.
15. Unsuccessful bidders agree, by the submission of their proposals, to return to Climate-KIC this RFP and any and all papers, records, data and materials supplied to them in connection with it, including all copies made by them.
16. This RFP is for consideration in whole and not in part or parts unless otherwise indicated.
17. All efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy and validity of information contained in this RFP. However, Climate-KIC does not warrant the information accurate or comprehensive.