



**NET
ZERO
CITIES**

NZC CESF Procurement RFP

CESF Procurement Document template to be published externally for the purposes of procuring expert support for cities in the Republic of Croatia

Date: 08/09/2026

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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: Expert Support to Facilitate the Community of Practice of Cities in the Republic of Croatia

Date: 08/09/2026

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	Expert Support to the community of practice of Cities in the Republic of Croatia.
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	Services and/or goods will be delivered to the following locations: Republic of Croatia Services will be delivered on-site at: Various cities in Republic of Croatia Additionally, services will be provided remotely to: Cities in Republic of Croatia
Climate-KIC Contact Points for Proposals and Inquiries	Luisa Carretti Shuva Thapa CESF@netzerocities.eu
Proposed contract term for successful candidates (expected)	19 October 2026 – 31 October 2027

Table 1: Procurement executive summary

1.2. Timelines

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

Planned Date*	Milestones
08 September 2026	RFP issued to bidders
22 September 2026 (23:59 CEST Time)	Deadline to submit questions
29 September 2026	Bidders submit proposals / Submission Deadline (23:59 CEST Time)
09 October 2026	Assessment results announcement (subject to finished evaluations and selection of a winner)

Planned Date*	Milestones
19 October 2026 – 31 October 2027	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.

1.5. 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 European Commission, 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.

1.6. 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.

1.7. 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 organisations, 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.

3. Specification

3.1. Background

NetZeroCities, through Special Grant Agreement 2 (SGA2) Task 1.6, 'Sub-European Peer-to-Peer Collaboration', is actively working to provide tailored support in various national contexts. The aim is to provide additional support to cities, foster communities of practice between cities in each country, i.e. to strengthen city-to-city collaboration spaces at national level and thus help to reinforce national platforms. To achieve this, NZC has developed a country-specific support framework tailored to the unique characteristics and needs of each context.

In the Republic of Croatia, Zagreb is the only Croatian city participating in the **EU Mission "100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030"** as a Mission City, while two additional Croatian cities, Križevci and Slavonski Brod, are Mission Twin Cities. Beyond these, many Croatian cities, including Poreč, Rijeka, Zadar, Šibenik, Koprivnica and Varaždin, are actively implementing ambitious climate actions and improving the citizens' wellbeing. It is important to facilitate collaboration on climate neutrality between Croatian cities to enable knowledge exchange and transfer of good practices in the same national context.

To consolidate ongoing efforts, this assignment is designed to establish a structured and continuous engagement process building on the work delivered between October 2025 and September 2026. Relevant background information and materials from the previous implementation period will be made available to the awarded supplier.

These services, which will be contracted through this tender, are to be delivered by a supplier with deep expertise in the Croatian national context and experience in convening stakeholders from local, regional and national governments. This approach ensures targeted support that directly addresses the objectives outlined in this Request for Proposals.

Finally, as part of this specific support, each country has a NetZeroCities partner responsible for coordinating the work. In the case of the Republic of Croatia, this role is fulfilled by Energy Cities. A strong coordination between the selected provider, Energy Cities and the NetZeroCities team is requested throughout the whole contracting period.

3.2. Scope

In the context of the efforts of Croatian cities within the **EU Mission for 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities**, and specifically the opportunity identified to provide additional support to the community of cities working toward the mission's objectives within the Croatia's national ecosystem, NetZeroCities / Climate KIC is requesting a quotation for services from a supplier able to operate within this national context. The role involves supporting teams from NetZeroCities, as relevant, to take charge of and facilitate the process described below.

The following is a **general description of the services** and actions to be provided by the awarded supplier, followed in subsequent sections with detailed information.

- (1) Expert support, namely *collective support*, aimed at fostering radical collaboration between cities, increasing their capacities and improving the cooperation of the community of practice of cities with national authorities, and different stakeholders within the Republic of Croatia.

The support will be directed towards cities that are already part of the Mission in the Republic of Croatia - Mission Cities, Twin Cities, Mission Minded Cities, cities participating in online discussion groups and in the Community of Practice of Cities in the Republic of Croatia and other interested cities wanting to achieve climate neutrality.

- (2) Coordination support aimed at establishing coherent collaboration processes for Croatian cities, regular meetings, feedback loops, process documentation, meaningful links to national authorities and other relevant stakeholders.

- (3) Organization of two “EU Cities Mission events” (one during the last quarter of 2026 and one in 2027) to support cities, promote co-implementation of projects and enhance collaboration between cities, national and regional authorities, and other stakeholders. The services will also include encouraging the participation of CIVINET partners or similar initiatives in these events.

As part of the organization of the two EU Cities Mission events, the supplier will support the implementation of Better Funding Dialogue (BFD) activities, in coordination with NetZeroCities partners: The BFD’s aim is to enhance financial flows to cities, mobilize private stakeholders, and drive systemic change in financing structures to achieve climate neutrality. The supplier is expected to play an active support role in conducting the necessary groundwork, including stakeholder outreach, coordination, and preparation, to deliver the EU Cities Mission events. This entails integrating the BFD within the events’ framework and ensuring close coordination with the respective initiative leads.

This support is also intended to catalyse longer-term cooperation between national authorities, cities, private sector actors, and financial institutions. The events won’t be designed as standalone activities, but act as key milestones of a broader, structured multi-stakeholder engagement process. The supplier will be expected to design and implement preparatory activities at national and local levels to identify and address key challenges, opportunities, and priorities related to the selected thematic focus. The supplier is asked to strategically leverage existing events and platforms (e.g. sectoral fairs, national conferences) to organise complementary sessions or engagement moments, to maximise participation and cost-efficiency.

Presentations and technical support will take place predominantly in Croatia; therefore, presenters must be fluent in Croatian. The collaboration and interaction with NetZeroCities partners will be in English.

The general objective of the described support is to enhance collaboration between cities in the same national context through the facilitation of training and peer-to-peer learning activities, the provision of specialized assistance, and other initiatives. Specifically, it aims to strengthen the community of practice for cities within the national platforms, creating collaborative spaces where Mission cities and other cities committed to decarbonization goals can receive support, work on common challenges, share learnings and make progress toward these objectives.

Additionally, this targeted support is intended as seed funding with the primary objective of maximizing impact by strengthening collaborative networks within each country. Therefore, this initiative also aims to serve as a kick-start and to encourage the continuity of funding once the support described in this procurement is completed.

The selected supplier is expected to engage collaboratively with experts from the NetZeroCities consortium, as well as to create synergies with the cities and key stakeholders of the Croatian national ecosystem. It is expected to build a strong basis for a constructive and sustainable multi-level dialogue involving national and regional stakeholders, cities, policy makers, research centres etc. NetZeroCities representatives (who are resourced already and do not have to be represented in a financial offer) and Mission Cities are to be engaged on a day-to-day basis where needed, on baseline briefings, the overarching strategic approach within which this assignment takes place, as well as for sharing good practices/learning from other Mission and Mission-Minded cities, where relevant.

3.3. Required Experience and Capabilities

The supplier will ensure sufficient capacity to deliver the services in an efficient and effective manner. The supplier that delivers the services must be able to demonstrate the following experience and capabilities:

Minimum Requirements:

- Fluency in Croatian language (native speaker or C1 level)
- Minimum C1 level in English
- Proven knowledge of local authorities’ competencies and national regulatory frameworks
- Proven connection with national and local stakeholders for at least 5 years

- Ability to engage with local elected representatives, drive cooperation between local authorities of different sizes, demonstrated by at least 5 years of experience working with local authorities
- Ability to propose systemic approaches to reach climate neutrality and apply the mission-oriented innovation approach
- Excellent understanding of policies and regulations at the intersection of energy / environment / transport / urban innovation and place-based development
- Good understanding of governance systems and competencies relevant for climate neutrality across different levels of governance

Desirable experience and capabilities:

- Good understanding of cities 'challenges in achieving climate neutrality at the latest by 2050; direct connection to cities.
- Good understanding of the Mission approach
- Good understanding of the NetZeroCities and CapaCITIES projects
- Demonstrated ability to work impartially and effectively with stakeholders across different political and institutional contexts.
- Good embeddedness into national structures; direct connection to critical national institutions and penholders, including financial eco-system players
- Enabler of cooperation with other stakeholders (private companies, third sector, etc.)
- Ability to coordinate the involvement of the national government, the European Commission and finance institutions (national banks, regional / municipalities public banks, etc).

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

3.4.Methodology

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

- Systemic approach, methodologies and tools developed by NetZeroCities
- Community building by fostering shared goals, active participation and supportive environments
- Commitment to high quality of service delivery and stakeholder communication
- Participation in onboarding activities and regular coordination calls with NetZeroCities partners
- Aligning service delivery in a European multi-project and multi-actor environment
- Adaptive management and ability to thrive in a fast-paced environment

3.5. Objectives

The following **objectives** are established for the outsourced services, defining the goals that the planned activities shall support and accomplish.

Objectives		
Objective		Description
1	Strengthening the community of practice among Croatian cities, that is, increase collaboration between cities on local climate neutrality transitions.	A community of practice must be established and strengthened bringing together cities committed to advancing their climate neutrality efforts. The community aims to: - Foster collaboration, information sharing and the exchange of ideas, experiences, lessons learnt and best practices, especially regarding the adoption of the methodologies and tools proposed by NetZeroCities (Transition Team, Climate Transition Map, NetZeroCities digital platform etc.). - Help municipalities identify, address and tackle concrete and common challenges and barriers. - Seek to empower those individuals delivering the work on climate in their local administrations and communities.
2	Build skills and strengthen capacities amongst Croatian municipalities to implement innovative climate action, following a holistic, transformative and systemic approach.	Facilitating collaboration among Croatian cities to support climate neutrality is essential for fostering knowledge exchange and sharing best practice among municipalities operating within the same national context. The supplier will, therefore, support the establishment of a community of practice among Croatian cities, building on existing initiatives and working in collaboration with relevant national partners. Cities will also benefit from a tailored training programme designed to equip cities with practical skills and capacities needed to manage local climate neutrality transitions. This training will address specific needs, focusing on general climate education, raising awareness among political leadership in cities, or more specific tasks such as data collection, GHG emissions accounting or sustainable financing.
3	Increase awareness on climate change amongst political leaders in local governments.	
4	Support the involvement of the community of cities in the multi-level collaboration between local, regional and national authorities, as well as in the multi-stakeholder collaboration between public authorities, academia/research, the private sector and civil society.	Support will be provided to the community of cities to engage in the multi-stakeholder and multi-level collaboration spaces, to facilitate the expression of needs, to collaborate in the design of services proposed by national stakeholders, their governance, and in addressing policy barriers. This support aims to help cities align their requests towards the national level and to strengthen their capacities to engage with various stakeholders, such as businesses and investors, to secure commitments to climate neutrality and drive concrete action (facilitating multi-level and multi-stakeholder collaboration). This support will be delivered in close collaboration with national partners, including the Association of Cities in Croatia.

3.6. Services and Activities

3.6.1 General information

The following outline workplan defines the mandatory activities and expected outputs to be delivered under this assignment.

Bidders may propose their preferred methodology, sequencing of activities, stakeholder engagement approach and implementation arrangements, provided these remain within the boundaries of the scope of work and objectives defined in this RfP.

The Strategic Workplan submitted by the bidder (see Section 3.7) will explain how it intends to deliver the mandatory activities and objectives described in this document, including any methodological considerations considered relevant to the Croatian national context.

3.6.2 Workplan: Mandatory and Recommended Activities

To achieve the objectives stated in Section 3.5, the following activities must be carried out by the service provider in the the contract period after the contract signature, until October 2027. All activities will be carried out in coordination with the NetZeroCities partner responsible for coordinating the work, in this case Energy Cities. For each activity, the listed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) must be achieved.

Mandatory activities	
Activity 1. Organisation of two in-person EU Cities Mission Events	
According to objective: 1 and 3	
Description	The supplier will organize two EU Cities Mission Events (one in 2026 and one in 2027) to bring together the national ecosystem supporting cities in achieving climate neutrality. The key objectives of the events are to: A) raise awareness about the EU Mission on Climate Neutral and Smart Cities in Croatia; B) discuss how to best implement the Mission in the national context; C) bring together stakeholders from the local, regional and national levels relevant to local climate neutrality transitions in Croatia. These events aim to include: - Croatian cities interested in accelerating their climate neutrality efforts, including the Mission City (Zagreb). - Regional and national governments. - Representatives of the private, research and civic sector in the Republic of Croatia. The events will build on the previous EU Cities Mission Event organised in March 2026 in Croatia, and will contribute to strengthening the capacities of cities by facilitating structured exchanges, sharing practical experiences, and fostering collaboration with national and regional authorities, as well as relevant stakeholders such as the private sector. A key objective of both events will be to initiate and nurture ongoing learning processes, encouraging participating cities to join a community of practice that will continue working on key challenges and solutions related to local climate neutrality transformations beyond the events themselves. The events may be held alongside another major national conference and will be organized in collaboration with the Association of Cities in Croatia, the NetZeroCities partner organisation Energy Cities, as well as other local partners, for instance engaged in the Covenant of Mayors Initiative, willing to contribute to such a format.
Participating Stakeholders	Cities (Mission City, other interested cities); relevant national ministries and state agencies; regional authorities; private sector; academia/research and civil society organisations.
KPI	• At least 50 participants. • At least representatives from 10 Croatian cities join the annual event for 2026, including political representatives. • At least representatives from 15 Croatian cities join the annual event for 2027, including political representatives • At least 10 other national or regional stakeholders join the annual event.
Activity 2. Organize a community of practice for cities & develop and deliver a capacity-building programme	
According to objective: 1 and 2	

Description	The supplier will establish or reinforce the community of practice that brings together cities committed to advancing their work towards climate neutrality in Croatia, including Zagreb (Mission City). The community should be built upon existing initiatives and frameworks where cities are already collaborating. The community would be connected to the Mission Portal and granted access to NetZeroCities' resource repository, including useful tools, case studies, good practices and communication channels with other cities. The supplier will explain in its offer how the activities (in terms of approaches, or topics) will be complementary to existing initiatives, increase the impacts of the existing activities and avoid duplication. The supplier will organize a comprehensive capacity-building programme for committed individuals from local administrations and communities, either from political leadership or operational teams. The curriculum shall be practical, tailored to cities' needs and focus on developing concrete skills in municipalities, like monitoring and reporting GHG emissions, climate action planning, sustainable finance, partnerships with private sector and others. The service provider could collaborate with different specialized organisations for different topics, e.g. NZC, Civinet, Civitas, CapaCITIES, Covenant of Mayors, CDP-ICLEI Track for GHG emissions accounting.	
Participating Stakeholders	City staff, e.g. strategic development and innovative projects departments, climate and environmental departments, finance departments and treasuries, infrastructure departments and others. Ideally, representatives of the political level will also be included.	
Formats	The described sessions and activities may be delivered in two formats: • Joint sessions that bring together both groups: cities already involved in the Mission and other interested cities aiming to achieve climate neutrality. • Exclusive sessions for other interested cities working towards climate neutrality.	
KPI	- At least representatives from 8 Croatian cities join the community of practice in 2026/2027. - At least 4 sessions are delivered for the community of practice in 2026/2027, including the capacity-building training. - At least 4 organizations join the Croatian national group on the Mission Portal.	
Activity 3. Enabling participation of cities in multi-stakeholder and multi-level collaboration spaces		According to objective: 4

Description	According to Objective 4, multi-stakeholder and multi-level engagement will be promoted, bringing together cities, regional public authorities, relevant national ministries, private sector representatives, academia, research institutions and civil society, with the aim to support cities in achieving climate neutrality. This National Platform will foster information sharing, open dialogue, alignment of strategies, narratives, and objectives, collaborative problem-solving and cooperation among all participants. The awarded supplier will participate in a minimum of three meetings with national stakeholders supporting the development of the National Platform, in order to improve the multi-level collaboration, and will support cities being part of the community of practice to prepare these meetings (providing inputs for the agenda, development of a common narrative, policy propositions, expression of needs and required services, etc.). During these meetings, feedback from the outcomes of Activity 2 will also be shared with the stakeholders engaged in the National Platform.
Participating Stakeholders	Cities (Mission City, interested cities); relevant national ministries and agencies; regional authorities; private sector actors; academia/research and civil society organisations
KPI	• Participation in at least 3 meetings with the national support structure.

3.7. Deliverables

The following deliverables are requested:

Deliverable 1: Strategic Workplan and Brief Baseline Report

Requirements:

At the start of the contract, the awarded supplier will be required to deliver:

- **A strategic workplan** aimed at precisely designing the strategy that will represent the foundation of the whole process, and at detailing the timeline and activities that will take place during the contract period. The strategic workplan will be approved by NetZeroCities partner in charge of Republic of Croatia, Energy Cities.
- **Brief baseline report**, building up on the previous conducted work and enriching it, aimed at documenting the current state of key aspects of the national ecosystem. This document will serve as the foundation for monitoring the activities and services implemented as part of this support initiative

The Strategic Workplan will include:

- A detailed strategy that will be followed to achieve the expected results. It will detail the main strategic goals and the plan to achieve them, specifying the main challenges, the prioritized topics, the stakeholders to be involved and the lessons to build on.
- A detailed outline of the activities to be carried out, specifying the dates, content, cities to be invited, other stakeholders involved, the criteria established for these selections, and any additional information deemed relevant.

The **Brief Baseline Report** will include the following information on the existing community of Practice among local governments:

- Frequency of meetings among local governments, the participating local governments, types of representatives involved (e.g., technical staff and/or political level), participation of other stakeholders (e.g., other levels of government, private sector, academia, others), the existence of multi-city projects (if applicable), etc.

In case the supplier proposes a methodology based on existing collaboration and initiatives, they must explain how the activities performed in this contract will be complementary and increase the impacts.

To be submitted in Month 2 (M2) of the contract start date.

Deliverable 2: Final Report

Requirements:

- At the conclusion of the contract, the awarded supplier will deliver a comprehensive Final Report. This report will provide a detailed account of the outcomes of the activities and services delivered during the support period, as well as the progress achieved in relation to the baseline situation documented in the Brief Baseline Report. The report will aim to assess the advancements made, evaluate the effectiveness of the actions taken, and propose strategic next steps to further strengthen both the Community of Practice among local governments and the national platform.
- The Final Report will include details about the activities conducted throughout the contract period. It will include an evaluation of the outcomes achieved, highlighting key results, challenges encountered, and the strategies used to overcome them. Evidence shall be provided regarding the achievement of the KPIs (list of attendees, agendas, pictures, etc.).
- A survey (proposed by NetZeroCities) addressed to participants to events, and to the capacity-building program, to assess their satisfaction and gather suggestions shall be included in annex of the report, as well as any materials developed (concept note, advocacy note, materials for capacity building sessions, etc.). Furthermore, it will reflect on the alignment of the activities with the overarching objectives, including their contribution to strengthening the Community of Practice among local governments and the national platform. Lastly, the report will provide actionable insights and recommendations to inform and guide future initiatives, ensuring continued growth and collaboration within the ecosystem. Additionally, the report will include any information the awarded supplier considers relevant.
- To be submitted at the end of the Assignment.

Deliverable 3: NZC CESF Delivery Report

Requirements:

- Upon completion of the delivery of support, the appointed provider must submit the NZC CESF Delivery Report. It must serve as a brief but comprehensive report summarizing the entire process, outcomes and learnings, and any identified follow-on actions, next steps and/or deployment of/connectivity to NetZeroCities and Mission Platform services and offers.

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

3.8. Indicative Budget

All tasks are defined to be performed from contract signature until 31 October 2027.

The total quotation must not exceed 37,400 EUR (excluding VAT). Within this ceiling, a maximum amount of 8,000 EUR (excluding VAT) for both events combined is allocated to event-related logistics, including but not limited to catering, venue rental, and related expenses.

Bidders are required to submit one single consolidated financial offer covering:

- Professional fees related to the delivery of the services described in this Request for Proposal
- Event-related costs associated with the organisation of the EU Cities Mission Events.

Event-related costs are expected to be incurred directly by the selected supplier and subsequently re invoiced to Climate-KIC. Local VAT applicable to event-related costs shall be quoted separately and in addition to the above ceiling, in accordance with the VAT and invoicing rules set out in the quotation requirements.

Professional fees shall be invoiced in accordance with the applicable reverse-charge mechanism for cross-border services invoiced to Climate-KIC in the Netherlands.

3.9. Eligibility

Climate-KIC reserves 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, has 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 EUR 216,000. 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 must not participate in this request for proposals as subcontracting between consortium partners is prohibited under EU funding rules.

3.10. Sustainability

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 to 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 shall 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:
 - o their trading name, VAT or tax identification number (if applicable) and registered trading address (*please note, address is not required for an individual*).
 - o website links to examples of work previously performed by the bidder if applicable (e.g. portfolios, work products or other).
 - o 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.
5. The proposal must be submitted in EURO.
6. The proposal must be submitted using the PDF file format.

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:
 - o Whether prices are inclusive or exclusive of VAT;
 - o Where applicable, costs must be clearly separated between professional service fees and event-related costs, in accordance with Point 2, below;
 - o The supplier's VAT number, including country code, if applicable;
 - o Whether the reverse charge mechanism is expected to apply.

2. Invoicing Structure and VAT Treatment

Suppliers are required to reflect this distinction clearly in the Main Quotation Table:

2.a) Event-related Costs:

- Event-related costs (e.g. venue rental, local logistics, catering, on-site services) must be clearly identified and itemised separately in the quotation.

- These costs shall be invoiced immediately following the relevant event.
- Event-related costs shall include local VAT, where applicable, based on the country in which the event takes place.

2.b) Professional Service Fees:

- All other services (including preparation, coordination, analysis, reporting, and project management) shall be treated as professional service fees.
- These fees shall be invoiced upon final delivery of the assignment.
- Professional service fees shall be invoiced without local VAT and under the reverse charge mechanism, where applicable.
- The relevant reverse charge wording must be included on the invoice in accordance with EU VAT legislation.

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

- If you do not intend to charge VAT, briefly confirm whether the reverse charge mechanism applies and provide a short explanation (e.g., intra-EU B2B supply of services under Article 196 of the EU VAT Directive).
- If you do intend to charge VAT, specify the VAT rate and, if you are based in a different EU country than the Netherlands, briefly explain why the reverse charge mechanism does not apply under your national legislation.

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.

3. **Main Quote Table:** Suppliers must provide a **main quotation table, which constitutes the primary financial basis for evaluation and comparison of bids.** The Main Quotation Table shall summarise all Deliverables listed in Section 3.7 (Scope of Work) and shall clearly distinguish between professional service fees and event-related costs, in accordance with the Point 2, Invoicing Structure and VAT Treatment. In the event of an inconsistency between the Main Quotation, Rate Card and Resource Plan, the Main Quotation shall prevail for the purpose of financial evaluation, unless the inconsistency results from an arithmetic error which can be objectively corrected without changing the substance of the offer.

Each row must correspond to **a deliverable or a clearly identifiable cost item** and include:

- Deliverable name or cost item;
- Cost category (Professional service fees / Event-related costs);
- Unit of measure (e.g. days, weeks, or months — use the most appropriate for the task);
- Quantity;

- Unit price;
- Subtotal Subtotal (EUR, excl. VAT) – calculated as Quantity × Unit Price
- VAT Rate – percentage rate applicable (if any)
- VAT Amount (EUR) – VAT calculated on the subtotal; 0 for professional service fees

At the end of the table, suppliers must include the following totals:

- Total professional service fees (excl. VAT)
- Total event-related costs (excl. VAT)
- Total VAT on event-related costs
- Overall total (excl. VAT) – sum of professional service fees and event-related costs, excluding VAT
- Overall total (incl. VAT) – sum of professional service fees and event-related costs, including VAT

Note: The overall total (excl. VAT) will be used as the basis for financial evaluation and comparison of bids.

The Main Quotation Table must be internally consistent with the Rate Card (Table 6) and the Resource Plan (Table 7), which serve as supporting documentation for cost verification and traceability.

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

4. **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.

5. **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 3.7 – 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.

6. Travel and subsistence for this assignment are expected to be minimal and must be clearly itemised in the quotation. Bidders 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. **Any travel or subsistence costs directly linked to in-person events shall be treated as event-related costs for the purposes of quotation**, VAT treatment and invoicing, in accordance with Point 2 (*Invoicing Structure and VAT Treatment*).
7. Please submit your quote on official company letterhead or a formal company document, in English. The quote shall 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.
8. The quotation shall remain valid at least 90 calendar days from the submission deadline.
9. 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.
10. The bidder shall explicitly declare any current or past institutional, commercial, financial, or organizational relationship with the Cities/ /Ministries/ National support structures 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	Cost Category	Unit	Quantity	Unit price (EUR, excl. VAT)	Subtotal (EUR)	VAT Rate	VAT Amount (EUR)
D1 – Inception Report	Professional service fees	days	13	780	10,100	N/A	0
D2 – Final Report	Professional service fees	days	20	790	15,800	N/A	0
Event Logistics – annual meeting	Event-related costs	Lump sum	1	2.500	2,500	21%	525
TOTALS							
Total professional service fees (excl. VAT)					25,940		
Total event-related costs (excl. VAT)					2,500		
Total VAT on event-related costs					525		
Overall Total (excl. VAT)					28,440		
Overall Total (incl. VAT)					28,965		

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

Terms of this RFP

1. Your proposal must be submitted according to the instructions as detailed in this section and shall 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 shall 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 seek clarification or, where necessary, conduct limited post-bid discussions with one or more bidders. Any such discussions will be conducted in accordance with the principles of equal treatment and transparency and will not result in a material change to the scope, minimum requirements or award criteria of the procurement. Where revised offers are requested, all bidders concerned will be given the same opportunity and a common deadline for submission.
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. Bidders will be informed of the outcome of the procurement and the reasons for the decision in accordance with the applicable procurement rules.
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 1.2.
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 shall be sequenced and numbered in accordance with the format of this RFP.
13. The formatting of this document and the attached response document shall 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.