

NZC CESF Procurement

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

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**Authors:**



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# Abbreviations and acronyms

| Acronym             | Description  |
|---------------------|--|
| NZC                 | NetZeroCities  |
| CESF                | City Expert Support Facility   |
| RFP                 | Request for Proposal   |
| NZC-SGA2 / SGA2-NZC | NetZeroCities Specific Grant Agreement No.2 to Scale the Cities Mission Platform |

# Summary

This document outlines the scope, process, and evaluation criteria for the deployment of Emergent and Additional Support via the City Expert Support Facility (CESF) to the community of practice among cities within the same national context. The document is organised as follows:

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# 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 (CESF). Please treat this document in accordance with the confidentiality obligations detailed further in this document.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Services and/or goods requested                                     | Expert Support to the <b>community of practice of cities*</b> in Bulgaria  |
| 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Bulgaria</b></li> </ul> Services will be delivered on-site at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Various cities in Bulgaria</li> </ul> Additionally, services will be provided remotely to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cities in <b>Bulgaria</b></li> </ul> |
| Climate-KIC Contract Manager for submitting proposals and inquiries | Jourdan Wetzlar<br><a href="mailto:tenders@climate-kic.org">tenders@climate-kic.org</a>  |
| Proposed contract term for successful candidates                    | 12 months, deliverables and activities based   |

\* Details on what is referred to as a community of practice of cities can be found in Section 1.7.3 below.

**Table 1: Procurement executive summary**

## 1.2. What is the CESF within the framework of NZC-SGA2 T1.6?

The City Expert Support Facility (CESF) within the framework of NZC-SGA2 1.6 is a grant-funded expert deployment service aimed at enhancing collaboration among cities within their national contexts. It focuses on strengthening the participation of cities interested in climate neutrality, in collaborative spaces and communities of practice among cities offered by national platforms and ecosystems.

Through Work Package 1 in SGA2, specifically from Task1.6, a dedicated support programme is being organised to strengthen communities of practice among cities (including Mission cities and other cities), support collaborative work between them in their national environment, and advocate for greater participation of cities that are not part of the 112 Mission Cities.

## 1.3. Timelines

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

| Planned Date* | Milestones  |
|---------------|---|
| 17/03/2025    | RFP issued to bidders                                   |
| 24/03/2025    | Deadline for Bidders to submit clarifications/questions |
| 31/03/2025    | Bidders submit proposals / Submission Deadline          |
| 11/04/2025    | Evaluation Completed, bidders informed of outcome       |
| 18/04/2025    | Proposed contract start date                            |

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

**Table 2: Timeline table**

If you have questions on the RFP, email the Contract Manager at least 3 business days before the submission deadline. We aim to respond in a timely manner wherever possible. To proceed, please submit a proposal following the requirements by the Submission Deadline stated at Section 1.3. Climate-KIC will assess bids and notify bidders following the timeline at Section 1.3.

## 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 (NZC).

## 1.5. 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"** and other cities aiming at reaching climate neutrality – 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.

## 1.6. About CapaCITIES

**CapaCITIES** is a Horizon Europe project (2022-2024) that offers support for national and regional authorities to advance their governance structures and strengthen dedicated support for cities to implement the EU Cities Mission. The project is currently working with national stakeholders in 15 countries, including **Austria, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, and Turkey**.

CapaCITIES work is designed specifically to support the development of national platforms through strengthening the engagement of national entities in designing support services to regional and local authorities to reach climate neutrality. The project will end in March 2024. A new project will be funded to continue the started activities via a Horizon Europe call closed in September 2024, and which is expected to begin in spring 2025, with a planned duration of two years.

## 1.7. About National Platforms

### 1.7.1 What are National Platforms

National platforms are multi-stakeholder national ecosystems that complement the efforts of the EU Cities Mission platform in their country-specific context. They aim to foster joint learning and progress among all cities that face similar challenges, given their shared national context. They support cities that are part of a community of practice in developing and implementing Climate City Contract (CCC) in the local language and seek to scale up actions and good practices between them. They also provide assistance to cities for emerging inquiries, ensuring that such support is coordinated jointly with NZC, among many other functions.

National platforms can create a conducive environment for joint learning and collective progress among cities facing similar challenges within the same national context. This is why these communities of practice among cities are also considered ideal workspaces for the participation of cities that are not part of the 112 Mission Cities, to accelerate their transition to climate neutrality. They enable other cities to participate in peer-learning opportunities and collaborative spaces alongside Mission Cities. This interaction provides them with valuable insights and methodologies, fostering a sense of inclusion and engagement in the broader climate neutrality objectives. By facilitating access to tools, resources, and support services developed under the Mission Platform, national platforms ensure that cities can effectively contribute to and benefit from the collective efforts done at national level by Mission Cities towards climate neutrality.

### 1.7.2 Alignment between NZC and CapaCITIES to support National Platforms

NetZeroCities and CapaCITIES work towards better alignment and coordination to deliver complementary support to all European countries and mobilise Member States and Associated Countries to establish their own national platforms for climate neutral cities. This coordination and close collaboration are crucial to build one comprehensive support programme. While CapaCITIES support is designed with the national level in mind, the NetZeroCities services are mostly city-facing.

This means that the two projects offer support at these two levels:

#### **Work with the national level**

CapaCITIES focuses on bringing together national representatives involved in national platforms and includes networking events between countries, transnational exchange of knowledge and good practices, thematic capacity-building sessions, mentoring programs, and resourcing. By doing so, it aims at supporting national authorities in improving national support frameworks for local authorities, including regulatory frameworks. CapaCITIES, given the constraints on resources, emphasises collective learning at the national level rather than providing support to the different national authorities in an individualised way.

#### **Work with the local level**

NZC is designed to support cities and, within the framework of national platform support, to strengthen the community of practice among cities within the same national context. This collective support includes technical assistance, finance and investment advisory, peer-to-peer learning, development of collaborative actions, and collective learning sessions. This approach works in harmony with CapaCITIES' initiatives, creating a synergistic effect that significantly enhances the capacity to reinforce national ecosystems within the Member States.

By providing complementary support, both programs collectively contribute to a more robust framework within the various national contexts for achieving climate neutrality.

### 1.7.3 Community of Practice within the same national context

Throughout this document, the term “community of practice among cities” refers to collaborative spaces where cities of the same country regularly engage with one another on regular basis. These communities are designed to enable local governments to combine efforts in the development and implementation of climate actions aimed at achieving decarbonization, thereby establishing a cohesive community of practice.

The key objectives of the community of practice are:

- A) to empower individuals who work on climate in local administrations and communities;
- B) to foster collaboration between cities, information sharing and the exchange of ideas, experiences, lessons learnt and best practices;
- C) to help municipalities address and tackle concrete barriers.

In this context, cities exchange experiences, collectively address shared challenges, and engage in knowledge-sharing sessions that respond to their evolving needs. Central to these communities of practice is the continuity of interactions, which fosters sustained collaboration among cities that not only face similar regulatory constraints and challenges but also share commonalities in language and cultural nuances. This sustained engagement enables cities to consolidate their efforts, drawing on shared knowledge and best practices within the same cultural and regulatory context.

## 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 regard to confidentiality and of the disciplinary proceedings which will result if confidentiality conditions are breached.

## 3. Specifications

### 3.1. Scope

In the context of the efforts of Bulgarian cities within the **EU Mission for 100 Climate Neutral Cities by 2030**, and specifically the opportunity identified to provide additional support to the community of cities working toward the mission's objectives within Bulgaria's national ecosystem, NZC / Climate-KIC is requesting a quotation for services from an organization or individual 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 technical assistance*, 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 Bulgaria.

The support will be directed towards cities that are already part of the Mission in Bulgaria—Mission Cities, Pilot Cities, Twin Cities, cities participating in online discussion groups— and other interested cities wanting to achieve climate neutrality.

- (2) Organisation of one in-person *annual national event* to support cities, promote co-implementation of projects and to enhance collaboration between cities, national and regional authorities, and other stakeholders. The services will also include encouraging the participation of CapaCITIES 2.0 partners or similar initiatives in this event.

Presentations and technical support will take place predominantly in Bulgarian; therefore, presenters must be fluent in Bulgarian. 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 technical 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 maximising impact by strengthening collaborative networks within each country. Therefore, this initiative also aims to serve as kick-start and to encourage the continuity of funding once the support described in this procurement is completed.

### 3.2. Context

NetZeroCities, through 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 nation, 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 Bulgaria, Sofia and Gabrovo are the Bulgarian Mission cities participating in the EU Mission for Climate Neutral and Smart Cities. However, there are many more Bulgarian cities that work hard to implement ambitious climate action and improve wellbeing of their citizens, with a number of Bulgarian cities engaged in the Covenant of Mayors initiative and a number of municipalities which are signatories to the Climate Adaptation Mission Charter. From a multi-level governance and multi-stakeholder cooperation perspective, there has been growing interest and participation across all governance levels in energy and climate dialogues in Bulgaria, which has also seen the involvement of Bulgarian cities and



Bulgarian cities' networks. This has been apparent through the [NECPlatform project](#), where EnEffect, the national Bulgarian coordinator, has set up a multi-actor and stakeholder platform to enable dialogues on the Bulgarian NECP. It is therefore important to continue stimulating collaboration on climate neutrality in Bulgaria, especially amongst the Bulgarian Mission cities and other interested cities. This will enable knowledge exchange and transfer of good practices between municipalities operating in the same national context (community of practice).

Building on these developments, and as part of the broader NZC program of support to all countries, new services are planned for 2025. In the case of Bulgaria, these services, which will be contracted through this tender, are to be delivered by an individual or organization with deep expertise in the Bulgarian national context. This approach ensures targeted support that directly addresses the objectives outlined in this RFP.

Finally, as part of this specific support, each country has a NetZeroCities partner responsible for coordinating the work. In the case of Bulgaria, this role is fulfilled by Energy Cities.

### 3.3. Required Experience and Capabilities

The supplier will ensure sufficient capacity to deliver the services in an efficient and effective manner. The organisation, team or individuals delivering the services shall be able to demonstrate the following experience and capabilities:

#### *Minimum Requirements*

- Fluency in Bulgarian (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, proven by a demonstrated experience of at least 5 years working with local authorities
- Ability to propose systemic approaches to reach climate-neutrality and apply the Mission-approach
- Excellent understanding of policies and regulations at the intersection of climate / environment and urban development
- Good understanding of governance system and competencies relevant for climate neutrality across different levels of governance

#### *Desirable experience and capabilities:*

- Good understanding of cities' challenges in achieving climate neutrality by 2030; direct connection to cities.
- Good understanding of the Mission approach
- Good understanding of NetZeroCities and CapaCITIES projects
- An apolitical / neutral role to ensure the ability to build trust among actors from different political spaces, both at the local and between other levels of government
- 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. 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          | <p>Strengthening the community of practice among Bulgarian cities, that is, increase collaboration between cities on local climate neutrality transitions.</p>  | <p>Sofia and Gabrovo are the two Bulgarian Mission Cities participating in the EU Cities Mission. There is an opportunity to not only strengthen collaboration amongst them but to also extend this effort to other interested Bulgarian cities, advancing their climate neutrality efforts. The insights and experiences gained from Sofia and Gabrovo's participation in the EU Cities Mission shall be shared more widely to inspire and support other Bulgarian cities in their climate planning. To enable this, there is a need to stimulate a community of practice, bringing together the Bulgarian Mission Cities as well as other Bulgarian municipalities, with the effort of engaging municipalities which might be smaller in size. This community of practice will aim to build on existing structures and create added value by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing, enabling Bulgarian cities to exchange information, experiences and best practices to learn from each other and work collaboratively on climate efforts</li> <li>• Work together with Bulgarian municipalities to identify common challenges and barriers, and to find solutions collectively</li> <li>• Empower actors within local administrations to embark on climate efforts through dedicated capacity building, using, where relevant, the tools, examples, and resources already delivered by NetZeroCities, such as the Climate Transition Map. These tools and resources shall also be adapted to the national context and in the national language, where relevant.</li> </ul> |
| 2          | <p>Build skills and strengthen capacities amongst Bulgarian municipalities to implement innovative climate action, following a holistic, transformative and systemic approach.</p>  |  |
| 3          | <p>Increase awareness on climate change amongst political leaders in local governments.</p>   |  |
| 4          | <p>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.</p> |  |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  | This support shall be delivered in close collaboration with national partners (incl. CapaCITIES partners) that NZC is engaged with, to avoid the duplication of efforts. |
|--|--|--|

### 3.5. Responsibilities

| Responsibilities |   |
|------------------|---|
| 1                | Awarded supplier will take part of regular meetings (estimated at once per month) with NZC partners to ensure the coordination of the activities with other support provided by NZC (that we aim at coordinating with national stakeholders, including CapaCITIES, Covenant of Mayors, etc.). The awarded supplier will not carry out activities within the scope of the awarded services without the respective coordination with NZC. |
| 2                | Awarded supplier will use the NZC communication materials and apply the communication guidelines provided by NZC. Awarded supplier won't promote their own- or third-party services when delivering the required services, unless formally agreed by the NZC partner in charge of coordinating the work in the concerned country.   |
| 3                | Awarded supplier will participate in NZC's Capacity Building Activities where necessary (up to one 2h-session per quarter).   |
| 4                | Dates and location of activities proposed will be subject to the formal approval of NZC partner in charge of coordinating the work in the concerned country; this is especially the case for the in-person annual event to be organised.  |
| 5                | Awarded supplier will involve the local authorities suggested by NetZeroCities in the delivered activities. Refusal shall be duly justified.  |
| 6                | Awarded supplier will propose, based on their expertise and knowledge of the national ecosystem, any adjustments deemed necessary to the planned activities and approaches during service provision. Any modifications to the proposed activities or approaches will be subject to the approval of the designated NZC partner responsible for coordinating efforts within the respective country.                                       |

### 3.6. Services and Activities

#### 3.6.1 General information

The following workplan contains the activities to be delivered. It is designed to offer flexibility so that the service providers, taking advantage of their specific and valuable knowledge of the national ecosystem of Bulgaria, can adapt the activities as well as propose additional ones that they consider necessary to achieve the objectives described above.

Therefore, proposals including complementary approaches or additional services to enhance the process described above would be welcomed, where they can contribute to the objectives. To integrate this flexibility into the subcontracting process, is foreseen that that applicants will submit a *'Proposed Workplan'* as part of the required documentation (See section 6.1).

In the 'Proposed Workplan,' the bidder may propose modifications to the mandatory activities, provided these are well-reasoned and justified.

#### 3.6.2 Workplan: Mandatory and Recommended Activities

To achieve the objectives stated in Section 3.4, the following activities shall be carried out by the service provider in the period of 12 months (starting in March 2025). All activities will be carried out in

coordination the NetZeroCities partner responsible for coordinating the work, in this case Energy Cities. For each activity, the listed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) shall be achieved.

| <b>Mandatory activities</b>   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Activity 1. Organization of an in-person national annual event</b> | <b>According to objective: 1 and 3</b>  |
| <b>Description</b>  | <p>The subcontractor will organise a national event in 2025 to enhance the visibility of Bulgarian cities' efforts in climate action and create a platform for all relevant actors and stakeholders within the national ecosystem to collaborate on climate efforts.</p> <p>The event aims to inform Bulgarian stakeholders about how the EU Cities Mission is advancing and accelerating the path towards climate neutrality. Additionally, it will provide an opportunity to discuss strategies for accelerating climate neutrality within the national context, bringing together key stakeholders, particularly those crucial to driving local climate transitions in Bulgaria.</p> <p>The event shall include participation and involvement from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Mission Cities of Sofia and Gabrovo, along with other Bulgarian cities interested in advancing their climate neutrality efforts.</li> <li>• Local energy agencies and existing municipal networks.</li> <li>• Various levels of government, including relevant government agencies, regional governments, and national Ministries.</li> <li>• Key stakeholders from the private, financial, research, and civil society sectors in Bulgaria.</li> </ul> <p>The event could be organised alongside or in collaboration with another significant national event focused on related topics. It shall leverage the momentum generated by the 2024 IPCC event in Sofia and build on the multi-stakeholder platform established in Bulgaria during the NECPlatform project. Collaboration with key Ministries, such as the Ministry of Energy, the Ministry of Environment and Water, the Ministry of Innovation and Growth, the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Transport and Communications, as well as key municipal networks, will be essential.</p> <p>In addition to these key stakeholders, the subcontractor is expected to liaise with Energy Cities (the NZC partner organisation responsible for Bulgaria in this task) and other local partners, such as national organisations involved in the Covenant of Mayors (CoM), willing to contribute to the event. Where relevant, the subcontractor shall also establish connections with other key support services within NZC, particularly in the areas of policy innovation (SGA 1 T6.5) and national investment roundtables (SGA2 T2.6).</p> <p>While collaboration with CapaCITIES 2.0 is fundamental to the event's organisation, the primary objective is to utilise the allocated resources to create a new event which complements an existing or planned event by CapaCITIES 2.0. This approach aims to maximise the number of national initiatives in 2025 offered by both initiatives. Nonetheless, this would still require close coordination with the CapaCITIES 2.0 partners to ensure their active participation and to guarantee that all events are complementary and mutually reinforcing.</p> |
| <b>Participating Stakeholders</b>                                     | <p>Bulgarian Cities, including Mission Cities and other interested cities; local energy agencies, relevant national ministries and agencies; regional authorities; private sector; academia/research and civil society organisations.</p>   |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>KPI</b></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 50 participants</li> <li>• At least representatives from 8 Bulgarian cities join the annual event for 2025, including political representatives.</li> <li>• At least 8 other national or regional stakeholders join the annual event</li> <li>• At least 8 other stakeholders from the private, civil society and research sector</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Activity 2. Organize a community of practice for cities &amp; develop and deliver a capacity-building programme</b></p> |  |
| <p><b>Description</b></p>   | <p><b>According to objective: 1 and 2</b></p> <p>The subcontractor will establish or strengthen a community of practice amongst cities in Bulgaria, including Sofia and Gabrovo (Mission Cities), and other cities committed to advancing their efforts towards climate neutrality.</p> <p>This community shall build on existing initiatives, frameworks, and collaborative setups already in place among Bulgarian cities. The subcontractor shall leverage the tools and resources available on the EU Cities Mission portal and create an online group within the portal, providing Bulgarian cities with access to these resources and a dedicated communication channel for sharing information. In its proposal, the subcontractor shall outline specific NZC tools and resources that can complement its ongoing activities, enhance the community of practice, and address the needs of Bulgarian cities.</p> <p>In addition to establishing this online space, the subcontractor will organise capacity-building training for individuals or teams working within local administrations. If required, a brief assessment or analysis shall be carried out to identify key areas of need for Bulgarian municipalities, which will inform the focus of the training. Potential topics may include monitoring and reporting GHG emissions, climate action planning both for mitigation and adaptation, sustainable finance, and stakeholder engagement.</p> <p>Where available and/ or applicable, NZC-developed resources shall be utilised for these trainings and, if necessary, adapted and/or translated into the national language. The training shall be practical, fostering peer-to-peer exchange to enable Bulgarian municipalities to learn from and support one another, and to ultimately develop concrete skills. The subcontractor is encouraged to collaborate with specialised organisations on various topics, such as NZC, CapaCITIES, Covenant of Mayors, and CDP-ICLEI Track for GHG emissions accounting.</p> <p>In addition to capacity building for municipal staff, the subcontractor may also consider targeted training for political representatives to raise awareness of the importance of climate action and the local-level co-benefits often associated with climate ambition.</p> |
| <p><b>Participating Stakeholders</b></p>  | <p>City staff working in climate and environmental departments, finance departments and treasuries, infrastructure departments and others. Ideally, representatives of the political level will also be included.</p>  |
| <p><b>Formats</b></p>   | <p>The described sessions and activities may be delivered in the following formats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint sessions that bring together both groups: the two Bulgarian cities already involved in the Mission and other interested cities aiming to achieve climate neutrality.</li> <li>• Exclusive sessions for other interested cities working towards climate neutrality.</li> </ul> <p>While the joint format is preferred whenever feasible by bringing the two Mission Cities together with other interested cities, the choice of format will be guided by the content and objectives of each specific session to ensure that the sessions achieve tangible progress on issues relevant to cities with shared needs. The modalities of the sessions can be both online and in-person, with in-person sessions prioritised to enable effective peer-to-peer learning.</p>   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>KPI</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least representatives from 6 Bulgarian cities join the community of practice in 2025.</li> <li>At least 6 sessions delivered for the community of practice in 2025, including the capacity-building training.</li> <li>At least 8 organisations join the Bulgarian national group on the Mission Portal.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Activity 3. Enabling participation of cities in multi-stakeholder and multi-level collaboration spaces</b> |   |
| <b>According to objective: 4</b>  |   |
| <b>Description</b>  | <p>According to Objective 4, multi-stakeholder and multi-level engagement shall 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 shall foster information sharing, open dialogue, alignment of strategies, narratives, and objectives, collaborative problem-solving and cooperation among all participants.</p> <p>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 multi-level collaboration, and will support cities being part of the community of practice to prepare their participation for these meetings (providing inputs for the agenda, development of a common narrative, policy propositions, expression of needs and required services and so on). As already mentioned in Activity 1, here, if relevant, the subcontractor can link with NZC support services on policy innovation (SGA 1 T6.5), in order to help cities involved in the community of practice define, refine and articulate specific policy demands towards other levels of government, or else government bodies.</p> <p>During these meetings, the outcomes from Activity 2 (community of practice sessions and capacity building) shall be shared with the stakeholders engaged in the National Platform in order to highlight the community of practice ongoing work but also recurrent needs and support identified during these activities.</p> |
| <b>Participating Stakeholders</b>   | Cities (Mission City, interested cities); relevant national ministries and agencies; regional authorities; private sector actors; academia/research and civil society organizations   |
| <b>KPI</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participation in at least 3 meetings with the national support structure</li> <li>At least 6 cities join the national community meetings with the national stakeholders.</li> </ul>  |

### 3.7. Deliverables

The following deliverables are requested:

| <b>Deliveries</b>                                  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Detailed Workplan and Brief Baseline Report</b> |   |
| <b>Description</b>                                 | <p>At the start of the contract, the awarded individual/organisation will be required to deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A detailed workplan aimed at precisely establishing the activities that will take place during the contract period. This Workplan will be approved by NetZeroCities partner in charge of Bulgaria.</li> <li>Brief baseline report (2-page max) 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.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Content</b>                                     | <p>The Workplan will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A detailed outline of the activities to be carried out, specifying the dates, content, cities to be invited, other stakeholders involved, the</li> </ul>   |



|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
|                     | <p>criteria established for these selections, and any additional information deemed relevant.</p> <p>The Brief Baseline Report will include the following information on the existing community of Practice among local governments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 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.</li> </ul> <p>In case the supplier proposes a methodology based on existing collaboration and initiatives, they shall explain how the activities performed in this contract will be complementary and increase the impacts.</p>  |
| <b>Deadline</b>     | To be submitted in Month 2 (M2) of the contract start date.   |
| <b>Final Report</b> |   |
| <b>Description</b>  | At the conclusion of the contract, the awarded individual/organization 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 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.  |
| <b>Content</b>      | <p>The Final Report (10-page max) 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 NZC) 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.</p> <p>Additionally, the report will include any information the awarded individual/organization considers relevant.</p> |
| <b>Deadline</b>     | To be submitted in Month 12 (M12) of the contract start date.   |

### 3.8. Indicative Budget

All tasks are defined to be performed in a time period of 12 months, starting in March 2025.

The total quotations must not exceed **33,000 EUR**, including a maximum allocation of 4,700 EUR designated for logistics associated with the annual event, including but not limited to catering, venue rental, and related expenses. This budget is without any VAT.

### 3.9. Eligibility

Climate-KIC reserve the right to reject proposals where the proposed supplier:

- Has insufficient technical, professional or financial capacity to deliver the services.
- Has been bankrupt or insolvent (last 7 years)
- Is sanctioned by a relevant authority

- Does not comply or has previously not complied with our Ethical Standards for Contractual Counterparties
- Has been convicted of crime, links to terrorism, breach of tax or social security obligations
- Is an individual prior employee of Climate-KIC or group entity (discretionary basis)
- Will continue to be a full-time employee of an EIT grant recipient or Climate-KIC/NetZero City/CapaCITIES partner or any other organization that may attract a double funding risk, during the contract term (discretionary basis)

If any of these scenarios apply, please make Climate-KIC aware in your submission.

### **3.10.Sustainability**

In order to uphold our commitment to sustainability, Climate-KIC aims to minimise any negative impact we may have on the natural and built environment by effectively managing our resources.

In the efforts to procure in a sustainable manner with minimal impact, the following requests are made of the bidder:

- Where practical, the services are to be delivered digitally following a paperless policy
- For events and workshops, please strictly minimise the generation of waste. We ask our service providers to consider the greenhouse gas emissions from transport to our city/partner offices and events. Cycling, walking, public transport and rail are preferable over air travel wherever possible.
- We love to hear what suppliers are doing to minimise impact. Feel encouraged to share your approach and policies if applicable.



## 4. Contracting (third parties)

The below is applicable for NZC External Parties only.

### 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.
- Payment terms associated with delivery of the goods and/or services must be not less than net 30 days.
- Climate-KIC can provide a purchase order number to be referenced on invoices.
- Where Climate-KIC is requesting services over longer periods of time, bidders can invoice in a pay as we go model (e.g. a consolidated invoice based on work completed or completion of deliverables - to be clarified during contracting).
- Requests for deposit payments are generally not accepted.
- If the bidder is requesting any form of payment prior to delivery of goods and/or services, this must be raised with Climate-KIC.
- 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 their standard terms and conditions and will consider the bidder's own terms and conditions on the basis that the bidder can incorporate the following:

- Climate-KIC requires that that service providers provide an indemnity to Climate-KIC for breach of third-party intellectual property rights;
- In addition, 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

The following criteria will be used.

### 5.1. 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:

- Relevant Experience – does the suppliers response show a history of delivering on projects like the package currently being evaluated? (20%)
- Relevant Expertise – do the individuals proposed for the delivery of this work have the relevant qualifications required to deliver this work? (10%)

Suppliers shall provide evidence that they comply with the minimum requirements, and if applicable the desirable requirements, indicated in section 3.3.

## 5.2. Capacity to Deliver (30%)

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:

- 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. (20%)
- 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. (10%)

## 5.3. 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.
- Pricing evaluation will follow the universally accepted formula of (Lowest Price / Tendered Price x Price Criteria Points (40)).
- 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 3 - Example scoring methodology for price lots

# 6. Instruction to Bidders

## 6.1. Responding with your proposal

Climate-KIC requests the following documentation to be 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.  
This proposal shall include:
  - A **Proposed Workplan** based on the content of Section 3.4, 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7, indicating how the supplier plans to deliver the activities (methodology, timeline, topics, demonstrating the added value compared to potential existing initiative or work, etc.). Any modifications, proposed adjustments, or additional activities shall be specifically oriented towards addressing the needs of the stakeholders who will receive the support, namely the cities within the national ecosystem of Bulgaria. The proposed workplan shall clearly differentiate

the methodology and activities proposed to address the mandatory activities included in section 3.6, and the ones proposed in addition (if any) to meet the objectives.

- **Evidence that the suppliers have the experience and expertise** to deliver the services as mentioned in section 5.1 and 3.3 (list of previous projects and activities, resumes of individuals that will be assigned to conduct the services described in this document), and **the capacities** as mentioned in section 5.2 (current workload, management measures)

This proposal may include:

- A **letter of support** containing the endorsement of various key stakeholders of the national ecosystem/platform. Namely, national authorities, representatives of different key municipal governments (Mission cities, Pilot cities, among others). This requirement is suggested, not compulsory.

Climate-KIC reserves the right to request this letter of support from potential bidders for awarding the bid.

2. The bidder is, amongst **other items**, also kindly asked to provide:
  - their trading name, VAT or tax identification number (if applicable) and registered trading address (please note, address is not required for an individual).
  - website links to examples of work previously performed by the bidder if applicable (e.g. portfolios, work products or other).
  - professional references that can be reached by Climate-KIC to verify previous services delivery.
3. **A Quotation** that meets the requirements described at Section 6.2.

Climate-KIC reserves the right to reject RFP responses that do not confirm with these guidelines. All responses shall be made to the Contract Manager (refer Section 1.1) via electronic copy, at [tenders@climate-kic.org](mailto:tenders@climate-kic.org)

## 6.2. Quotation requirements

Climate-KIC request that bidders quote in the following manner, as appropriate to delivery of the services:

- Please provide itemised quotations in Euros and specify if the quote includes / excludes VAT or any other taxes. Please refer Table 4 as an example.
- Provide a rate card for relevant grades of employment that will be conducting services (e.g. day rate) instead of averaged rates. These may be used for additional services. Please refer Table 4 as an example.
- For External Suppliers (Non-NZC Consortium): Travel and subsistence for these services are strictly limited. Domestic travel and subsistence will not be reimbursed unless agreed in advance and in writing with Climate-KIC, please estimate costs in your quotation. If you require international transport and/or accommodation, please make this clear and estimate costs in your quotation. Time for travel will not be billable hours.
- Include all applicable costs or charges associated with providing the goods and/or services in your quotation.
- Please quote on a company letterhead or similar company form where possible with the resolution described in Table 4 at a minimum.

**Table 4: Provided quotations to include the following details**

| Item and unit cost (in Euros excluding VAT)  |
|--|
| Services for activity 1 as per Section 3.6.2 |
| Services for activity 2 as per Section 3.6.2 |
| Services for activity 3 as per Section 3.6.2 |

|  |
|--|
| Deliverable 1 “Detailed Workplan and Brief Baseline Report” as per Section 3.7 |
| Deliverable 2 “Final Report” as per Section 3.7                                |
| License fees (per user per month/annum, and in aggregate) if applicable        |
| TOTAL (if applicable)  |
| <b>Rate card for services (per day/hour, in Euros excluding VAT):</b>          |
| Assistant – XX / day   |
| Officer – XX / day   |
| Specialist - XX / day  |
| Project coordinator – XX / day   |
| Consultant – XX/day  |
| Principal consultant – XX/day  |
| Partner – XX/day   |
| ...  |

### 6.3. Terms of this RFP

1. Your proposal shall be submitted according to the instructions as detailed in this section and shall be valid for a period of at least six (6) months 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 undertake post-bid negotiations with none, all or a shortlist of bidders.
7. Climate-KIC/GARAC, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to accept or reject any or all of the proposals received and not to award any business and shall not be bound to give reasons for any decision. Only the execution of a written agreement between a Climate-KIC entity and a supplier(s) will obligate a Climate-KIC entity in accordance with the terms and conditions contained in such agreement.
8. Climate-KIC reserves the right to procure services from alternative suppliers(s) where the successful bidder is, or becomes, uncompetitive within the market. However, issues over pricing and specification will be resolved through discussion and mutual agreement between Climate-KIC and the supplier.
9. Bidders are required to email soft copies of their proposal to the Contract Manager detailed in Section 1.1 based on the timeline at Section 1.3.
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.