



Preliminary Market Consultation Notice to support Sofia's Energy Transition

Date: 17 August 2026



Disclaimer and Data Protection

This preliminary market consultation does not constitute a call for competition, an invitation to tender, a request for a binding quotation or an offer to enter into a contract.

Please note that your responses/contributions are confidential and will not be published. Any personal data will be processed solely for purposes of preliminary market consultation.

Participation is voluntary and suppliers will not be reimbursed for costs incurred in preparing a response.

Any future procurement of the service under the scope of this consultation will be conducted separately and in accordance with the applicable public procurement rules and procedures.

Information received may be used to inform the scope, procurement strategy, estimated contract value, technical specifications, award criteria and contractual arrangements for a possible future procurement. The final requirements of any eventual contract will be determined independently by Climate KIC and will not be designed to favour a particular economic operator, product or solution.

This document and the accompanying annexes are exclusively intended for the use within the framework of and for the duration of the present market consultations preceding the procurement. Any other use is not permitted, except with the prior written permission of the contracting entity.

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Overview

1.1 Purpose of the Preliminary Market Consultation

The purpose of this Preliminary Market Consultation (PMC) is to gather market intelligence, assess the feasibility of the services that might be procured at a later stage, and understand prevailing financial and commercial practices in order to inform any future procurement strategy and the procurement process, and support the needs of the NetZeroCities programme.

Specifically, this PMC seeks to:

- Explore the feasibility of the indicative scope of services described herein and collect feedback on market capabilities and approaches.
- Receive indicative price ranges for the provisions of the scope of services
- Collect feedback to inform the drafting of future tender documentation, the scope of the tender and the technical specifications; and
- Identify emerging trends, innovations, and best practices relevant to the envisaged procurement.

This consultation is conducted on the basis of Articles 40 and 41 of Directive 2014/24/EU, and 166 of Regulation 2018/1046 (the EU Financial Regulation) and point 15 of its Annex.

1.2 Who can Participate?

Contributions from economic operators, industry representatives, and other stakeholders active in the field of energy transition, whose expertise may help inform the development of future procurement requirements and specifications are particularly welcome.

1.3 How to participate?

The survey is web based and is available for completion and submission [here](#).

The completed form with the replies must be submitted through the platform no later than 3 September 2026, 17:00 CET. In case of technical problems with the submission, the form can be downloaded and sent by email to cesf@netzerocities.eu by the deadline. For any clarifications on the survey, please do not hesitate to contact by writing to cesf@netzerocities.eu by 24 August 2026. Questions will be collated and added to the website.

1.4 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 (NZN).

1.5 About NetZeroCities

NetZeroCities (NZN) is a project designed to help cities overcome the current structural, institutional, and cultural barriers they face to achieve climate neutrality by 2030. NZN 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.

Description and details of needs

2.1 Draft Scope

The overall objective of the expected assignment is to validate and assess the feasibility of the Positive Energy District (PED) strategic concept developed for the city of Sofia in Bulgaria, and prepare an implementation roadmap.

A Positive Energy District (PED) is an urban area that, on an annual basis, produces more renewable energy than it consumes, achieved through the integrated planning of buildings, energy infrastructure, mobility, and local governance. In Sofia, the PED initiative is being developed as a practical pathway to support the city's climate-neutrality goals, with a particular focus on low-carbon and innovative district heating and cooling solutions.

As Sofia moves from exploration toward implementation, dedicated local expertise is anticipated to refine priority PED opportunities, assess governance and delivery models, identify funding and investment pathways, support stakeholder engagement, and develop a practical roadmap for implementation aligned with the city's climate and energy objectives.

To achieve the above objectives, below activities are expected to be undertaken:

Part A: Validation and Assessment of PED

- Review the PED strategic concept developed through the NZC support process and assess its alignment with Sofia's local conditions, priorities, and implementation realities.
- Assess the feasibility of proposed energy measures (e.g. renewable energy installations, energy efficiency retrofits, smart grid elements, geothermal, district heating, new heating and cooling solutions) within the Sofia context.
- Assess the applicability of the proposed PED approach within Sofia's institutional, regulatory, financial, and political environment.
- Assess stakeholder readiness, institutional capacity, and implementation & decision-making conditions relevant to priority PED opportunities.
- Identify governance, coordination and delivery considerations that may influence implementation.
- Assess alignment with relevant Climate City Contract commitments, SECAP measures, district heating transition priorities, and urban regeneration objectives.
- Identify gaps, inconsistencies, risks, and key dependencies that may affect implementation, including technical, legal, financial, governance, and social dimensions.
- Identify opportunities to strengthen implementation readiness, stakeholder alignment, and investment attractiveness.
- Provide written feedback and recommendations to Sofia and the NZC team to strengthen implementation pathways and local applicability.

Part B: Implementation Roadmap for PED

- Develop a strategy and deliberate, detailed roadmap for the PED project concept, covering the period from district prioritisation through feasibility assessment and early implementation phases, including identification of explicit City decision points along with the sequence of work.

- Define concrete actions, responsibilities, sequencing, decision points, and milestones, considering local procurement rules, permitting processes, regulatory requirements, and financing mechanisms available in the Bulgarian context.
- Assess and recommend governance arrangements, stakeholder roles, coordination mechanisms, delivery models, and funding pathways to advance priority PED opportunities toward feasibility and implementation.
- Identify key barriers, risks, dependencies, and enabling conditions, and prepare a risk matrix with recommended mitigation measures.
- Identify near-term opportunities and quick wins that can build momentum, strengthen stakeholder confidence, and support future investment readiness.
- Align the roadmap with relevant municipal plans and strategies, including the Climate City Contract, SECAP, district heating transition priorities, and available national and European funding and technical assistance opportunities.
- Recommend next steps such as future feasibility studies, project development activities, partnerships, and implementation support required to advance priority opportunities

2.2 Indicative Budget Assumption

For the purpose of this Preliminary Market Consultation, an indicative budget assumption of approximately EUR 20,000 is being tested against market feedback.

Respondents are invited to provide their independent assessment of the level of effort and indicative cost required to deliver the needs described in this document, and to indicate whether the proposed needs could realistically be delivered within this amount.

The EUR 20,000 figure is an indicative assumption for the purpose of the market consultation only. It does not constitute a budget ceiling, a target price, a maximum contract value or a commitment by Climate-KIC to procure the services at this amount.

2.3 Future Procurement

In case a procurement procedure was to be launched, a contract notice would be published on the [NetZeroCities website](#).