NET ZERO CITIES

# NZC CESF Procurement RFP

## CESF Procurement of External Strategic Advisory Services for ClimaNET Governance, Business Model and Long-Term Positioning

### SGA3-MCCC-027 ClimaNET (Greek and Cyprot Cities)

Date: ~~11 August 2026~~ **UPDATE: 25 August 2026**

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**A list of Questions and Answers is published at the bottom of the RFP.**

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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:** On-Demand Advisory Services Supporting ClimaNET Governance, Business Model Development and Strategic Positioning

**Date:** ~~11 August 2026~~ **UPDATE: 25 August 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 | Climate-KIC, acting on behalf of NetZeroCities, is seeking external strategic advisory services to support ClimaNET in strengthening its governance framework, developing a sustainable organisational and business model, and defining its long-term strategic positioning. The selected supplier will work closely with ClimaNET and its member Mission Cities to assess the current organisational setup, engage key stakeholders, develop and test future governance and business model scenarios, and provide strategic recommendations to enhance ClimaNET's long-term sustainability and its role in supporting the climate neutrality transition across its network. |
| 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 | Athens (Greece)<br>Thessaloniki (Greece)<br>Ioannina (Greece)<br>Kalamata (Greece)<br>Kozani (Greece)<br>Trikala (Greece)<br>Limassol (Cyprus)<br>Services will be delivered remotely to the following locations:<br>• Greece and/or Cyprus<br>Some onsite services may be required at:<br>• Greece and/or Cyprus |
| Climate-KIC Contract Manager for submitting proposals and inquiries | Luisa Carretti<br>Mateusz Hoffman<br>CESF@netzerocities.eu |
| Proposed contract term for successful candidates | ~~01/05 October 2026~~<br>**UPDATE: 12/16 October 2026**<br><br>Expected duration: approximately 12 months |

**Table 1: Procurement executive summary**

## 1.2 Timelines

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

| Planned Date* | Milestones |
|---|---|
| 11 August 2026 | RFP issued to bidders |
| 25 August 2026 (23:59 CEST Time) | Deadline to submit questions |
| ~~**07 September 2026 (23:59 CEST Time)**~~ **UPDATE: 14 September 2026 (23:59 CEST Time)** | Bidders submit proposals / **Submission Deadline** |
| ~~18 September 2026~~ **UPDATE: 25 September 2026** | Assessment results announcement (subject to finished evaluations and selection of a winner) |
| ~~01/05 October 2026~~ **UPDATE: 12/16 October 2026** | Proposed contract start date |

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

**Table 2: Timeline table**

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

## 1.3 About Climate-KIC

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

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

## 1.4 About NetZeroCities

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

### 1.4.1 NZC Climate City Contracts (CCC)

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

### 1.4.2 NZC Pilot Cities Programme

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

### 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

ClimaNET (EGTC Clima Net Gr-Cy) is a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) established by seven Mission Cities: Athens, Thessaloniki, Ioannina, Kalamata, Kozani, Trikala, and Limassol (Cyprus). Registered in Greece and operating under the EU legal framework for EGTCs, ClimaNET provides a formal platform for cross-border cooperation between member cities on climate neutrality, urban resilience, and sustainable urban development.

The organisation is governed by a General Assembly composed of representatives of the member municipalities, supported by a Board of Directors and an executive coordination structure. Its mandate is to facilitate collaboration among member cities, support the implementation of Climate City Contracts (CCCs), develop and disseminate common methodologies and standards, coordinate joint initiatives and projects, mobilise funding opportunities, and provide technical and strategic support related to climate neutrality, energy transition, sustainable mobility, urban planning, digital transformation, and climate resilience.

ClimaNET operates as a complementary mechanism to municipal administrations and national frameworks, aiming to strengthen implementation capacity, promote knowledge exchange, and enable collective action across participating cities. Further details regarding ClimaNET's governance arrangements, statutory objectives, and operational procedures are contained in its founding agreement and bylaws. Given that these documents are internal working documents and currently available only in Greek, they will be made available to the successful contractor following contract award.

**While ClimaNET has a broad statutory mandate, its operational role, governance arrangements, and sustainable financing models are still emerging.** Moreover, ClimaNET includes both Greek and Cypriot participation (Limassol), introducing a cross-country dimension that affects governance, legitimacy, and positioning vis-à-vis national authorities. During the period covered by this assignment, ClimaNET is expected to focus on establishing itself as an operational support and coordination platform for its member cities. Priority functions include facilitating peer learning and knowledge exchange among member cities; supporting the implementation of Climate City Contracts (CCCs); identifying opportunities for joint project development and funding applications; and representing common city interests in national and European policy discussions;

At the same time, the policy and funding context for cities in Europe is entering a critical transition phase. Member States are preparing for the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and Cohesion Policy period (2028–2034), with preparatory work intensifying between 2025 and 2027. Future EU funding is expected to be more outcome- and performance-based, with stronger reliance on regions and cities to deliver national targets related to climate neutrality, energy efficiency, transport, and urban transformation.

In parallel, national coordination frameworks for climate neutrality are being consolidated at ministerial level, with a strong emphasis on ministry-led implementation, monitoring, and technical assistance for Mission Cities. Within this context, there is a clear need to demonstrate how ClimaNET can complement these structures by supporting implementation on the ground and reducing fragmentation between cities, programmes, and stakeholders.

In this context, ClimaNET and its member cities face a dual challenge and opportunity:

- In the **short term (2025–2027)**, cities need tangible support to access existing funding opportunities, advance Climate City Contracts (CCCs) implementation, and test ClimaNET’s added value as a coordination and service vehicle.
- In the **medium to long term (2028–2034)**, ClimaNET needs to position itself as a credible, strategic partner for the national governments of Greece and Cyprus, and the European Commission, capable of supporting cities in implementing CCCs, aggregating local needs and

projects, and contributing to national objectives through complementary, implementation-facing support of national plans under the next MFF.

## 3.2 Scope

Climate KIC, acting on behalf of NetZeroCities, is requesting proposals to **support ClimaNET and its member cities across two horizons: delivering immediate benefits, while laying out the groundwork for ClimaNET's role in the next EU programming period.**

The scope of this assignment combines **short-term operational support** for ClimaNET and Greek and Cypriot Mission Cities with **medium-long-term assessment of ClimaNET's feasibility, relevance and added value, and recommendations for its operational and strategic positioning** as a credible partner under the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework (2028–2034):

- In the short term, the scope focuses on delivering tangible value for cities, including initial business model proposals for ClimaNET;
- In the medium–long term, the scope supports ClimaNET in clarifying its role, governance, and value proposition vis-à-vis national authorities, and EU institutions, with a view to position the network as a credible partner, capable of supporting cities in implementing CCCs, aggregating local needs and projects, and contributing to national objectives through complementary, implementation-facing support of national plans under the next MFF.

In addition, the assignment should strengthen ClimaNET's governance and collective decision-making arrangements. This includes ensuring meaningful engagement of both ClimaNET's operational representatives and board-level city leadership throughout the assignment, clarifying how collective priorities and decisions are established within ClimaNET, and how board-level strategic direction is translated into operational implementation. The assignment should also help ensure that ClimaNET's strategic development reflects the collective priorities of its member cities and supports constructive alignment with relevant national coordination and support mechanisms.

Key stakeholders involved in or affected by this work include:

- ClimaNET governance bodies, including the Board of Directors and General Assembly, and the executive coordination structure and secretariat
- Greek and Cypriot Mission Cities and their political leadership, including mayors and/or other board-level representatives, as well as their technical and operational representatives
- Relevant national ministries and managing authorities (e.g. environment, finance, EU funds)
- NetZeroCities and its Mission Platform partners
- CapaCITIES and other national coordination mechanisms
- Potential European-level interlocutors (e.g. European Commission services, European Urban Initiative, Interreg actors)
- Unions and associations of municipalities (e.g. national and regional municipal associations)
- Private sector and ecosystem actors (e.g. utilities, investors, SMEs, solution providers), particularly where engaged through city-led or project-based initiative.

The supplier's proposal should include a clear methodology for engaging different levels of ClimaNET's governance and membership, including operational focal points and board-level city leadership. The methodology should explain how inputs from these different levels will be gathered, reconciled where necessary, and reflected in the analysis and recommendations.

## 3.3 Phased Tasks / Activities

The work is expected to follow a phased approach, combining immediate, practical outputs with forward looking strategic recommendations.

### 3.3.1 Phase 1: Diagnosis (October - January 2027)

**Objective**
Understand current context, opportunities, and constraints for Greek and Cypriot Mission Cities and ClimaNET, focusing on immediate EU funding opportunities (2021–2027) and organisational readiness.

**Activities**

- Conduct analysis of ClimaNET governance, statutes/bylaws, organisational setup, decision-making processes, and operational readiness to identify constraints and opportunities for implementation and service delivery. The analysis should explicitly assess how collective priorities and decisions are established within ClimaNET, the respective roles and interaction between board-level and operational representatives, and how board-level strategic direction is translated into operational implementation.
- Engage directly with board-level representatives and/or mayors, as well as operational representatives of member cities, as part of the governance diagnosis. The supplier should assess whether current governance and representation mechanisms enable effective collective decision-making and strategic oversight across member cities, and identify any risks associated with decision-making being concentrated primarily at operational level without sufficient board-level engagement or oversight.
- Review existing ministry-led coordination and technical assistance structures in Greece and Cyprus relevant to Mission Cities, including interfaces, complementarities, and non-duplication opportunities for ClimaNET.
    - Assess implications of ClimaNET's **cross-country composition (Greece–Cyprus)** for governance, positioning, and institutional recognition.
- Assess how ClimaNET's governance and decision-making arrangements can support constructive alignment between the collective priorities of member cities and relevant national coordination, policy, and technical assistance structures in Greece and Cyprus.
- Conduct a light benchmarking and market scan of comparable national or city-led platforms in other Member States, focusing on services offered, governance models, funding mechanisms, and institutional positioning relevant to ClimaNET.
- Conduct targeted consultations with Greek and Cypriot Mission Cities (Athens, Ioannina, Kalamata, Kozani, Limassol, Thessaloniki, Trikala) to gather input on current priorities, implementation needs, expectations regarding ClimaNET, and opportunities for collaboration. The consultation methodology should ensure engagement at both operational and board/political level, including dedicated engagement with mayors and/or other board-level representatives, as appropriate. The supplier should clearly distinguish between the perspectives and expectations of operational representatives and those of political/board-level leadership, and identify areas of alignment or divergence.
-

Engagement should primarily take place through online meetings and interviews and may include one in-person workshop to validate initial findings, discuss common priorities, and inform the diagnosis of ClimaNET's current role, service needs, and organisational readiness. Where possible, the workshop should be organised alongside planned NetZeroCities events or other relevant events to maximise participation and minimise costs. At least one dedicated board-level meeting or workshop should be organised during Phase 1 to discuss the governance diagnosis, collective priorities, and the strategic role of ClimaNET.

**Inputs to be provided by NetZeroCities**
To support this phase, NetZeroCities will undertake parallel internal work, including a review of relevant European and national policy and strategic documents, an assessment of funding opportunities relevant to Mission Cities and Climate City Contract implementation, and stakeholder engagement activities at national and European levels. Relevant findings and materials generated through this work will be made available to the contractor on the commence date.

The contractor is expected to build on these inputs and focus on the targeted organisational, governance, benchmarking, and business-model analyses required to assess ClimaNET's positioning, operational readiness, and future development options.

### 3.3.2 Phase 2: Stakeholder Engagement & Business Model Development (January/February - April 2027)

**Objective**
Support ClimaNET in defining strategic priorities and developing viable options for its future operating and business model through targeted stakeholder consultation, iterative review, and validation with designated representatives of member cities and key stakeholders.

**Activities**

- Develop and assess a minimum of 3 potential business model scenarios for ClimaNET, building on the benchmarking and market scan conducted under Phase 1, including:
    - Definition of potential service offers (e.g. funding intelligence, project aggregation, coordination, technical assistance, capacity-building services, mobilisation of public and private finance for CCC implementation);
    - Assessment of governance, organisational, and operational arrangements required to deliver these services;
    - Identification and segmentation of potential client and beneficiary groups (e.g. Greek and Cypriot Mission Cities, other municipalities, regions, national bodies, and partner organisations);
    - Analysis of market demand, willingness to pay, and potential revenue streams;
    - Assessment of legal, institutional, and organisational constraints and enabling factors;
    - Development and comparison of alternative business model scenarios, including recommendations on the most viable pathway for ClimaNET’s medium- and long-term sustainability.
- Present and discuss emerging business model options and strategic priorities with Greek and Cypriot Mission Cities, the ClimaNET Task Force, and board-level representatives of member cities, as appropriate, to gather feedback, validate assumptions, and refine proposed service offers, governance arrangements, and implementation scenarios. The engagement methodology should ensure that both operational representatives and board-level city leadership are involved in reviewing and validating the proposed strategic priorities and business model options. At least one dedicated board-level meeting or workshop should be organised during Phase 2 to review the emerging business model scenarios, strategic priorities, and governance implications, and to support alignment on the preferred direction for ClimaNET.

Engagement should primarily take place through online meetings and interviews, complemented by one in-person workshop focused on reviewing and refining the proposed business model scenarios and strategic recommendations. Where possible, the workshop should be organised alongside an existing NetZeroCities, Mission Cities, or other relevant national event to maximise participation and minimise costs. The supplier shall include in its financial proposal all travel and accommodation costs associated with its own personnel's participation in these workshops. The supplier shall not be responsible for covering travel, accommodation, or participation costs incurred by city representatives or other stakeholders.

**Inputs to be provided by NetZeroCities**
NetZeroCities will support the establishment of a small ClimaNET Task Force composed of designated operational representatives of member cities to act as the primary counterpart for the day-to-day coordination, review, and validation of this phase of work. The Task Force will complement, and not replace, engagement with ClimaNET's board-level governance structures. Board-level representatives and/or mayors will be engaged at appropriate milestones to provide strategic direction and validate key findings and recommendations.
The supplier will present draft findings and recommendations to the Task Force for review and validation. The assignment is expected to include up to **two structured feedback and revision rounds**. Validation by the Task Force shall constitute acceptance of outputs and will not require individual approval from all

member cities. Where outputs have implications for ClimaNET's strategic direction, governance, or long-term positioning, the supplier shall also present these findings to the relevant board-level representatives for strategic discussion and alignment.

In parallel, NetZeroCities will provide strategic support through its engagement with relevant national, regional, and European stakeholders. This may include identifying key stakeholders and institutional entry points relevant to ClimaNET, providing insights on perceptions, expectations, and positioning considerations, facilitating introductions where appropriate, and supporting discussions related to ClimaNET's role within the broader climate governance and implementation landscape. Relevant findings and insights generated through these activities will be shared with the supplier to inform the development and assessment of business model options.

Additionally, NetZeroCities will facilitate coordination with ClimaNET and relevant stakeholders to identify appropriate moments and existing events for conducting in-person consultations, workshops, and validation sessions during the assignment.

### 3.3.3 Phase 3: Strategic Positioning for the Next EU Programming Period (October 2026 – September 2027)

**Objective**
Position ClimaNET as a complementary, implementation-facing coordination and aggregation mechanism in the 2028–2034 MFF, supporting cities' efforts and contributing to national objectives.

**Activities**

- Analyse emerging policy and funding trends relevant to cities under the 2028–2034 EU programming period, including potential implications for Climate City Contract implementation, urban climate investment, and city support mechanisms.
- Assess the implications of different future policy and funding scenarios for ClimaNET's potential role, services, governance arrangements, and sustainability.
- Define and compare alternative positioning scenarios for ClimaNET within the evolving national and European climate governance landscape, including different levels of alignment with national authorities and implementation structures.
- Engage with ClimaNET's board-level representatives and member cities to discuss and validate the implications of alternative strategic positioning scenarios, including their implications for ClimaNET's relationship with national authorities and existing ministry-led coordination and support mechanisms. The engagement should support alignment between ClimaNET's strategic direction, the collective priorities of its member cities, and opportunities for constructive complementarity with national structures.
-

At least one dedicated board-level meeting or workshop should be organised during Phase 3 to discuss the recommended strategic positioning and its implications for ClimaNET's future role, partnerships, governance, and alignment with national and European implementation frameworks.

**Inputs to be provided by NetZeroCities**
In parallel to this phase, NetZeroCities, in coordination with CapaCITIES and relevant partners, will support policy dialogue and advocacy activities related to the future policy, legislative, and funding framework for climate-neutral cities, including discussions concerning the 2028–2034 EU programming period and the preparation of National and Regional Partnership Plans in Greece and Cyprus.

NetZeroCities will use the evidence, scenarios, and recommendations developed under this assignment to inform broader engagement with national ministries, managing authorities, European institutions, and other relevant stakeholders. This may include translating analytical findings into advocacy and policy-positioning materials, facilitating dialogue with relevant actors, and assessing opportunities to align ClimaNET's future services and operating model with national Climate City Contract implementation priorities and existing coordination mechanisms.

Relevant insights and outcomes from these activities will be shared with the supplier, where appropriate, to support the refinement of positioning scenarios and strategic recommendations.

**Activities/Tasks Excluded from the Assignment**
For clarity, the following services are specifically excluded from the assignment:

- The supplier will not be responsible for implementing Climate City Contract (CCC) actions, managing projects, or delivering infrastructure or pilot activities.
- The supplier may analyse ClimaNET's legal and organisational framework but will not provide formal legal opinions or act as legal counsel.
- The assignment is time-bound and strategic; it does not include ongoing operational roles, staffing, or long-term management functions within ClimaNET.
- While targeted workshops and consultations are expected, broader communication campaigns, branding strategies, or public outreach activities are not included.
- The supplier may provide facilitation, convening, agenda development, logistical support, and analytical input for consultations and discussions involving ClimaNET, its member cities, board-level representatives, and relevant stakeholders. However, strategic mediation between ClimaNET, its board-level representatives, national authorities, and other institutional stakeholders remains the responsibility of NetZeroCities and the contracting team. The supplier will not be expected to act as an independent mediator or negotiate institutional or political agreements on behalf of ClimaNET or NetZeroCities.
- While the supplier will support ClimaNET's efforts in positioning its role in the context of MFF 2028+, direct representation of ClimaNET before national and regional authorities is not included in the scope of services.

## 3.4 Milestones

This support is designed as a **feasibility and positioning exercise**, aiming to assess under which conditions ClimaNET can operate as a relevant and sustainable coordination and service platform, while supporting Greek and Cypriot cities in advancing the implementation of their Climate City Contracts (CCCs).

The support will combine **analytical support, strategic guidance, coordination, and facilitation by NetZeroCities** with complementary external expertise (to be procured separately).

NetZeroCities will focus on framing, alignment, and stakeholder engagement across three phases of work, matching the phases of work requested from the supplier:
(1) Diagnosis,
(2) Stakeholder engagement and business model development, and
(3) Long-term strategic positioning.

The services are expected to be delivered according to the following (indicative) milestones:

| Milestone | Time frame |
|---|---|
| Phase 1 – Diagnosis | October 2026 – January 2027 |
| Phase 2 – Stakeholder Engagement & Business Model Testing | January/February 2027 – April 2027 |
| Phase 3 – Strategic Positioning for the Next Eu Programming Period **(running in parallel to the other phases)** | October 2026 – September 2027 |

Phases 1 and 2 include stakeholder consultations, development of business model scenarios, review by the ClimaNET Task Force and up to two structured feedback and revision rounds prior to finalisation of recommendations.
The selected bidder is expected to engage with experts from the NetZeroCities consortium regularly (NZC experts are resourced already). The supplier will be explicitly required to:

- Engage with NetZeroCities task coordination team throughout the assignment through bi-weekly check-ins.
- Ensure that deliverables align with Mission branding, identity, and lessons learned from other Mission Cities.
- Collaborate with NetZeroCities, specifically City Advisors, City Finance Specialist and staff in charge of supporting the Greek and Cypriot national platform work, to ensure coherence between the work of the supplier and other streams of support NetZeroCities is providing to Greek and Cypriot Mission Cities.
- Coordinate with NetZeroCities, specifically City Advisors, City Finance Specialist and staff in charge of supporting the Greek and Cypriot national platform work, to engage all key stakeholders, as NetZeroCities is also in touch with them on parallel topics.
- Align materials produced during the assignment with advocacy efforts and other events and webinars organised by NetZeroCities.

## 3.4 Expected Budget

The maximum budget available for the support is EURO 65.000,00 (VAT excluded).

The assignment is expected to be delivered primarily through remote collaboration, with a maximum of two in-person workshops to be held in Greece and/or Cyprus during the course of the assignment. Travel and accommodation costs for the Supplier's personnel shall be included in the financial proposal. Bidders are expected to propose the team composition they consider most appropriate to deliver the assignment and must show a breakdown of proposed team roles, effort allocation and applicable day rates, including involvement of any specialist / external experts insofar as they deem relevant.

## 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:

- Practical experience with EU funding instruments (e.g. Cohesion Policy, Just Transition Fund, Interreg, Horizon Europe), particularly as implemented or accessed in Greece and Cyprus.
- Excellent understanding of the workings of municipalities in Greece and Cyprus.
- Apability to speak fluent Greek and English (C1).
- In-depth experience collaborating with cities, regional authorities, and national stakeholders in Greece and Cyprus on strategic planning, funding access, or programme implementation.
- Ability to deliver high-quality analytical work, including policy analysis, funding landscape assessments, and development of actionable recommendations tailored to the national contexts of Greece and Cyprus.
- Experience facilitating governance and decision-making processes involving both political/board-level leadership and operational representatives, ideally in the context of city networks, public entities, multi-city platforms, or multi-level governance structures.
- Familiarity with key challenges faced by cities in implementing climate neutrality strategies, including governance, financing, and cross-sector coordination.
- Ability to design and facilitate workshops, and consultations with cities in Greece and Cyprus.

- Ability to design and facilitate engagement processes that effectively involve both political/board-level representatives and technical or operational stakeholders, and to translate inputs from these different levels into coherent strategic recommendations.
- Ability to analyse and draw lessons from comparable initiatives, networks, or institutional models across European contexts.
- Ensure objectivity of the process, supporting critical reflection on ClimaNET's feasibility rather than promoting a predefined outcome.

## 3.6 Deliverables

The following deliverables are requested – all are to be delivered in English.

Unless otherwise agreed, all deliverables shall be submitted in an editable electronic format (e.g. Microsoft Word). Deliverables may be submitted in Greek (with the exception of the final CESF report). However, they must not be provided solely as scanned or non-editable documents, to enable internal review, translation, and reuse by NetZeroCities and ClimaNET.

The following deliverables are requested:

**DELIVERABLE 1: Diagnosis (Phase 1) - in Greek language**

- Short analytical note on ClimaNET's current legal and organisational readiness (about 10–15 pages), including an assessment of governance and decision-making arrangements, the respective roles of board-level and operational representatives, the effectiveness of current mechanisms for collective city decision-making and strategic oversight, and any identified risks or gaps in board-level engagement. The note should reflect input gathered through consultations with both operational representatives and board-level city leadership.
- Short benchmarking note summarising relevant service models, governance arrangements, and funding approaches from comparable national or city-led platforms in other Member States (about 20-30 pages).

**DELIVERABLE 2: Stakeholder Engagement & Business Model Development (Phase 2) - in Greek language**

The supplier shall submit a draft report for review by the ClimaNET Task Force. The report will be subject to up to two structured feedback and revision rounds before submission of the final version.

- Summary of stakeholder consultations and key findings regarding priorities, needs, expectations, and opportunities for collaboration among ClimaNET members and relevant stakeholders in Greece and Cyprus.
- Proposed strategic priorities and guiding principles for ClimaNET's future development, informed by stakeholder consultations with operational representatives and board-level city leadership, and reviewed and validated through the ClimaNET Task Force and relevant board-level governance structures.
- Recommended service portfolio for ClimaNET, including an assessment of the value proposition for different target groups.
- Assessment of governance, organisational, and operational arrangements required to deliver the proposed services.
- Analysis of potential client and beneficiary groups, market demand, willingness to pay, and potential revenue streams.
- Assessment of key legal, institutional, organisational, and financial constraints and enabling factors.
- Comparison of alternative business model scenarios, including associated opportunities, risks, resource implications, and sustainability considerations.
- Recommendation of a preferred business model scenario and justification for its selection.
- High-level operational roadmap for implementation of the recommended scenario, including:

- Indicative staffing requirements;
- Indicative financial and resource requirements;
- Key implementation milestones and sequencing;
- Capacity-development considerations.

**DELIVERABLE 3: Strategic Positioning Report for ClimaNET (Phase 3) - in Greek language**

- Forward-looking analysis of the 2028–2034 EU policy and funding landscape relevant to climate-neutral cities.
- Assessment of the implications of alternative policy and funding scenarios for ClimaNET's future role and sustainability.
- Comparison of alternative positioning scenarios for ClimaNET within the evolving national and European climate governance landscape.
- Recommended positioning approach and supporting rationale, informed by engagement with ClimaNET's board-level representatives and member cities and reflecting the collective strategic priorities identified through the assignment.
- Strategic recommendations, inlcuding on advocacy and communications, regarding ClimaNET's future role, partnerships, service offer, and alignment with national and European implementation frameworks.
- Key considerations for institutional and financial sustainability.

**DELIVERABLE 4: 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/ies 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.
- In English, using Dutch technical terminology and nomenclature as required, with translation of Dutch-language terminology and nomenclature to English.

Deliverables 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 x 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 (p*lease 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 0
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 English and 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 3/3.8 (Scope of Work/Deliverables).
   The financial proposal shall be submitted as a fixed-price quotation covering the full scope of the assignment. Unless expressly stated otherwise in the Request for Proposal, no additional costs, expenses or fees (including travel, accommodation, subsistence, overheads, administrative costs or any other incidental expenses) shall be reimbursed by Climate-KIC during contract implementation.

   Each row of the Main Quote Table 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.

The subtotal for each deliverable shall be fully traceable to the corresponding effort and daily rates presented in the Resource Plan (Table 7) and Rate Card (Table 6).

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 (including subcontractors or external specialists, where applicable.) 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. The total cost shown in the Resource Plan shall reconcile with the total quotation submitted in Table 5.

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 costs required for the delivery of the assignment shall be fully included in the fixed-price quotation and clearly itemised. No additional reimbursement of travel or accommodation costs will be made during contract implementation. Time spent travelling is not considered billable. Bidders 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. The quotation shall be signed by an authorised representative of the supplier.
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. The bidder shall also declare any potential conflict of interest that could reasonably be perceived to affect the impartial performance of the assignment.

### 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 0. 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 0 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 0 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.
18. Following notification of the procurement outcome, Climate-KIC will observe a standstill period of seven (7) calendar days before entering into the contract with the successful bidder. During this period, unsuccessful bidders may submit a written request for clarification regarding the evaluation outcome or request a review of the evaluation process where they consider that the procurement procedure has not been conducted in accordance with the provisions of this Request for Proposal. Any such request must be submitted in writing within the standstill period to the CESF Contract Manager, **Luisa Carretti**, by email at **CESF@netzerocities.eu**. Climate-KIC will consider all requests received before proceeding with contract signature. Upon expiry of the standstill period and provided that no outstanding review requests remain under consideration, Climate-KIC may proceed with the contract award and execution.

# List of Questions and Answers

**SGA3-MCCC-027-ClimaNET**

| Questions | Answers |
|---|---|
| Q1. Language of deliverables<br>Section 3.6 initially states that all deliverables are to be delivered in English. However, Deliverables 1, 2 and 3 are subsequently specified as being in Greek.<br>Could you please confirm:<br>• whether Deliverables 1–3 should be submitted in Greek;<br>• whether Deliverable 4, the CESF Delivery Report, should be submitted in English; and<br>• whether English-language executive summaries of Deliverables 1–3 will also be required. | • Deliverables 1–3 should be submitted in Greek;<br>• Deliverable 4, the CESF Delivery Report, should be submitted in English;<br>• English-language executive summaries of Deliverables 1–3 are not required as long as the deliverables are submitted in an editable electronic format. They must not be provided solely as scanned or non-editable documents, to enable internal review, translation, and reuse by NetZeroCities and ClimaNET. |

| Questions | Answers |
| --- | --- |
| Q2. In-person workshops and locations<br>The RFP refers to a maximum of two in-person workshops to be held in Greece and/or Cyprus, but their locations, indicative duration and expected participation are not specified.<br>To enable accurate planning and costing, could you please clarify:<br>• whether bidders should assume and budget for one of the workshops to take place in Cyprus;<br>• the indicative duration and expected number of participants for each workshop;<br>• whether the venues and local logistical arrangements will be provided by ClimaNET or NetZeroCities; and<br>• whether the selected supplier will be responsible only for the travel, accommodation and subsistence costs of its own team, with any costs incurred by city representatives and other stakeholders being covered separately. | • Bidders must include in their financial proposals only the travel, accommodation and subsistence costs associated with the participation of their own personnel in the in-person workshops;<br>• Bidders are not responsible for costs incurred by city representatives or other stakeholders participating in the workshops;<br>• Bidders should not include workshop logistics costs, such as venue hire or event-hosting costs, in their financial proposal;<br>• Where a workshop is organised alongside a planned NetZeroCities event, NetZeroCities will cover the relevant logistics costs;<br>• For workshops not linked to a NetZeroCities event, the relevant host city or organisation may be asked to provide a venue or otherwise host the session. NetZeroCities will facilitate coordination with ClimaNET and relevant stakeholders to identify suitable opportunities for in-person workshops;<br>• The supplier remains responsible for organising and facilitating the workshops, including coordinating their delivery, even when NetZeroCities or a host organisation supports the venue or other logistics;<br>• Cyprus is not a mandatory workshop location. Workshops may take place in Greece, Cyprus, or another appropriate location, depending on the relevant event and practical arrangements. The objective is to enable the broadest feasible representation of ClimaNET cities;<br>• There is no specified number of workshop days or expected number of participants per workshop. This will depend on the format, timing, location and constraints of the relevant event or host organisation. The supplier should coordinate with NetZeroCities, ClimaNET and relevant stakeholders to maximise appropriate ClimaNET city representation. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Q3. Access to key organisational documents<br>The RFP indicates that ClimaNET's founding agreement, statutes/bylaws and internal operational documents will be made available only to the successful contractor following contract award.<br>Since the nature and volume of these documents may affect the proposed methodology, level of effort and resource allocation, could you please provide:<br>• an indicative description of the number, type and approximate volume of the documents to be reviewed;<br>• confirmation as to whether ClimaNET already has an approved organisational structure, designated secretariat and operational coordination arrangements;<br>• confirmation as to whether the EGTC's legal establishment and operational activation have been fully completed; and<br>• an indicative list of the policy, funding, stakeholder-mapping and other background materials that NetZeroCities expects to provide at the commencement of the assignment. | • Below is an indicative list of documents that will be made available to the successful bidder:<br>  ○ ClimaNET Statute, approx. 25 pages, translated English version;<br>  ○ ClimaNET Joint Declaration 2025, approx. 2 pages, translated English version;<br>  ○ CapaCITIES 2.0 Action Plan for Greece with input from ClimaNET 2026, approx. 13 pages in English;<br>  ○ Requests for support to ClimaNET, approx. 20 pages;<br>  ○ ClimaNET Recommendations for European Social Climate Fund in Greece approx. 14 pages.<br>• The above list is indicative and additional documents may be provided by NetZeroCities and ClimaNET at the start of the assignment;<br>• ClimaNET has already an approved organisational structure and designated secretariat and operational coordination arrangements. However, as stated in the RfP, its operational role, governance arrangements, and sustainable financing models are still emerging and support to these is part of the scope of the supplier's assignment;<br>• The EGTC's legal establishment and operational activation have been fully completed C_202601850EN.000101.fmx.xml;<br>• At the commencement of the assignment, NetZeroCities is expected to provide:<br>  ○ An overview of the current funding landscape (EU, national) relevant to Mission Cities and ClimaNET (e.g., Cohesion Policy, Just Transition Fund, other relevant calls) and of relevant calls aligned with CCC priorities;<br>  ○ Preliminary list of existing ministry-led coordination and technical assistance structures, clarifying interfaces, complementarities, and non-duplication opportunities with ClimaNET; |

| Questions | Answers |
| --- | --- |
| | ○ The supplier is expected to build on these inputs and focus on the targeted organisational, governance, benchmarking, and business-model analyses required to assess ClimaNET's positioning, operational readiness, and future development options. |

| Questions | Answers |
| --- | --- |
| Q4. Review and acceptance of deliverables<br>Could you also please clarify the review and formal acceptance arrangements for Deliverables 1–4, including:<br>• the body or designated representative responsible for reviewing and formally accepting each deliverable;<br>• the number of review and revision rounds anticipated for Deliverables 1 and 3, given that up to two structured rounds are explicitly mentioned for Deliverable 2;<br>• the indicative period that will be available to the ClimaNET Task Force and other relevant bodies to provide consolidated comments; and<br>• whether validation by the ClimaNET Task Force will be sufficient for the formal acceptance of outputs relating to governance and strategic positioning, or whether additional approval by the Board of Directors, General Assembly or other board-level representatives will be required. | • The ClimaNET Task Force, supported by NetZeroCities representatives, will be responsible for reviewing and formally accepting Deliverables 1–4.<br>• Validation by the ClimaNET Task Force will be sufficient for formal acceptance of deliverables. This is without prejudice to the separate requirement in Section 3.3 that, during each phase of the assignment, at least one dedicated board-level meeting be organised to discuss implications for ClimaNET's strategic direction, governance and long-term positioning. These meetings are intended to support strategic alignment, discussion and uptake of the supplier's recommendations; they do not constitute an additional formal approval gate.<br>• The two structured feedback and revision rounds specified in the RFP apply to Phase 2. This reflects Phase 2's role in developing the governance and strategic-positioning work that builds on Phase 1 and informs Phase 3.<br>• For Phases 1 and 3, the supplier should develop outputs in close and continuous consultation with the ClimaNET Task Force and NetZeroCities. Feedback will be provided as work progresses and consolidated following submission of draft deliverables, where appropriate.<br>• No fixed review period is prescribed. The timing and extent of review and any revisions will be agreed during implementation, taking account of the Task Force's availability, the assignment timeline and the nature of the deliverable.<br>• Across all phases of the assignment, the supplier is expected to work in close and continuous consultation with the ClimaNET Task Force and NetZeroCities. Input should be sought and integrated throughout the development of each deliverable, rather than being deferred until submission of a final draft. |

| Questions | Answers |
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| Q5. Experience in Greece and Cyprus<br>Could you please clarify whether the requirement for relevant experience in both Greece and Cyprus must be fulfilled by each individual expert, or whether it may be fulfilled collectively by the proposed team? | The relevant experience in both Greece and Cyprus must be fulfilled by each individual expert. |
| Q6. Language requirements<br>Could you please clarify whether the C1 level in Greek and English is required for every expert included in the proposed team, or only for those experts who will be directly involved in stakeholder engagement, facilitation, presentations and interaction with NetZeroCities and the beneficiary cities? | The C1 level in Greek and English is required for every expert included in the proposed team. |
| Q7. Language of deliverables<br>Could you please confirm the required language for each of the main deliverables, in particular D1, D2 and D3, as well as the Final CESF Delivery Report? We would appreciate clarification as to whether the main deliverables may be prepared in Greek, with the final CESF report in English, or whether all deliverables must be submitted in English. | Deliverables 1–3 should be submitted in Greek; and Deliverable 4, the CESF Delivery Report, should be submitted in English.<br>English-language executive summaries of Deliverables 1–3 are not required. |
| Q8. Reference to Dutch technical terminology<br>The RfP appears to contain a reference to “Dutch technical terminology”. Could you please confirm whether this is a template-related wording and that no Dutch-language knowledge or Dutch technical expertise is required for this assignment? | It’s a language mistake. |

| Questions | Answers |
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| Q9. Payment arrangements<br>Could you please confirm whether the contract foresees 100% payment following the acceptance of the Final Report, or whether interim/milestone-based invoicing and payments may be agreed during the implementation period? If milestone-based payments are possible, could you please indicate the envisaged payment schedule? | As stated in Section 4.1, "Payment and Invoicing" of the RFP, the standard payment term stipulates settlement of 100% of the total contract value upon acceptance of the Final Delivery Report. Any requests for a deviation from this term must be explicitly stated in the bidder's proposal and are subject to evaluation and prior written approval by the Climate-KIC Contract Manager. Should a deviation be approved, all payments will be strictly contingent upon the completion of one or more clearly defined deliverables/milestones. |