



NZC CESF Procurement RFP

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

SGA-MCCC-025 Aachen

Date: 19 May 2026

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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: Design and Operationalisation of a Municipal Climate Fund for the City of Aachen

Date: 19 May 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 requested	Climate-KIC seeks to appoint a qualified supplier to provide targeted financial and structuring expertise to the City of Aachen, with the primary objective of advancing the design and operationalisation of a municipal climate fund as a key instrument of the Climate City Contract (CCC). The assignment focuses on supporting the transition of the climate fund from an initial concept stage to implementation readiness, building on existing work developed by the City and its partners.
The legal entity requesting these goods and/or services	Stitching Climate-KIC International Foundation
Services will be delivered to the following locations	Aachen (Germany) Services will be delivered remotely to the following locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aachen (Germany) Some onsite services may be required at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aachen (Germany)
Climate-KIC Contact Points for Proposals and Inquiries /Contract Manager	Luisa Carretti Mateusz Hoffmann CESF Manager CESF@netzerocities.eu
Proposed contract term for successful candidates	Starting from July 2026 – (6/8 months)

Table 1: Procurement executive summary

1.2 Timelines

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

Planned Date*	Milestones
19 May 2026	RFP issued to bidders
02 June 2026 (23:59 CEST Time)	Deadline to submit questions
09 June 2026 (23:59 CEST Time)	Bidders submit proposals / Submission Deadline
19/21 June 2026	Assessment results announcement (subject to finished evaluations and selection of a winner)

Planned Date*	Milestones
Proposed contract start date for successful supplier	01 July 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

In March 2024, the city of Aachen submitted its Climate City Contract (CCC) with a total of 134 commitments from the urban community actors. In October 2024, Aachen's CCC was awarded the EU Mission Label. This important milestone marked the beginning of the collaboration with the Climate City Capital Hub (The Hub)¹ within NetZeroCities (NZC) and the finance experts responsible for Aachen. In October 2024, the Capital Hub kick-off took place in Aachen with the Aachen Transition Team, representatives from the NZC consortium and European Investment Bank (EIB). The Hub's support services and the EIB's offerings for mission cities were presented and discussed.

As all cities in the EU Mission for Cities, the city of Aachen faces the major task of implementing its Climate City Contract (CCC) ([link to English version](#)) ([link to German version](#)). One of the biggest challenges in this regard is finding suitable and smart financing solutions for the climate action measures. These can consist of municipal loans, subsidies, public financing, venture capital, private capital, or a combination of several of these options. A total of approximately **EUR 7.2 billion has been calculated in Aachen's investment plan**, which must be raised citywide to implement the city's CCC and achieve climate neutrality until 2030.

As Aachen is located in a structurally weak region and in the "Rheinisches Revier", the city can also draw on funding and financing from the Rheinisches Revier structural change fund, the Just Transition Fund (JTF), and the ERDF, in addition to the generally available funding and financing options.

The CCC's catalogue of measures is extremely heterogeneous. Specifically, it includes measures taken by the city administration (IKSK 2.0), municipal holdings, and the 134 local actors committed to climate action. Since its submission, the group of commitment providers has grown to 158 and is expected to continue to grow.

In addition, there is many unspecified actions that must be implemented by the entire local community, such as converting the heating supply, renovating buildings, etc., for which capital is also required.

In IKSK 2.0, the measure "Establishment of a climate fund at Sparkasse and Volksbank in cooperation with the climate agency and funding management" was formulated and politically decided upon.

Description of this measure:

The city of Aachen is supporting Sparkasse and Volksbank in setting up a fund to finance local climate protection projects. Projects to be funded make a direct contribution to GHG reduction. The climate fund promotes local investments and innovations for greenhouse gas reduction. The amount of funding for greenhouse gas reduction measures is based on the number of emissions saved or offset. Criteria for deposits and the promotion of climate protection measures (e.g., social impact) are being developed for this fund.

Status of the city's work on financing aspects:

A dedicated working group comprising CCC partners has developed an initial concept for the fund, which will be made available to the subcontractor as a basis for further development.

The requested support will specifically cover the further development of the fund's governance structure, investment and allocation criteria, operational processes and implementation roadmap. The aim is to prepare the fund to the greatest extent possible during the support phase so that it can be implemented without delay following approval.

The support to the City of Aachen requires a close cooperation between the subcontractor (selected as a result of this request) and the Capital Hub (resourced already). To ensure effective use of CESF resources and clear coordination with existing EU Mission support structures, the roles of the Hub and the subcontractor are clearly defined, highlighting that the City of Aachen acts as the operational counterpart and validates the results.

Role of the subcontractor will be as follows:

The subcontractor provides embedded, financial expertise to the City of Aachen with the objective of advancing the Aachen climate fund to implementation readiness.

The subcontractor is responsible for translating strategic guidance from the Hub into locally implementable fund design and supports the preparation of key operational elements required for the fund's launch.

The structured coordination between the CESF subcontractor and the Capital Hub will ensure that Aachen's financing approaches are aligned with EU Mission methodologies while being adapted to local institutional, financial, and political conditions.

In contrast to the subcontractor role, the role of Capital Hub will continue to be providing strategic, methodological, and EU-level support to the City of Aachen and its partners. In this capacity the hub will continue guiding the city on climate finance approaches aligned with the EU Mission, EU taxonomy, and relevant EU financial instruments. Act as a strategic coordination and strategic coordination and advisory counterpart vis-à-vis the City of Aachen and *Geschäftsstelle Klimaneutrales Aachen 2030* in the frame of its strategic advisory function on climate finance approaches within the EU Mission.

3.2 Scope

Climate KIC, acting on behalf of NetZeroCities is requesting proposals are requesting quotation on the following scope.

The finance expert will provide targeted support to the City of Aachen, with a primary focus on advancing the implementation of the municipal climate fund as a key instrument of the Climate City Contract (CCC).

The support addresses a critical capacity gap in advancing the municipal climate fund from concept stage to implementation readiness.

TASK 1. Support for IKSK Measure: “Establishment of a Climate Fund for the City of Aachen”: Operationalisation

The City of Aachen will be supported in the conception, structuring, and implementation of a municipal climate fund in line with Measure Governance 1.1.2.2 of the Integrated Climate Protection Concept (IKSK 1.0) and Measure 4.2 of the priority list for IKSK 2.0.

The support is delivered through a complementary division of roles between the Capital Hub and a subcontractor, as outlined below.

The objective is to advance the fund from concept stage to implementation readiness.

Role of the Subcontractor (Embedded Operational Support) The subcontractor acts as embedded financial expertise to the City of Aachen and supports the practical development and local anchoring of the municipal climate fund. In particular, the subcontractor will:

- Support the City in the conception and structuring of the climate fund, building on strategic input from the Capital Hub, through clearly defined advisory and structuring activities, with final design and decision-making responsibility remaining with the City of Aachen
- Support the development of key operational elements (governance, allocation logic, decision-making procedures and funding criteria)
- Contribute to defining the organisational setup of the fund, including management structures, roles and operational responsibilities
- **Facilitate coordination** of inputs from municipal departments and local stakeholders to build support for the establishment of the fund as mandated by the City/Geschäftsstelle within the timeframe of the contract duration.
- Contribute to the preparation and communication of up to 6 decision-making documents for committees and political resolutions, in cooperation with the Hub, within the timeframe of contract duration.

The subcontractor shall act strictly within the assigned scope of work, shall not engage political advocacy and shall not establish parallel coordination or decision-making structures.

Role of the Capital Hub (Strategic and Technical Advisory)

The Hub acts as a strategic and technical advisor to the City of Aachen, contributes EU-level expertise and reference knowledge to inform the city's decision-making processes. In particular, the Capital Hub will:

- Advise on the overall concept, objectives, and financial structure of the municipal climate fund
- Share reference models and lessons learned for the fund's governance, allocation mechanisms, and evaluation framework
- Advise on eligibility and selection criteria for projects supported by the fund
- Provide methodological input for analyzing financing needs and priority fields as defined by the City of Aachen
- Provide advisory comments and/or inputs on draft decision-making documents prepared by City of Aachen and subcontractor to support alignment within the EU Mission

TASK 2. Resource Mobilisation and Financial Viability of the Climate Fund Role of the Subcontractor

- Identification and structuring of relevant funding and contribution sources (e.g. public funding, sponsorships, private donations and local partners)
- Assessment of options to support the initial setup and operational phase of the fund
- Support in aligning existing funding programmes and financing instruments with the fund's co-financing logic
- Structured and targeted engagement with local financial institutions and partners (e.g. Sparkasse, Aachener Bank, NRW.Bank) with a focus on their role as contributors or co-financing partners
- Contribution to defining a viable financial setup, including the interaction between donations, public funding, and project-level co-financing
- Support in assessing the medium-term sustainability and scalability of the fund
- **Role of the Hub (Strategic and Technical Advisory):**
- Analysis of the funding landscape overall and at EU level for a Fund of this type
- Identification of suitable funding programs, financing instruments and private capital sources for similar Funds
- Development of tailored financing structures considering project size, eligibility for funding, and co-financing requirements
- Advice on possibilities for co-financing, guarantees, or participation models

The City of Aachen will make available to the subcontractor, from the beginning of the assignment, the relevant existing documentation, financial and stakeholder information, and background materials necessary for the execution of the tasks described under Task 1 and Task 2.

Point of Contact for the City with the Climate City Capital Hub

This coordination role is complementary and does not constitute a standalone workstream with separate deliverables.

- Support coordination and information exchange between the City of Aachen and the Capital Hub in the framework of the EU Mission and its CCC. The subcontractor contributes to information sharing and alignment, while the City of Aachen remains the primary counterpart for strategic direction, engagement and validation.
- This role is performed in close collaboration, coordination, and regular information sharing with the city and the Capital Hub dedicated team for Aachen. In doing so, they act as an interface between Aachen stakeholders and city departments and external institutions, especially *Geschäftsstelle Klimaneutrales Aachen 2030*.

3.3 Timeframe and Effort

The support should begin as soon as possible (01 July 2026) to maintain and continue the ongoing discussions and contacts with local banks, Capital Hub and other finance experts.

The support is expected to be approximately 60 working days over six to eight months, allowing sufficient time to advance the operationalization of the climate fund and ensure continuity within the City of Aachen team.

1. Phase 1, (approx. months 1–2): The support will start with a short consolidation phase focusing on the existing climate fund concept and key open questions.
2. Phase 2, (approx. months 3–6): The main part of the assignment will focus on developing the operational and financial setup of the fund, including alignment with relevant stakeholders (e.g. City of Aachen, Geschäftsstelle Klimaneutrales Aachen 2030, CCC-partners working group climate fund)
3. Phase 3 (approx. months 6–8): In the final stage the results will be consolidated and prepared to enable the next steps towards implementation.

On-site Meetings

The delivery of the support will involve regular coordination with the City of Aachen, the Capital Hub, and relevant stakeholders.

Meetings and exchanges may take place in both virtual and in-person formats, as appropriate to ensure effective collaboration and progress. On-site presence may be required on an ad hoc basis, where it adds value to the development and alignment of the climate fund.

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 city advisors and experts (who are resourced already and do not have to be represented in a financial offer) are to be engaged (together with the City) on baseline briefings, the overarching strategic approach within which this assignment takes place, as well as for sharing good practices from other cities, where relevant.

3.4 Indicative Budget

Climate-KIC expects proposals to reflect a proportionate level of effort in line with the indicative workload described in this Request for Proposal (approximately 60 working days over 6–8 months).

For reference, the indicative budget range for this assignment is expected to be between EUR 75,000 and EUR 80,000 excluding VAT, if applicable.

This budget range is expected to cover all costs related to the delivery of the assignment, including travel and subsistence costs where applicable.

3.5 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:

- Operational financial expertise
- Experience in the banking sector and private capital markets
- Working knowledge of various financing instruments and mixed financing solutions
- Experience in development of financing and funding solutions for major investments
- Experience in dealing with administration and local politics
- Developing and delivering analytical and audience-friendly reports
- Adherence to evaluation professional ethics and quality standards
- Project and financial management showcasing on time and on budget delivery
- Written and spoken local language competency in German and English

3.6 Deliverables

The expected support is embedded, operational financial expertise for the city of Aachen.

The reporting on progress will be limited to final report only, as the support is operational (not focused on delivering a document), work time – limited to 5 days a month and the scope.

The subcontractor will coordinate with the Capital Hub to ensure alignment on the delivery of services and scope of work, with responsibility for deliverables and validation resting with the City of Aachen.

Deliverable 1: Draft Climate Fund Setup (intermediate output)

During the course of the assignment (Phase 2), the subcontractor will develop a draft version of the climate fund setup as an intermediate output supporting the operationalisation of Task 1 and Task 2.

This draft will set out the key elements of the fund design, including in particular:

- an initial proposal for the governance structure, organisational setup and roles
- the proposed allocation logic and funding approach
- a preliminary financial and resource structure, including identification of potential funding and contribution sources
- initial considerations on operational processes and decision-making procedures

The draft will be developed in close coordination with the City of Aachen and the Capital Hub and will serve as a structured basis for discussion, alignment and further refinement.

The draft should be sufficiently detailed to:

- allow the City of Aachen to assess the feasibility of the proposed setup
- support internal discussion and preliminary decision-making
- identify key open issues to be addressed in the final phase

The draft may be developed in German only.

Deliverable 2: Final report on the Design and Operationalisation of the Aachen Climate Fund

Requirements:

Upon completion of the assignment, the supplier shall submit a Final Report consolidating the outputs developed under Task 1 (Climate Fund Operationalisation) and Task 2 (Resource Mobilisation and Financial Viability).

The report shall include, at minimum:

- a finalised and implementable concept for the climate fund structure, including governance, organisational setup, and operational processes (Task 1)
- a defined allocation logic, funding approach, and decision-making framework (Task 1)
- a structured financial and resource framework, including identified funding and contribution sources and considerations on financial viability (Task 2)
- a summary of engagement with relevant stakeholders and financial partners, where applicable (Task 2)
- a brief and actionable implementation roadmap outlining next steps towards the establishment and operational launch of the fund

The Final Report should build on Deliverable 1 and reflect the refinement and consolidation of the draft fund setup developed during Phase 2.

The report may be submitted in German only.

Deliverable 3: 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.

The report 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.

3.7 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.

3.8 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 × 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
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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.