



NZC CESF Procurement RFP

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

SGA-MCCC-022 Parma & Bologna

Date: 03 April 2026

Authors: Andres Fernandez (Climate-KIC), Luisa Carretti (Climate-KIC), Mateusz Hoffmann (Climate-KIC)

Table of contents

- 1 Overview.....5
 - 1.1 Executive Summary5
 - 1.2 Timelines5
 - 1.3 About Climate-KIC.....6
 - 1.4 About NetZeroCities6
 - 1.4.1 NZC Climate City Contracts (CCC).....6
 - 1.4.2 NZC Pilot Cities Programme.....6
 - 1.4.3 NZC Community of Practice6
- 2 Confidentiality7
- 3 Specification.....8
 - 3.1 Background.....8
 - 3.2 Scope9
 - 3.3 Tasks9
 - 3.4 Timeline&Milestones11
 - 3.5 On-site Meetings12
 - 3.6 Required Experience and Capabilities12
 - 3.7 Methodology12
 - 3.8 Objectives12
 - 3.9 Deliverables13
 - 3.10 Eligibility.....14
 - 3.11 Sustainability.....14
- 4 Contracting (third parties)15
 - 4.1 Payment & Invoicing.....15
 - 4.2 Contract Management.....15
- 5 Award Criteria17
 - 5.1 Evaluation across quality criteria.....17
 - 5.2 Evaluation Criteria17
 - 5.2.1 Expertise / Experience (30%)17
 - 5.2.2 Capacity to Deliver (10%).....17
 - 5.2.3 Methodology (20%)18
 - 5.2.4 Price Criteria (40%).....18
- 6 Instruction to Bidders.....19
 - 6.1 Responding with your proposal.....19
 - 6.2 Quotation requirements.....19
 - 6.3 Terms of this RFP22

Abbreviations and acronyms

Acronym	Description
NZC	NetZeroCities
CESF	City Expert Support Facility
CCC	Climate City Contracts
RFP	Request for Proposal
GARAC	Grant and Resource Allocation Committee
CoP	Community of Practice

Request for Proposal

For: Parma and Bologna seek expert support to design legally feasible and operational governance structures for the implementation of their Climate City Contracts. The assignment combines legal analysis, stakeholder co-creation and strategic recommendations, and will produce a transferable governance model for other Italian Mission Cities.

Date: 03 April 2026

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	Design of Legally Anchored Governance Models for Climate City Contract Implementation in Parma and Bologna
The legal entity requesting these goods and/or services	Stitching Climate-KIC International Foundation
Services and/or goods will be delivered to the following locations	Parma&Bologna Services will be delivered remotely to the following locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parma&Bologna Some onsite services may be required at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parma&Bologna
Climate-KIC Contact Points for Proposals and Inquiries	Luisa Carretti Mateusz Hoffmann CESF Manager CESF@netzerocities.eu
Proposed contract term for successful candidates	01 June 2026 – 31 March 2027 (10 months)

Table 1: Procurement executive summary

1.2 Timelines

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

Planned Date*	Milestones
01 April 2026	RFP issued to bidders
17 April 2026 (23:59 CET Time)	Deadline to submit questions
24 April 2026 (23:59 CET Time)	Bidders submit proposals / Submission Deadline
By 08 May 2026	Assessment results announcement (subject to finished evaluations and selection of a winner)
Proposed contract start date for successful supplier	01 June 2026

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.

1.4.3 NZC Community of Practice

The [NZC Community of Practice \(CoP\)](#) is a collaborative space on the Mission Platform, which gathers city officials, experts and practitioners from public organizations, private organisations or public-private organisations directly involved in climate neutrality programmes, activities or solutions. Through this community, we recognize that there are already many existing resources, knowledge, and solutions available, and we aim to foster their connection to cities to help them achieve their climate goals. Through the online portal group and monthly webinars, the CoP encourages the sharing

of challenges, questions, and solutions related to climate neutrality, facilitating discussions that inspire innovative collaborations and drive city strategies for achieving climate goals.

The CoP plays a complementary role in the context of the City Expert Support Facility. While participation in the CoP is not required to submit an offer and has no influence on the evaluation process, it may provide added value for suppliers in other contexts. It provides a space where city needs can be openly shared and discussed, and where suppliers can stay engaged, respond to emerging opportunities, and contribute their expertise. For more information on how to join the CoP and present your services, please contact helena.suarezgroen@lgi.earth.

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 Climate-KIC (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 Background

The Cities of [Parma](#) and [Bologna](#) are part of the Italian network of Mission Cities and have each developed their Climate City Contracts (CCCs) through large, collaborative coalitions involving universities, utilities, private-sector partners, civil-society organisations, research institutions, inter-municipal bodies, and the Emilia-Romagna Region. These alliances demonstrate strong political commitment and broad engagement, but they currently lack formal legal or institutional anchoring. As a consequence, they remain fragile, heavily dependent on voluntary participation, and exposed to political turnover, administrative restructuring, and fragmented mandates.

Both cities are now entering a decisive moment: the shift from planning and intention (CCC development) to operational delivery and long-term implementation. To ensure continuity and accelerate climate action, they require governance structures that are **legally sound, financially feasible, operationally credible, and resilient across political cycles**.

Parma and Bologna therefore seek specialised external support to design, validate, and co-create governance models that can:

- provide long-term institutional durability;
- coordinate multi-actor delivery during CCC implementation;
- ensure continuity beyond the 2027 elections;
- allow responsible and transparent participation of private-sector actors;
- align municipal, provincial, and regional mandates;
- create structures capable of managing resources and accessing funding;
- offer a model that is **replicable across all Italian Mission Cities**.

This request builds directly on the work and learnings of [Let'sGOv](#), a pilot carried out by all nine Italian Mission Cities. Let'sGOv surfaced shared governance challenges and demonstrated a strong need for governance innovations that can be transferred across cities. These include:

- persistent difficulty in ensuring structured, consistent stakeholder engagement;
- the lack of multi-actor governance frameworks that support climate neutrality delivery;
- the fragility of voluntary coalitions lacking institutional or legal identity;
- the need for models that survive electoral cycles and administrative turnover;
- emerging innovations (e.g., Cabine di Regia, Transition Teams, Climate Assemblies) demonstrating potential but still lacking long-term anchoring;
- strengthened inter-city collaboration that can be leveraged for replication.

The support requested through CESF represents the next step in this systemic transformation: turning insights and emerging practices into **operational, legally anchored governance architectures** that can drive climate neutrality to 2030 and beyond.

The supplier will work closely with Parma, Bologna, and their stakeholders, and will also interface with the broader network of Italian Mission Cities through **Col'Azioni Climatiche**, coordinated by Politecnico di Milano (Polimi). This will enable continuous validation, peer testing, and Italy-wide scaling of results.

Key stakeholders include: Municipal administrations, technical departments, the Emilia-Romagna Region, the Provinces, universities, utilities, private-sector partners, chambers of commerce, civil-society organisations, Italian Mission Cities, and NetZeroCities consortium City Advisor and experts.

Key contextual considerations include:

- the 2027 election cycle and the need for pre-election formalisation;
- regulatory constraints in Italy concerning public-private collaboration;
- the transition into CCC delivery;
- the ambition to contribute to an Italy-wide governance blueprint.

3.2 Scope

Climate-KIC, on behalf of NetZeroCities, requests proposals for the **design, assessment, and co-creation of legally anchored, financially feasible, operational governance structures** for Parma and Bologna's climate alliances. The assignment combines legal advisory, governance design, and facilitated stakeholder co-creation to ensure that the proposed governance model is both legally feasible and operationally supported by key actors.

The supplier will support the cities to:

- identify feasible legal and institutional options for long-term governance anchoring;
- design an operational governance model that:
 - supports CCC implementation,
 - articulates clear roles, mandates, decision-making pathways,
 - ensures continuity beyond political cycles,
 - supports access to financing and resource mobilisation;
- build on insights from Let'sGOv and on innovative models already emerging in Italian cities;
- ensure that the final governance framework developed for Parma and Bologna is structured in a way that allows adaptation by other Italian Mission Cities. Transferability will be addressed through Deliverable 4 (Italy-wide Transferable Governance Model), which will synthesise the key elements of the proposed governance structure, highlight enabling conditions and constraints under Italian law, and outline considerations for adaptation in other municipal contexts.

This assignment goes well beyond improving coordination. It addresses the **structural foundations** needed for long-term, multi-actor climate governance: legal durability, institutional identity, compliance with public-sector requirements, financial capability, and resilience to political change.

Element	Cities' need	Support to be provided
Stability	Alliances currently fragile and voluntary	Legal anchoring and institutional structuring
Coordination	Fragmented mandates and limited alignment across key stakeholders	Design of an integrated multi-stakeholder operational governance framework
Implementation	Need to shift decisively from planning to the effective delivery of CCC actions	Provision of structured tools, processes and clearly defined roles for CCC implementation
Replicability	Requirement for governance approaches that can be scaled and transferred across cities	Development of a replicable governance toolkit for the wider network of Mission Cities
Political cycles	2027 municipal elections pose risks of discontinuity and loss of institutional memory	Creation of governance structures designed to ensure continuity and resilience across political cycles

3.3 Tasks

The supplier is expected to deliver a combined **analysis + facilitation + co-creation design process**, comprising:

1. Legal and institutional analysis

- a. Mapping viable legal and institutional frameworks under Italian law (e.g., foundation, association, consortium, hybrid structures, governance platform, cooperative forms).
- b. Assessing regulatory constraints already encountered by the cities, with the goal of presenting the cities with an analysis of the models that are possible within the Italian national framework, so that cities have all the information they need to make decisions.

- c. Particular attention should be given to the analysis of mechanisms to allow private-sector participation, especially on the part of larger companies, **without conflict of interest** and ensuring compliance with national and regional regulations.
- d. Identification of legal structures capable of supporting joint programming, co-ownership of initiatives, and long-term continuity beyond a single political term with also attention on how to work and collaborate with other public entities, such as the Province.

To support this analysis, the cities of Parma and Bologna are expected to provide baseline information at the start of the assignment, including, where available:

- existing governance and partnership agreements related to their CCC implementation;
- relevant institutional and legal documents, stakeholder mapping and partnership structures;
- outputs from previous related initiatives;
- internal assessments or studies relevant to mission governance and stakeholder coordination.

This will be done at the start of the assignment when Parma and Bologna will meet with the supplier to have an initial internal workshop, provide all needed information they have available, clarify assumptions, and align the analytical approach.

2. Co-creation workshops

- a. Designing and facilitating **3 participatory workshops per city** with CCC members (universities, utilities, industry, NGOs, civil society actors) + **1 joint workshop** bringing together the stakeholders of the two cities. Specifically:
 - Designing the workshop methodology and structure,
 - Preparing facilitation materials (agendas, presentations, interactive tools, visual aids),
 - Facilitating the sessions. Mapping shared goals, governance needs, and decision-making expectations.
- b. Exploring alternative structures and guiding stakeholders towards a preferred model or roadmap.
- c. Ensuring effective workshop facilitation, providing an external perspective to the one offered by the cities so far to the stakeholders.
- d. Ensuring alignment with regional partners, especially the **Emilia-Romagna Region**, which plays a key role for both cities.

3. Benchmarking and case studies

- a. Work with NetZeroCities to analyse examples from Italy and other EU contexts where durable, cross-sector climate governance has been established. The assignment does not require a comprehensive Europe-wide comparative study, but rather a focused assessment sufficient to inform the governance design process.
 - NetZeroCities will provide a curated set of relevant materials, case examples, and knowledge resources through its network. These materials are intended to serve as a structured baseline for the benchmarking analysis,
- b. Building on this baseline, the supplier is expected to conduct targeted complementary research and analysis where necessary to:
 - Assess legal feasibility within the Italian regulatory framework;
 - Identify transferable elements relevant to Parma and Bologna;
 - Highlight limitations or contextual constraints.
- c. For this phase, NetZeroCities will collaborate with the consultant to provide the relevant examples to feed into their analysis.

4. Strategic recommendations and roadmap

- a. Producing clear, actionable guidance on:
 - the final proposed governance model;
 - a phased roadmap towards formalisation.
- b. Integrate insights into network-level knowledge sharing via Col'Azioni Climatiche meetings (approx. 3 sessions).
- c. Identifying resource needs and potential funding sources.
- d. Outlining risk mitigation measures.

- e. Detailing how the alliance can operate independently of political cycles.

5. **Design of an Italy-wide Transferable Governance Model**

- a. Synthesising findings into a framework usable by the remaining seven Italian Mission Cities.
- b. Supporting integration of results into the regular Col'Azioni Climatiche meetings for iterative feedback.

3.4 Timeline&Milestones

The services are expected to be delivered according to the following (indicative) milestones. The estimated effort is indicative only and that bidders should propose their own level of effort based on their methodology.

Milestone	Comments	Time frame	Linked deliverables	Estimated effort
Kick off meeting with cities and NetZeroCities (online)	Urgency linked to the 2027 political cycle	June 2026	-	1 day
Internal workshop with staff of cities (in person)		June 2026	-	2-3 days
Legal and institutional analysis completed and presented to the cities (online or in person)	Current stakeholder coordination practices, review of current governance practices, legal/regulatory constraints analysis	June-July 2026	Legal and institutional analysis (Deliverable 1)	8-10 days
Benchmarking and case studies' discussion with NetZeroCities	Assessment of models used by Mission Cities and beyond; identification of transferable components	June-July 2026	Assessment of transferability of benchmarking and case studies (Deliverable 2)	1-3 days
In person workshop series in Parma and Bologna (in person, 3 workshops per city + 1 joint workshop)	Iterative co-creation with municipalities, region, universities, utilities, civil society (Please consult cities' CCC for list of signatories). Important to complete this cycle of workshops by October, as elected officials will then be busy preparing for the elections	July-November 2026	Insights to feed into Deliverable 3	15-18 days
1 st presentation during Col'Azioni Climatiche (online)		August 2026	Insights to feed into Deliverable 4	1 day
2 nd presentation during Col'Azioni Climatiche, with attention to make of this a dynamic workshop involving the other Mission Cities (online)	Integration of feedback via Polimi/Col'Azioni Climatiche; stress-testing models	December 2026	Insights to feed into Deliverable 4	2 days
Delivery of strategic recommendations and roadmap to cities	Final governance framework, operational guidelines, implementation roadmap	January 2027	Strategic recommendations and roadmap (Deliverable 3)	8-10 days

3 rd presentation during Col'Azioni Climatiche with attention to make of this a dynamic workshop involving the other Mission Cities (online)	Integration of feedback via Polimi/Col'Azioni Climatiche; stress-testing models	January 2027	Insights to feed into Deliverable 4	2 days
Delivery of transferable model to cities	Fed by feedback collected during the Col'Azioni Climatiche	February 2027	Italy-wide Transferable Governance Model (Deliverable 4)	5-7 days
Delivery of final CESF Report to cities and NetZeroCities		March 2027	CESF Delivery Report (Deliverable 5)	2-3 days

3.5 On-site Meetings

A combination of **online and in-person engagements** is expected throughout the assignment. In-person meetings are essential for co-creation with local actors and for deep contextual understanding. The supplier must include all travel-related expenses in their financial proposal.

The core expected on-site meetings include:

- **Internal workshop with municipal staff (in person)** during June 2026.
- **Three in-person workshops per city + one joint workshop** (Parma + Bologna), held between July and December 2026. These will support iterative co-creation with regional authorities, universities, utilities, civil society organisations, and other relevant stakeholders.

Suppliers may additionally propose max 2 **on-site visits per city, interviews, or targeted consultations**, particularly if their proximity makes travel easier, as long as these additions support the quality of the work and remain aligned with the timeline and deliverables.

3.6 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:

Legal expertise in Italian governance and institutional design (mandatory);

- Expertise in public-private cooperative models, foundations, consortia and hybrid entities;
- Experience facilitating **multi-stakeholder co-creation** processes;
- Understanding of Italian municipal and regional governance dynamics;
- Familiarity with climate governance, transition teams, climate alliances;
- Policy and regulatory innovation;
- Strategic planning and organisational design;
- Ability to produce clear, analytical, and accessible reports;
- Fluency in Italian (mandatory).

3.7 Methodology

The service provider is asked to adopt a suitable and professionally accepted methodology to deliver the services. The methodology should consider:

- Approach must be co-creative and participatory;
- Supplier should tailor all interventions to Parma and Bologna's contexts;
- Workshops should combine facilitation, legal structuring and strategic foresight;
- Capable of generating transferable outputs for other Italian Mission Cities.

3.8 Objectives

- Define feasible governance/legal options for long-term CCC alliances in Parma and Bologna.

- Co-create a preferred model (or pathway) with key stakeholders.
- Produce a replicable governance framework for all Italian Mission Cities and potentially Mission-Minded Cities.
- Provide insights on how a governance model can survive political turnover and is actionable.
- Build shared ownership and accountability mechanisms for climate neutrality.

Expected results:

Outcome Category	Expected Result
Governance Strengthening	A legally grounded governance model developed in collaboration with both cities, ready to support municipal decision-making – subject to formal approval through each city’s internal political/administrative processes to be carry out by the local government itself.
Operational Capacity	Clear coordination mechanisms, roles, and decision-making pathways
Stakeholder Engagement	More consistent involvement of universities, utilities, private sector, civil society
Political Resilience	Continuity across election cycles (2027 and beyond)
Financial Access	Stronger ability to access and manage climate funding
Replication	Transferable tools shared with Italian Mission Cities

3.9 Deliverables

The following deliverables are requested:

Deliverable 1: Legal and institutional analysis (in Italian). Requirements:

- Overview of current governance practices and stakeholder coordination in Parma and Bologna. Current list of CCC signatories for Parma and Bologna can be found in their CCCs, published in the NetZeroCities portal;
- Comparative assessment of feasible governance pathways under Italian law;
- Analysis of legal and regulatory constraint, risks, and feasibility;
- Evaluation of suitability for long-term cross-sector cooperation;
- Identification of mechanisms to prevent conflicts of interest.

Deliverable 2: Assessment of transferability of benchmarking and case studies (in English for ease of coordination with NetZeroCities experts). Requirements:

- Targeted independent research and analysis,
- Assessment of transferability based on examples from Italy and other EU contexts where durable, cross-sector climate governance has been established.

Deliverable 3: Strategic recommendations and roadmap (in Italian). Requirements:

- A clear, actionable document including:
 - the preferred governance structure;
 - a phased roadmap with timelines;
 - resource needs and funding sources;
 - operational mechanisms;
 - risk mitigation;
 - roles and responsibilities;
 - a short note on how inputs from the workshop series were used to refine the recommendations and roadmap.

A short note on how inputs from Deliverable 2 were used to refine the recommendations and roadmap.

Deliverable 4: Italy-wide Transferable Governance Model (in Italian):

- A synthesis version of the roadmap to be used by other Italian Mission Cities or in the national platform development work carried out by Polimi, including: practical guidance highlighting key steps, enabling conditions, and considerations for replications in different regional contexts.
- The deliverable should include a short note documenting insights gathered during Col’Azioni Climatiche and how these have fed into the Model.

- Engagement with the wider Italian Mission Cities network for this deliverable will take place primarily through the three Col'Azioni Climatiche sessions included in the scope. No additional consultations and co-design activities are expected.

-

Deliverable 5 (Mandatory): CESF Delivery Report (in English).

Requirements:

Upon completion of the delivery of support, the appointed provider must submit the CESF Delivery Report. This report should be validated by the cities 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.

3.10 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 the overall Climate-KIC Group (discretionary basis)
- Will continue to be a full-time employee of an EU grant recipient or a Net Zero Cities Consortium partner during the contract term (discretionary basis)
- **Has a price more than the Public Procurement Directive threshold, currently EURO 221,000. Bids of this size cannot be accepted under this procurement process.**

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

Moreover, Net Zero Cities Consortium partners should not participate in this request for proposals as subcontracting between consortium partners is prohibited under EU funding rules.

3.11 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.
- The standard payment term is 100% of the total contract value upon acceptance of the Final Delivery Report. Invoices for the Final Delivery Report may only be submitted following formal written acceptance by the Climate-KIC Contract Manager.
- Payment terms associated with the delivery of goods and/or services must be not less than net 30 days from the date a correct and undisputed invoice is received.
- Any request for a deviation from the standard payment term (e.g., payment in tranches) must be explicitly raised within the bidder's proposal and is subject to the review and prior written approval of the Climate-KIC Contract Manager. If a deviation is approved, all payments will be strictly linked to the achievement of one or more clearly defined deliverables. The Contract Manager reserves the right to approve or reject any requested payment schedule deviation.
- Climate-KIC can provide a purchase order number to be referenced on invoices.
- Requests for deposit payments are generally not accepted.
- 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 its standard terms and conditions on request. Bidders may propose their own terms and conditions; however, any final contract must incorporate the requirements below regarding Intellectual Property, liability, data protection and ethical standards:

- Background IPR
 - Each party keeps ownership of the Intellectual Property Rights it held before the contract or created independently of the assignment ("Background IPR").
 - The supplier must grant Climate-KIC a non-exclusive, royalty-free, perpetual and transferable licence to use any supplier Background IPR needed for Climate-KIC to use, adapt or further develop the contract deliverables. This licence may be sub-licensed to Climate-KIC group companies, affiliates or project partners for the same purpose.
 - The supplier receives no rights over Climate-KIC's Background IPR beyond what is strictly necessary to perform the services.
- Foreground IPR: All Intellectual Property Rights created in providing the services ("Foreground IPR") will be owned by Climate-KIC. The supplier must be able to assign these rights to Climate-KIC and take reasonable steps to support this.
- 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 (10%)

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 (5%).

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 (5%).

5.2.3 Methodology (20%)

The purpose of this criterion is to assess the suitability of the technical approach detailed by the supplier in the offer, particularly with regard to the overall scope of the contract and specifically with regard to the services therein comprised. The proposed methodology should be, therefore, fit for purpose, considering the specific characteristics of the services, the needs of the city or local authority, and risks identified in relation to the contract execution, among other aspects. Some aspects to consider for assessing the proposed methodology:

1. The specific methods and tools the supplier will use to deliver the services and attain the overall objectives of the assignment;
2. The proposed logical sequence of phases for the deliverables (e.g., intake, analysis, reporting, implementation);
3. The intellectual and professional approach to the challenges or issues indicated in the tender specifications, and more in particular, how the team proposed by the supplier will work together and how their specific expertise will be applied to the assignment;
4. How the team will identify potential project risks and what mitigation strategies they propose;
5. The internal quality controls to ensure that the deliverables provided are of a consistently high standard.

5.2.4 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.

All proposals/offers must be submitted via email to bids@netzerocities.eu by the deadline indicated in this RFP.

For **any requests for clarifications or questions** related to the contents of this RFP, bidders must send an email to cesf@netzerocities.eu.

Climate-KIC reserves the right to reject RFP responses that do not confirm with these guidelines.

6.2 Quotation requirements

1. Please provide a fully itemised quotation in Euros, detailing all applicable costs related to the assignment. The quotation must specify:
 - The supplier's VAT number, including country code, if applicable.
 - Whether prices are inclusive or exclusive of VAT.
 - Where VAT is applicable, the exact VAT rate (%) to be applied.
 - Whether the reverse charge mechanism is expected to apply.

To enable Climate-KIC to assess the financial and tax implications of your bid, please also confirm the following:

If VAT will not be charged:

- Confirm whether the reverse charge mechanism applies.
- Provide a brief explanation of the legal basis (e.g. intra-EU B2B supply of services under Article 196 of the EU VAT Directive).

If VAT will be charged:

- Explicitly state the VAT rate (%) that will be applied to the invoice.
- If the supplier is established in an EU Member State other than the Netherlands, briefly explain why the reverse charge mechanism does not apply, with reference to the relevant national or EU VAT provisions.

Invoicing will be directed to the company **STICHTING CLIMATE-KIC INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION, VAT NL860987541B01**.

Please note: The correct application of VAT and related legislation is the sole responsibility of the supplier. Climate-KIC reserves the right to request supporting documentation or legal clarification regarding VAT treatment at the contracting stage.

2. **Main Quote Table:** Suppliers must provide a **main quotation table** summarising all deliverables listed in Section 3/3.4 (Scope of Work). Each row must correspond to a deliverable and include:
- Deliverable name (as listed in Section 3.4)
 - Unit of measure (e.g. days, weeks, or months — use the most appropriate for the task)
 - Quantity
 - Unit price
 - Subtotal

Please check below "**Table 5**" which is a simple and non-exhaustive example of the main quote table.

3. **Rate Card:** Suppliers shall provide a **rate card** listing each personnel category/role that will contribute to the assignment, together with the applicable **daily rate in EUR (EUR/day)**. Rates must be **specific to each role** and **must not be blended or averaged** across personnel.

If your organisation normally operates with **hourly rates**, you must also indicate the equivalent **daily rate**, applying the following standard conversion to ensure comparability across bids:

Standard conversion: 1 working day = 8 hours.

The rate card must include all roles foreseen in the delivery of the assignment and shall use **the same role names** that appear in the **Main Quotation (Table 5)** and the **Resource Plan (Table 7)**. All rates must be **fixed for the entire contract duration** and expressed in EUR, excluding VAT (VAT treatment is covered in the previous section).

Required columns for Table 6:

- Role (use consistent naming across all tables)
- Daily rate (EUR/day)
- Hourly rate (EUR/hour) — optional
- Short description of role

Please check below "**Table 6**" which is a simple and non-exhaustive example of the rate card table.

4. **Resource Plan:** Suppliers shall also provide a **Resource Plan**, showing the allocation of human resources across the project life cycle. The plan must use a **single consistent time unit**, which for this assignment is **monthly** (i.e. time buckets in calendar months).

This plan ensures full traceability between the resources, the deliverables and the associated costs.

For each **month** (or project phase, if more relevant), the supplier shall indicate:

- The **deliverable(s)** planned for that period (as listed in Section 3.4 – Scope of Work),
- The **role(s)** involved,
- The **number of days** allocated to each role,
- The **daily rate** (EUR/day) — as provided in the Rate Card (Table 6), and
- The **calculated cost** (EUR = days x daily rate).

The **same role names and rates** used in Table 6 must be used in this table and referenced consistently in the **Main Quotation (Table 5)**.

Suppliers may also include a **summary line** at the end of the table totalling the days and cost per role, as well as overall totals per deliverable.

Required columns for Table 7:

- Month / Phase
- Deliverable ID (ref. Section 3.4)
- Role
- Days in month
- Daily rate (EUR/day)
- Cost (EUR = days × rate)

Please check below "Table 7" which is a simple and non-exhaustive example of the resource plan table.

5. For External Suppliers (Non-NZC Consortium): Travel and subsistence for this assignment are expected to be minimal and must be clearly itemised in the quotation. While no travel is currently foreseen, suppliers are required to estimate and include in their quote any potential costs related to travel or accommodation that may arise during the implementation of the assignment. This includes potential domestic and international travel. Please note that time spent travelling is not considered billable. Suppliers are encouraged to propose remote collaboration and digital engagement methods wherever possible to minimise environmental and financial impact.
6. Please submit your quote on official company letterhead or a formal company document, in English. The quote should be submitted in PDF format. The quote shall include company name, address and VAT/TAX code, contact details, date of submission, name and role of the authorized signatory.
7. The quotation should remain valid at least 90 calendar days from the submission deadline.
8. Climate-KIC encourages environmentally sustainable business practices. Within the quote, where possible, suppliers are encouraged to indicate any sustainable approaches (i.e. digital documentation, remote collaboration) that can reduce the environmental impact during the provision of services.
9. The bidder shall explicitly declare any current or past institutional, commercial, financial, or organizational relationship with the City/Municipality for which the tender is issued, including but not limited to: a) Membership or affiliation in the bidder's organization b) Any contractual, financial, or in-kind support received from or provided to the Municipality c) Involvement in previous or ongoing projects funded or coordinated by the Municipality d) Participation in governance, technical, or advisory bodies.

Table 5: Example – Main Quotation Table

Deliverable ID / Name	Unit	Quantity	Unit price (EUR)	Subtotal (EUR)
D1 – Inception Report	days	13	–	10,100
D2 – Final Report	days	20	–	15,800
Total				25,900

Table 6: Example – Rate Card (Resource-Based Quotation)

Role	Daily rate (EUR/day)	Hourly rate (EUR/hour, optional)	Short description of role
Project Manager	900	112.50	Overall coordination and liaison

Technical Expert	700	87.50	Technical lead on energy audits
------------------	-----	-------	---------------------------------

Table 7: Example - Resource Plan (Monthly Allocation)

Month / Phase	Deliverable ID	Role	Days	Daily rate (EUR/day)	Cost (EUR)
Month 1	D1	Project Manager	5	900	4,500
Month 1	D1	Technical Expert	8	700	5,600
Month 2	D2	Analyst	12	450	5,400

6.3 Terms of this RFP

1. Your proposal should be submitted according to the instructions as detailed in this section and should be valid for a period of at least ninety (90) days from the bid due date. Any proposal submitted outside the scope defined may be rejected without provision for re-submission.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Entering into contractual arrangements with Climate-KIC in connection with this RFP does not guarantee work will be awarded.
5. Climate-KIC/GARAC reserves the right to reject any proposal(s) received after the submission date/time.
6. Climate-KIC/GARAC reserves the right to undertake post-bid negotiations with none, all or a shortlist of bidders.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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.

10. 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.