Request for Proposal

For: Independent External Experts

Date: 5 October 2026

Updated: 8 October 2026

A list of Questions and Answers is published at the bottom of the RFP (Annex 2).

This will be updated on the Wednesday, October 15, and a final updated version on Monday October 26, 2026.

1. Overview

1.1. Executive Summary

This is a Request for Proposal (RFP) that details Climate KIC's requirements for services. Please treat this document in accordance with the confidentiality obligations detailed further in this document.

Services and/or goods requested	Procurement of external expertise to support Climate KIC's programmatic delivery work in the capacity of (but not limited to) thematic advisors (to cities, regions, industry), mentors (start-ups, scale-ups), evaluators (in competitive calls providing financial support to third parties), event speakers and panellists. See Annex 1 of expertise that we envisage we will need in the next four years.
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 will be delivered remotely
Climate KIC Contract Manager for submitting proposals and inquiries	Jane Okafor Contract Manager jane.okafor@climate-kic.org
Proposed contract term for successful candidates	4 years from the Framework Agreement start date. The Framework Agreement does not guarantee any minimum volume of work or payment; specific tasks will be commissioned under individual Assignment Agreement issued during the 4-year term.

1.2. Timelines

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

Planned Date*	**Milestones**
05 October 2026	RFP published on website
10 business days before the Submission Deadline	Deadline for applicants to submit questions on the RFP
30 October 2026 (18:00) CET	**Submission Deadline**
Expected 06 November 2026	Climate KIC team to complete proposals review
Expected 06 November 2026	Notification of contract award
23:59 CET on 20 November 2026 (10 business days)	Standstill period ends
Expected 01 December 2026	Proposed contracts start date

Climate KIC reserves the right to amend this timetable during the RFP. Changes will be communicated

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 Holding B.V. or relevant subsidiary (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 regards to confidentiality and of the disciplinary proceedings which will result if confidentiality conditions are breached.

3. Introduction and Background

Climate KIC engages External Independent Experts to support Climate KIC's programmatic delivery work in the capacity of **thematic advisors** (e.g. to cities, regions, industry), **mentors** (e.g. start-ups, scale-ups), **evaluators and**

evaluation panel members (e.g. in competitive calls providing financial support to third parties), **contributors** to learning content development and capacity building, **event speakers and panellists**. Specifically, external expertise is engaged across Climate KIC continuing education, capacity building, business creation support and place-based activities such as the Climate KIC Academy, ClimAccelerator, EIT New European Bauhaus, NetZeroCities platform.

Experts are contracted via multi-year Framework Agreements that set remuneration rates without promise of a minimum volume of work or payment. Depending on programmatic work needs, experts are then assigned specific tasks via Specific Assignment Agreements with remuneration relevant to task and volume of work. Payments are typically deliverables-based.

3.1. About Climate KIC

Climate KIC is the EU's climate innovation initiative, working to accelerate the transition to a zero-carbon and resilient world by enabling systems transformation. Headquartered in Amsterdam, we deliver projects both inside and outside of the EU. Climate KIC was established in 2010 and was predominately funded by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), a body of the European Union.

As a Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC), it brings together more than 400 partners from business, academia, the public and non-profit sectors to create networks of expertise, through which innovative products, services and systems are developed, brought to market and scaled-up for impact. See https://www.climate-kic.org/ for more information.

4. Specification

4.1. Scope

Climate KIC are requesting applications for the appointment of a pool of External Independent Experts via Framework Agreements for a term of up to 4 years, with individual tasks commissioned under separate call-off Assignment Agreements as programmatic needs arise.

The proposal should consider the following:

- Their specific area(s) of thematic expertise (e.g. climate adaptation, climate resilience, emissions reduction, governance, capacity development, partnerships & collaboration, monitoring & evaluation, agri-food, or general innovation). **See annex 1**
- Their availability to undertake ad hoc, deliverable-based assignments (e.g. serving on evaluation panels, mentoring, or thematic advisory work) at relatively short notice
- Their ability to demonstrate independence from the parties being evaluated or advised, and to manage any potential conflicts of interest
- Language and geographic coverage relevant to Climate KIC's pan-European and international programmes

Additional assignments related to this Scope may be requested on a day rate basis. Please ensure a rate card is included with your submission and any other applicable costs associated with supplementary services.

Successful applicants will be appointed to a Pool of External Independent Experts. There is no fixed maximum number of Experts to be appointed, Climate KIC intends to appoint as many suitably qualified Experts as

needed across the identified thematic areas to maintain a diverse and resilient Pool. Appointment to the Pool does not guarantee any work or payment. Climate KIC reserves the right to seek quotation from, or issue assignments to, one or more Pool members during the term of the Framework Agreement at its own discretion.

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

Climate KIC reserves the right to award the contract to more than one third party supplier to achieve suitable capabilities for the geographical coverage described. Applicants are encouraged to make it clear in their proposal what countries they can evidence experience in and note any geographical limitations to the coverage of these services.

For clarity, the following services are specifically "Out of Scope"

- General short-term staff-substitution consultancy engaged to fill a temporary capacity or capability gap in Climate KIC's own staff. Such engagements are procured separately and do not constitute an External Independent Expert assignment as defined in this RFP.

4.2. Service Level Requirements

In providing goods and/or services to Climate KIC, the following service levels are requested:

- Services are requested during business hours 9am to 6pm CET excluding public holidays.
- Services may be required outside general business hours, and flexible working arrangements are requested.
- The service provider should be generally contactable and responsive during business hours by phone or email.
- Services should be delivered by professionally competent and appropriately experienced individuals.

4.3. 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 applicants:

- The services are to be delivered digitally following a paperless policy
- We ask our service providers to consider the greenhouse gas emissions from transport to our 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.

4.4. 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, links to terrorism, breach of tax or social security obligations
- Is an individual prior employee of a Climate KIC or group entity (discretionary basis)
- Will continue to be a full-time employee of an EIT grant recipient or Climate KIC partner during the contract term (discretionary basis)

If any of these scenarios apply, please make Climate KIC aware via the application form.

4.5. Required Experience and Capabilities

The team or individuals delivering the services should be able to demonstrate the following experience and capabilities:

- Expertise in one or more of Climate KIC's priority thematic areas (e.g. climate adaptation, climate resilience, emissions reduction, governance, capacity development, partnerships & collaboration, monitoring & evaluation, agri-food, or general innovation). See Annex 1
- Experience in delivering services comparable to those required under this RFP (thematic advisor, mentor, evaluator/ evaluation panel member, learning content contributor, speaker/ panellist), evidenced through the proposal and references to relevant past assignments.
- Written and spoken local language competency in English and, where relevant to the assignment, other languages.

4.6. Contract Management

Climate KIC will share its standard framework agreement to successful applicants. The Framework Agreement does not guarantee any minimum volume of work or payment; specific tasks will be commissioned under individual Assignment Agreement issued during the 4-year term.

5. Award Criteria

Climate KIC will assess the applications based on the following factors:

Mandatory pass/ fail criteria:

- Acceptance and confirmation, through the application form, of:
    - Eligibility and Compliance Declarations
    - Confidentiality and Data Protection Compliance
    - Administrative and Contractual Compliance

Only proposals that meet the pass/fail criteria will proceed to the detailed evaluation against the weighted assessment criteria:

Component	**Weighting**
Demonstrated expertise in the subject matter relevant to the requirements, evidenced through the proposal and references to relevant past work	40%
Demonstrated experience in delivering services comparable to those required under this RFP (thematic advisor, mentor, evaluator/ evaluation panel member, learning content contributor, speaker/ panellist), evidenced through the proposal and references to relevant past assignments.	30%
Cost as per daily/ hourly rates	30%
Total	100%

6. Instruction to Applicants

6.1. Application Documents

Climate KIC is requesting the following to apply on this contract:

1. Complete the application form
2. Send an email to experts@climate-kic.org including the following attachments:
    - Proposal (max. 3 pages) that sufficiently details the applicant's expertise, proof of past work. This proposal may include website links to examples of work previously performed by the applicant if applicable (e.g. portfolios, work products or other) and professional references that can be reached by Climate KIC to verify previous services delivery.

- Resumes/CVs must be provided for the individual applicant or, where the application is submitted by an organisation, for all proposed individuals who will be assigned to deliver the services for Climate KIC.

Deadline for applications: 30 October 2026 (18:00) CET

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

6.2. Quotation requirements

Climate KIC request that applicants quote daily and hourly rates excl. VAT in the application form.

6.3. Subcontracting guidance

It is not anticipated that the delivery of these services will require subcontracting

6.4. Complaints handling

Climate KIC offers applicants a mechanism to foster transparency and enable procurement best practice.

Applicants have the right in this procurement procedure, within a reasonable time, to address questions, request additional information and obtain feedback, as well as submit complaints. Requests for information or clarifications and complaints will be directed to the contact person (the Contract Manager or other designated person) indicated in this Request for Proposal. Climate KIC reserves the right not to action complaints received after any applicable standstill period.

The Contract Manager will acknowledge, review and respond to complaints or clarifications presented by applicants in a reasonable time. Climate KIC reserves the right to conduct a procedural review, make changes to the published procurement documents or take other action in response to complaints at its discretion.

In the event of a serious irregularity in connection with this procurement, and after first exhausting the recourse of obtaining a reply from the contact person for this procurement, applicants and suppliers are referred to the channels outlined in Climate KIC's Strategy & Policy Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption (refer whistleblowing) available at https://www.climate-kic.org/policies/.

6.5. 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 six (6) months from the call 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 the Executive Summary. If a point of clarification materially affects the RFP, our response will be circulated to all applicants, otherwise the response will only be sent to the applicant 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 a contractual arrangements with Climate KIC in connection with this RFP does not guarantee work will be awarded.
5. Climate KIC reserves the right to reject any proposal(s) received after the submission date/time.
6. Climate KIC reserves the right to undertake post-bid negotiations with none, all or a shortlist of applicants.
7. Climate KIC, 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 an 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 applicants, 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. 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 applicant and by submitting a proposal you automatically agree that proposal becomes the property of Climate KIC.
10. 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.
11. The formatting of this document and Microsoft online forshould not be altered.
12. 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.
13. Unsuccessful applicants agree, by the submission of their proposals, to return to Climate KIC / destroy this RFP and any and all papers, records, data and materials supplied to them in connection with it, including all copies made by them.
14. This RFP is for consideration in whole and not in part or parts unless otherwise indicated.
15. 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.

Annex 1

Expert Pool – Expertise Categories

- Adaptive management of natural resources
- Adaptive systems in the face of uncertainty posed by climate change
- AI ethics and sustainability
- AI for industrial decarbonisation
- Bio-based manufacturing
- Biodiesel
- Blue economy – including marine resource management, ecosystem restoration, offshore renewable energy (e.g. wind and wave power), decarbonisation of shipping, and blue finance (including direct investment and policy frameworks for regenerative ocean industries)
- Built environment and retrofits
- Business coaching – including business models and pitching
- Business Model Canvas
- Carbon accounting
- Carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS)
- Circular economy – including circular industries, business models, manufacturing and circular capacity building
- Circular supply chains
- Citizen engagement and behavioral change
- Climate adaptation and mitigation in city planning and urban design
- Climate adaptation and mitigation in land use
- Climate adaptation and resilience
- Climate change in the Mediterranean context
- Climate communication
- Climate finance and de-risking of public and private assets and investments
- Climate risk assessment and management
- Climate science fundamentals
- Decolonisation and comparative approaches to climate resilience
- Ecology and nature-based solutions
- Education and learning design
- Emissions reduction and decarbonisation of manufacturing industries

- Energy systems – including solar, biodiesel, heat pumps and district heating
- Entrepreneurship support for cleantech start-ups and scale-ups – particularly investment readiness, access to markets and investment attraction
- Food systems and agriculture – including agroecology, climate-smart agriculture and soil carbon
- Forests – including urban forests and forest product value chains
- Gender, equity and inclusion – including women's leadership
- Green manufacturing
- Heat pump systems
- Industrial-scale carbon reduction solutions
- Innovation – including general and open innovation
- Just resilience
- Just transformation
- Net-zero technology manufacturing – e.g. renewable energy components and battery energy storage systems
- Smart mobility
- Sustainable waste management – including industrial waste
- Systems change
- Systems innovation and systems thinking
- Water security and water reuse

Annex 2 - List of Questions and Answers

Questions	Answers
I have a few projects/roles which I would like to refer to where the person who was my key client/line manager, whom I would have previously used as a professional referee, has either retired, or moved on - would it be acceptable to provide an alternative contact from the organisation in those cases, who would be equally able to professionally verify & comment on my work?	Yes, it is acceptable to present an alternative contact from the organisation.
I recently joined an organisation, which is mainly advising water utilities in the various aspects of their operations and has a particular expertise in desalination and reuse. As such, I assume I no longer qualify as an independent advisor. Please let me know if it is otherwise.	Yes, you still qualify as an independent expert. Be sure to share any conflict of interest that might arise if presented with a statement of work.
I currently have a framework agreement with CKIC that is expiring next year, can I still apply?	Climate KIC is centralising its external experts into one consolidated pool, so we advise all experts to apply. The new framework will be for 4 years.