



NZC CESF Procurement RFP

CESF Procurement Document template to be published internally or externally for the purposes of procuring expert support for cities

Date: July 2025

Date of modification: 28 July 2025

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Abbreviations and acronyms

Acronym	Description
NZC	NetZeroCities
CESF	City Expert Support Facility
CFSS	City Finance Specialised Services
RFP	Request for Proposal
GARAC	Grant and Resource Allocation Committee

Summary

This document is to be used to launch a procurement for expert support to be provided against the specification provided herein. The template relates to both calls for NZC Partners (internal) and external third parties (external) to deliver the given support and provides 'delete as applicable' content to align the procurement Route 1 or Route 2, according to the NZC CESF Procurement Procedure.

Request for Proposal

For: City Finance Specialist, subcontractor

Date: April 2025

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	City Finance Specialised Services, dedicated to support capital and finance needs for specific Mission Cities in defined geographic area.
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	<p>Services will be delivered to the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support cities with implementation of their investment plans, get to investment ready projects. Support with scoping and financial close, bring projects to Climate City Capital Hub. • Make themselves familiar with cities organisational structure, get to know all stakeholders, be aware of who the decision makers are. Experience / Seniority for actual city contact to enable influence. • Support capacity building within cities on financial and project prep matters. <p>The City Finance Specialist Service Provider (CFS) will be expected to plan for regular in-person meeting time with city staff. Working with Finance Theme leadership, work flows will be developed to reflect the particular needs and expectations appropriate for each country and situation a CFS will be serving.</p>
Climate-KIC Contract Manager for submitting proposals and inquiries	Baptiste Mesa Program Manager, Finance & Investment CESF@netzerocities.eu
Proposed contract term for successful candidates	One year from date of contract signature plus one further option till December 2027, subject to satisfactory performance and continued need. Anticipated commencement date: 1 st August 2025.

Table 1: Procurement executive summary

1.2 Timelines

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

Planned Date*	Milestones
04 July 2025	RFP issued to bidders
14 July 2025	Deadline to submit questions
30 July 2025 15 August 2025	Bidders submit proposals / Submission Deadline

Planned Date*	Milestones
11 August 2025 27 August 2025	Assessment results announcement (subject to finished evaluations and selection of a winner)
18 August 2025 3 September 2025	Alcatel Period Closes (5 business days from notification to bidders).
20 August 2025 5 September 2025	Proposed contract start date

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

Table 2: Timeline table

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

1.3 About Climate KIC

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

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

1.4 About NetZeroCities

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

1.4.1 NZC Climate City Contracts (CCC)

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

1.4.2 NZC Pilot Cities Programme

The **NZC Pilot Cities Programme** supports large scale piloting activities to exploit, deploy, and scale R&I and systemic solutions combining social, cultural, technological, nature-based, regulatory, and financial innovation, and new business and governance models to underpin the climate transition. As such, the NZC Pilot Cities Programme and its subgrant-funded activities are an opportunity for Mission

Cities to put into practise elements of their developing and/or finalised Climate City Contracts and the plans contained in them and learn by doing so in the process.

2 Confidentiality

All information provided in this Request for Proposal (hereinafter “RFP”) document and any information that may be subsequently disclosed during discussions, correspondence, and negotiations, is confidential and must not be disclosed to any other party or used for any other purpose whatsoever without the prior written permission of Climate-KIC (hereinafter “Climate-KIC”).

The Supplier must not disclose any such information, materials, specifications, or other documents to any third parties or to any other part of the Supplier’s group or use them for any purpose other than for the preparation and submission of a response to this RFP. The Supplier must not make any press announcements or publicise in any way Climate KIC’s name, this document, the quotation process or any subsequent agreement without the prior written consent of Climate-KIC.

Climate KIC may require the execution of Non-Disclosure Agreement as part of this RFP or for future commercial engagements. As part of preparation for the submission of the response and in any subsequent negotiations, the Supplier is allowed to disclose confidential information to others within the Supplier organisation, external advisors, or subcontractors, provided that the confidentiality conditions are adhered to.

Employees of either party who have access to confidential information must be notified of their obligations with regard to confidentiality and of the disciplinary proceedings which will result if confidentiality conditions are breached.

The scoring information (includes price) and the successful proposal will be shared with the City that is the beneficiary of the contract prior to contract execution. The unsuccessful proposals may also be shared with the city for feedback. Please make Climate KIC aware if there are any potential issues with the dissemination of your proposal for the purposes of informing the city of the outcome.

3 Specification

As part of the comprehensive support envisioned by NetZeroCities as the Cities Mission platform, direct capacity support and capability building delivered by City Finance Specialised Service (CFS) has been included in direct response to stated priority needs by Mission Cities. The CFS is being provided in a combination of ways, and this procurement scope addresses one of those ways. Direct sub-contracting of CFS in target geographies will seek to ensure all cities are receiving this level of capacity and capability support.

Mission Cities use the Investment Plan of the Climate City Contract to 1) identify their capital needs for climate-neutral pathways; 2) understand the approximate capacity for public and private capital to meet those needs; 3) assess the current capability for the city to mobilise capital, given their institutional and policy context (local and national) combined with existing capabilities within the municipal government and other capital institutions; 4) outline key priorities for building the needed capacity, policy context and deployment pathways for implementation, including key milestones and metrics.

3.1 Scope

Climate KIC are requesting quotation for a CFS to support Mission Cities in the following geographic areas:

- Bulgaria : Sofia and Gabrovo
- Czech Republic : Liberec
- Estonia : Tartu
- Hungary : Budapest, Miskolc and Pecs
- Israel : Eilat
- Latvia : Riga and Liepāja
- Lithuania : Vilnius and Tauragė
- Slovakia : Bratislava and Košice

The CFS support will deliver on the overall needs of the defined Mission Cities. The CFS exists to help Mission Cities build primarily their financial capacity and capabilities. In a practical sense, the CFS will be expected to work collaboratively with each city's transition team and finance leadership to identify areas of support work and prioritise execution. The CFS will serve as a connection point with the Climate City Capital Hub (CH) and ensure project preparation assistance and capital markets engagement from the CH is aligned with city processes and decision-making. Over time, the CFS serves to help each city build their internal capacity and capabilities, providing direct assistance while avoiding locking in dependencies on the CFS long term.

- Identify and provide priority capacity- and capability-building support to Mission Cities in the defined geography of this CFS.
 - Specific attention will be given to support capacity building on climate-focused capital and finance needs within each Mission City's municipal government structure, along with established institutional partners (e.g., municipal energy companies, etc.). Mission Cities should build their capital and finance capacity as a direct result of CFS support, and not simply rely on the CFS to execute finance-related activities on a city's behalf.
 - The CFS will also assess needs and help organise delivery of capability-building for Mission Cities on capital and finance work. Where city staff would benefit from formal and informal training, coaching and advisory, the CFS will help each city reflect on those needs and work collaboratively to help build an approach for capability development.
- Support Mission Cities with implementation of their investment plans. The practical balance of directly helping a city with project preparation and financial analysis and with building its own capacity and capabilities will be a key area for the CFS and NZC to work together to achieve. Cities often learn by through doing, and the CFS will be critical to helping to refine project

scopes, conduct and oversee business analysis and formal business case development, determining project “bankability”, and engaging with all aspects of project and portfolio development.

- Each city will receive tailored financial support, combining expertise in project finance with capital markets engagement, helping the city to develop an effective strategy for its overall climate finance needs. Such a strategy will seek to identify and overcome key barriers, helping the city to link its finance activities with policy and citizen engagement, in order to enable Mission-scale actions.
- The CFS will help each city in its engagement with the CH and other key investors, including the European Investment Bank (EIB) and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), along with all relevant public and private sources of capital.
- Along with other NZC and CH activities, the CFS will help each city to identify its existing and needed capital ecosystem, so outreach efforts to build up that ecosystem are undertaken early.
- The CFS will need to become familiar with cities organisational structure, get to know all stakeholders, be aware of who the decision makers are. Experience working directly in and adjacent to the city context is valuable, and the CFS will be expected to seek out support from NZC for complementary and supplementary expertise, where needed.
- While not necessarily a formal requirement for NZC, the CFS and each city should work to establish a plan for needed capacity and capability development, both among existing city staff and with additional roles for the city to establish and recruit.
- The CFS across the Cities Mission will provide substantial opportunities for shared learning, synergies in capacity and capability support activities, policy development, and capital markets engagement. As such, NZC will provide close facilitation among all CFS to support information-sharing, knowledge development and exchange, and problem-solving. Close collaboration with NZC and the CH also will be essential in the execution of this work. NZC and the CH have developed effective knowledge management tools and project execution processes to support each CFS in this regard.

Each country in Europe is different in policy and institutional context, and NZC and the CFS support will be tailored to respond to these diverse needs to the maximum extent possible. Further, the ongoing support will seek to be as adaptive as possible to take into account evolving needs.

Climate KIC reserves the right to award the contract to more than one third party supplier to achieve suitable capabilities for the scope of work described. Bidders are encouraged to make it clear in their proposal what expertise and services they can provide in line with the scope of work described, if not the whole scope.

The selected bidder is expected to engage with experts from the NetZeroCities consortium, as well as engaging with the city and its key stakeholders. NetZeroCities experts (who are resourced already and do not have to be represented in a financial offer) are to be engaged (together with the city) on baseline briefings, the overarching strategic approach within which this assignment takes place, as well as for sharing good practices/learning from other cities, where relevant.

3.2 Required Experience and Capabilities

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

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

Experience requirements:

- Minimum of 5 years in a relevant finance role - preferably financial analysis, project finance, financial transactions and execution, or similar, with a primary focus on sustainable finance highly preferable.
- Comprehensive understanding of financial markets, financial structuring, and investment instruments as they apply to sustainability projects.
- Prior experience working with cities and public sector institutions engaging and delivering on sustainable project development.
- Knowledge of local and national financial ecosystems, frameworks and sustainability funding initiatives.
- Proven experience of engagement with private sector financing institutions.
- Specific sectoral project experience in urban sustainable infrastructure e.g. renewable energy, energy efficiency, sustainable transportation, district heating and cooling, etc.

Expected capabilities:

- Fluency in English and in the local languages of each assigned Mission Cities.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to build relationships and collaborate effectively with diverse internal and external stakeholders.
- Financial transactional and execution skills.
- Demonstrated ability to think strategically, solve complex problems, and drive results in a fast-paced, transactional environment.
- Project management skills, including the ability to develop and implement action plans, monitor progress, and deliver results within set timelines
- Ability to adapt to changing city needs and project requirements, demonstrating flexibility in approach and problem-solving.
- Aptitude and flexibility to travel as the service will require both extensive inter and intra-regional travel, with this at times being at short notice.

3.3 Methodology

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

- Extensive travel requirements: The delivery of the work will involve significant travel, sometimes at short notice. It is expected that each CFS will spend significant time on-site with their assigned cities (to be agreed upon with each city based on needs and availability). Additionally, participation in relevant events outside of the covered cities may be required (e.g., Cities Mission annual conference, NZC consortium annual meeting, NZC seasonal school for cities, and other relevant conferences).
- Onboarding training and knowledge management: CFS will be required to complete an onboarding training at the beginning of their contract before engaging with cities. This training will include an introduction to NZC processes and tools, particularly regarding information sharing and knowledge management. Regular updates across NZC information systems (e.g. Notion, SharePoint) and active contributions to business development targets (e.g., LOIs, investor dialogue) are expected.
- Complex stakeholder environment: CFS will operate in a complex ecosystem and engage with multiple stakeholders at both the city and NZC consortium levels. CFSs are expected to quickly establish strong working relationships with Mission Cities, particularly municipal finance teams and other relevant departments, and develop a solid understanding of each city's governance, political landscape, climate strategies, and investment plans. In addition to working with city stakeholders (e.g. climate/transition teams, finance departments, technical departments), CFS activities will be carried out in close coordination with NZC partners, particularly the City Advisors (CA) assigned to the same Mission Cities. As described before, CFS will also act as key liaisons with the Climate City Capital Hub (CH), collaborating closely to ensure continuous feedback loops between the CH and the cities, and actively supporting project maturation and investment readiness.

- Continuity: optimally, there will be a key individual assigned as CFS Lead, who should remain the same throughout the duration of the support to the city(ies), as far as possible. This consistency fosters trust with the city and consortium partners and supports the accumulation of city- and country-specific knowledge.

3.4 Deliverables

The work of each CFS will vary quite significantly, reflecting the distinctive set of priorities and needs of the Mission Cities with the geographic area. As such, deliverables based on tailored finance-related support are difficult to describe in advance. This work will be developed and documented in detail as part of the overall project management in NZC and in alignment with the CH. For the purposes of the sub-contracting management, the following deliverables are requested:

Deliverable 1: NZC City Finance Specialised Services Mid-Project Delivery Report

Requirements:

The sub-contractor must prepare and submit a concise, informative Mid-Project Delivery Report, reflecting the mid-point of the overall contract timeframe. This report should be validated by the cities in receipt of the support, as described in the Assignment contracted. It should serve as a brief but comprehensive report summarizing the activities, outcomes and learnings. In addition, reference to complementary support needs from NZC and others, including national government, should be made to put the finance support work in context. Deliverable 1 will need to reference and provide a brief narrative on how each of the Mid-term objectives (outlined in the Annex 1) has been addressed or met. This should include specific examples or evidence of progress where applicable.

Deliverable 2: NZC City Finance Specialised Services Project Delivery Report Requirements:

The sub-contractor must submit a similar final Project Delivery Report, this time documenting work throughout the term of the contract. This report also will be validated by the cities receiving support and serve to inform future work to support those cities, based on the broader set of Mission support activities of NZC and the CH. Deliverable 2 will need to reference and provide a brief narrative on how each of the Final-term objectives (as outlined in the Annex) has been addressed or met. This should include specific examples or evidence of progress where applicable.

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.

3.5 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, NZC Consortium Member or Climate-KIC partner during the contract term (discretionary basis)
- Climate-KIC cannot enter into any contract with any individual supplier for over EURO 221,000 utilizing this procurement process. We encourage bidders that can apply for multiple countries

to do so, even if the cumulative total exceeds this number. This is to ensure the strongest bids can be selected on a country by country basis.

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

3.6 Sustainability

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

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

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

4 Contracting (third parties)

4.1 Payment & Invoicing

- Payments will be made following provision of a correctly rendered undisputed digital (via email) invoice to Climate-KIC. Climate-KIC contract manager will inform the successful bidder where to submit invoices.
- 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

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 (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:

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 (20%).

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 (10%).

5.2.3 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.

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:
 - 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.
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.

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 via electronic copy, at CESF@netzerocities.eu

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;
- 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.
- 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. 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.

6.3 Terms of this RFP

1. Your proposal should be submitted according to the instructions as detailed in this section and should be valid for a period of at least 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 should be made on the assumptions taken to arrive at your quoted costs, or alternatively contact us prior to submitting your proposal to seek clarification.
4. Entering into contractual arrangements with Climate-KIC in connection with this RFP does not guarantee work will be awarded.
5. Climate-KIC/GARAC reserves the right to reject any proposal(s) received after the submission date/time.

6. Climate-KIC/GARAC reserves the right to undertake post-bid negotiations with none, all or a shortlist of bidders.
7. Climate-KIC/GARAC, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to accept or reject any or all of the proposals received and not to award any business and shall not be bound to give reasons for any decision. Only the execution of a written agreement between a Climate-KIC entity and a supplier(s) will obligate a Climate-KIC entity in accordance with the terms and conditions contained in such agreement.
8. Climate-KIC reserves the right to procure services from alternative suppliers(s) where the successful bidder is, or becomes, uncompetitive within the market. However, issues over pricing and specification will be resolved through discussion and mutual agreement between Climate-KIC and the supplier.
9. Bidders are required to email soft copies of their proposal to the Contract Manager detailed in Section 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 should be sequenced and numbered in accordance with the format of this RFP.
13. The formatting of this document and the attached response document should not be altered.
14. Whilst this RFP confers no legal rights on its addressees, it is not intended that any other persons acquire rights or obligations in respect of or arising under it.
15. Unsuccessful bidders agree, by the submission of their proposals, to return to Climate-KIC this RFP and any and all papers, records, data and materials supplied to them in connection with it, including all copies made by them.
16. This RFP is for consideration in whole and not in part or parts unless otherwise indicated.
17. All efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy and validity of information contained in this RFP. However, Climate-KIC does not warrant the information accurate or comprehensive.

7 Annex 1: Mid-term and Final-Term Objectives

Mid-Term Objectives

1. Understand and Established Relationships with your City:

- a. Analysed and understood all the CCCs of all your Cities with particular focus on Investment Plans and projects highlighted. Please use the ;
- b. Developed an overview of municipal governance (Finance teams and other relevant departments), public sector companies/utilities and contact persons;
- c. Established relationships with Treasury/Finance teams within your cities.
- d. Established relationships with the City Advisors (CA's) and EIB country officer.
- e. Identified the key contact people within your cities for the Capital Hub and established a relationship;
- f. Analysed the financial situation and the balance sheet of each of your Cities, are aware of hurdles and difficulties to finance the CCC, understand their ease/appetite/ability to raise debt, available equity/budget to finance projects, experience with (green/social) bonds, PPPs, SPV's, crowd funding, other financial instruments;
- g. Gained insights into the political situation in your cities, the appetite and drive for CCC implementation, potential hurdles and blockages, important regulations and incentive structures for different infrastructure sectors;
- h. Conducted at least one in-person full-day meeting or workshop with each Mission-labeled city.

2. Informed about and able to guide Cities to the Capital Hub and broader NZC support offering:

- a. Understood and are able to present the Capital Hub support offering to cities;
- b. Understood the global NZC offering to cities (including the Capital Hub, City Expert Support Facility - CESF, City Support Groups, pilot activities, policy advice, etc.) and be able to guide cities towards these support services when requests arise, with the primary objective of delivering offerings under the Capital Hub and liaising with CAs for additional requests;
- c. Established relationships with relevant NZC organisations in your countries (e.g. SEI in Sweden, Polimi in Italy, UPM in Spain, etc.);
- d. Developed connections with national platforms within your countries, where applicable;
- e. Be aware of the Better Funding Dialogues (SGA2 T2.6) that are planned or currently taking place in your country or countries.

3. Got a project overview:

- a. Are familiar with the infrastructure project lifecycle (project preparation process), can explain the most important steps to Cities (project preparation process slides) and can assess the readiness of a project depending on the information presented to you;
- b. Established an overview of City projects included in CCCs (all projects added into notion), are able to provide information on:
- c. Where the projects stand in terms of project preparation (maturity assessment) - added information into notion;
 - i. Who are the relevant departments, utilities, people involved in each project;
 - ii. What are the main obstacles, issues the City needs support on;
- d. Supported the City on project prioritization to bring to the Capital Hub:
 - i. Discuss with City the maturity/readiness of their projects and indicated this information in notion (on all projects of the City, not just the ones which the Capital Hub supports);

- ii. Identify support needs for individual projects (in regards to project preparation (TA) and finance);
 - iii. Support cities to use City Finance Framework for portfolio of projects and fill out the Project Intake Form (PIF) and to submit it to the Capital Hub with the relevant documentation on the projects;
 - e. Established feedback loops with Capital Hub and City:
 - i. Once projects are allocated to working groups within the Hub, participate in (and coordinate) working group meetings to provide timely feedback to Cities;
 - ii. Be accountable for regular feedback to Cities on specific projects and general requests and stay informed on work performed by Capital Hub working groups on your City projects;
- 4. Established an overview and relationships with investors:**
- a. Are familiar with the TAs and investment offers and conditions of the European Investment Bank (EIB) ;
 - b. Have established good relationships with the EIB representative of your country/city;
 - c. Have complemented the existing overview (table/list) of all relevant grant providers in your country and are familiar with the most relevant grant providers, their grant provision criteria;
 - d. Have established/complemented an overview (table/list) of all relevant (private) debt and equity providers for different infrastructure sectors in your country, are familiar with their investment criteria;
 - e. Be aware of the main EU, regional and national public funding sources for Cities' projects (link to SGA2 T2.6.1 mapping).
 - f. Have established a relationship with first investors and established a shortlist of investor contacts to reach out to;
- 5. Established an overview and (potentially) relationships with other relevant partners:**
- a. Familiarized yourselves with available Technical Assistance support within the EU realm, that is potentially eligible for your Cities and can direct Cities towards that support offering (familiar with eligibility criteria, format for applications, informed about open calls);
 - b. Established an overview (table/list) of potential private project developers/service providers/PPP partners for relevant infrastructure projects in your country/cities - Have established relationships with first partners and established a shortlist for additional relevant contacts to reach out to;

Final-Term Objectives

1. Cities & Partner knowledge

- 1. Deepened key relationships with city finance teams, city finance advisors, EIB & EBRD country officers as evidenced by number of meetings and a comprehensive understanding of cities' (including city public companies) and other relevant governance, financial situation, and Climate City Contracts (CCCs) for cities under responsibility as evidenced by and the information output.
- 2. Hold regular touchpoints (weekly or biweekly) with the City Advisor(s) for the cities under responsibility.
- 3. Hold at least one monthly update and coordination meeting with the National Platforms for the countries under your responsibility, if applicable.
- 4. Be aware of and participate, if relevant, in the Better Funding Dialogues taking place in the country(ies) under responsibility.

5. Participate in the NZC country meeting for the country(ies) under your responsibility.
6. Update the following information on Notion at least once a week:
 - a. Your projects/assignments with the Capital Hub Project/Assignment Tracker
 - b. Your meeting minutes with cities in the “City Support & Finance-related Meeting Notes” database
 - c. Your scheduled meetings with cities in the “City Event Calendar”
 - d. General updates on your cities in the “CFS/Capital Hub workstream” section of the “City Support Tracker”
7. Update the relevant project and city information stored in the NZC SharePoint at least once a week. Additionally, ensure that the corresponding links to these documents are added in the appropriate space in Notion.

2. Financial & private capital Development

1. Get an understanding of projects already in process the city is financing to learn from/engage with
2. Have a clear view of the gaps and opportunities in terms of public sources which could be met by Private investors or private banks, or third party public/philanthropic capital (or a combination thereof).
3. Contribute to thinking about innovative business models, capital combinations, and financial solutions to address those gaps.

3. Business Development

1. Obtain at least 10 LOIs in total with clear trajectory for deployment of capital (to support projects advance to the next stage) collaborating with the Hub for (TA) project preparation assistance, modelling expertise and funding assistance and financial advisory.
2. Support the development of a written document of interest from investors for at least one City project supported by the Capital Hub by year-end, ideally contributing to or enabling term sheet negotiations to drive value generation in 2025 and beyond.
3. Deepen City Treasury teams (including public companies as may be relevant) relationships under responsibility to build trust and develop a prioritised pipeline with assignment requests to be submitted to the Capital Hub with the relevant information. Similarly, engage with relevant City departments and utilities, such as the construction department, waste and water utilities, to ensure comprehensive project preparation and coordination.
4. Schedule and hold a monthly meeting with EIB counterparts, and as the case may be relevant EBRD counterparts, and ensure smooth operations with EIB or EBRD colleagues.
5. Establish a network of technical/project preparation assistance providers, including Smart Cities and Philanthropies, and potential project developers/PPP partners.
6. Identify at least 4 local investors or banks for city projects and build relationships with them.
7. Leverage and use the City Finance Framework tool as much as possible as may be relevant to help develop investable propositions.

8 Annex 2: Replies to interested suppliers

The answers are provided in RED in the text below

1. The RfP describes the scope for several countries/cities but does not specify individual work scopes. Could you provide more detail to help us estimate the workload per country/city?

The RfP leaves the individual city work scope flexible, as it is intended to reflect each Mission City's specific needs, which will vary and evolve over time through ongoing engagement. Section 3.1 outlines core expectations that will apply to all cities: investment plan implementation, capacity building, project preparation, engagement with the Capital Hub and support for capital ecosystem development. Bidders are encouraged to estimate effort per city based on these expectations, the number of cities per country and the anticipated need for on-site presence and stakeholder engagement.

2. Is there a required or recommended format/template for responding to the RfP or preparing the application?

No strict format or template is provided in the RfP. However, section 6.1 of the RfP outlines the required content of the submission.

3. If a price proposal is to be submitted as a total (in addition to hourly rates), should it include or exclude the optional work extension until December 2027?

The initial contract is for 1 year, with an optional extension until December 2027. Price proposals should reflect this.

4. Starting from this provision in the RFP (section 3.5) 'Climate-KIC cannot enter into any contract with any individual supplier for over EURO 221,000 utilizing this procurement process. We encourage bidders that can apply for multiple countries to do so, even if the cumulative total exceeds this number. This is to ensure the strongest bids can be selected on a country by country basis.':

- Since our consortium can cover the cities in two countries (Bulgaria and Hungary), can we submit two separate bids, one for each country?

Yes, you are allowed to submit separate proposals for each country, which may help with clarity and compliance with the budget cap per award. Please note that the EURO 221,000 ceiling per contract/supplier still applies.

- If the answer to the previous question is 'Yes', and given the wording in the RFP on covering multiple countries, do you have a preference regarding two separate submissions, one for each country, or one - joint countries submission?

Considering the EURO 221,000 ceiling and the evaluation being done on a country-by-country basis, two separate submissions may simplify evaluation. A joint submission would be acceptable if clearly segmented by country and budget.

5. Given the multiple beneficiary cities listed in the RFP for Hungary and Bulgaria, we have a question on the previous experience/ engagement with the nominated cities of the proposed city finance specialists: will the proposals who have experts with references/ projects/ expertise with the nominated cities be ranked higher in the evaluation? Is the criterion of previous experience/ engagement with the nominated cities relevant for scoring of the proposal, and if 'yes' what would be the weight of such criterion?

Yes, indirectly. The “Relevant Experience” criterion (20%) includes prior work on similar projects. While experience in the specific listed cities is not explicitly required, demonstrated local engagement or knowledge of the municipal finance ecosystem (particularly in the listed cities or countries) would strengthen the proposal under both the “Relevant Expertise” and “Relevant Experience” criteria.

6. Regarding the submission deadline (section 1.2), can you please clarify the hour/time by which the proposal needs to be submitted via e-mail on the 30th of July 2025?

The submission deadline has been extended to Friday 15 August 2025 (23h59 CET).

7. Is the contractor/CFS expected to perform services in all of the 14 cities, or will a subset of these cities be prioritised? Or, conversely, is it possible to bid for certain cities?

Contractors are not expected to provide services in all 14 cities. It is possible to submit a proposal covering one or several specific countries. However, it is not possible to submit a bid for individual cities, as all cities within the same country must be covered by the same service provider.

8. We note that fluency in English and in the local languages of each of the assigned Mission Cities is required. Are you as such aiming to contract a consortium/team that speaks all of the 8 local languages? Or do you plan to contract several teams/CFS to cover the language requirement?

As mentioned above, we are not aiming to contract a single provider for all 14 Mission Cities. Contractors may submit bids for specific countries, and therefore we expect to award contracts to several teams/CFSs, each covering different countries and meeting the corresponding language requirements.

9. Will teams/CFS that are fluent in English but not the local languages be excluded?

Teams/CFS fluent in English but not in the local languages will not be automatically excluded. However, local language skills will be taken into account in the evaluation of the offers.

10. Could you kindly confirm whether the €221,000 ceiling applies per country, covering all Mission Cities within that country (in our case: Budapest, Pécs, and Miskolc)?

The EURO 221,000 ceiling applies per contract/supplier, not per country.

11. Regarding the KPI on the Letters of Intent (LOIs), is the expectation to secure 10 LOIs per country, or is that target intended per city?

The KPI on LOIs (10) applies per country.

12. Expected structure of the proposal and the assignment of experts (CFS): Is the supplier expected to submit one proposal per city, each with a dedicated CFS expert, or can the supplier submit a single proposal covering all cities they can support, potentially with a team of CFS experts? In Arup we are in working relationships with experts in multiple geographies. We would like to understand what proposal form is preferable to the NZC?

We expect suppliers to submit proposals covering all the Mission Cities they are able to support. The structure for delivering this support is left to the suppliers to propose.

13. Additionally, is it acceptable for one CFS expert to support multiple cities, or is a one-to-one assignment (one expert per city) required?

It is acceptable for a single CFS to support multiple cities (for example, all Mission Cities within the same country).

14. Are bidders expected to cover all listed cities within a given country, or is it acceptable to submit a proposal covering only a selection of those cities?

Bidders are expected to cover all listed cities within a given country if they choose to submit a proposal for that country. It is not possible to submit a proposal covering only a selection of cities within a country, as all cities must be covered by the same service provider to ensure consistency and coherence of support.

15. Should a dedicated CFS Lead be assigned to each city individually, or is it acceptable to appoint one CFS Lead responsible for all cities included in the contract?

We encourage continuity, ideally with a single CFS Lead per country or contract (depending on how many countries/Mission Cities covered), not necessarily per city. A shared lead across cities is acceptable if capacity and responsiveness are ensured.

16. Following the RfP, we understand that the €221,000 budget cap applies to a single supplier. Does this mean that this cap applies to a single city or a single country (having in mind a country can include support to 1 to 3 cities)? We understand suppliers covering multiple geographies are still encouraged to apply despite the total fee exceeding the cap. Or should separate proposals for countries / cities be submitted?

It applies per contract/supplier, not per city or per country. You may apply to cover multiple countries. However, the total value of any single contract cannot exceed the EURO 221,000 cap as Climate-KIC is not permitted to award a contract above this amount under this procurement procedure.

17. Could you please clarify whether travel expenses incurred by city representatives will be reimbursed by Climate-KIC, covered by the cities themselves, should they be included in our financial proposal within the base fee or should they be estimated on top of the base fee?

Travel expenses for city representatives are not to be included in your proposal. Your quotation should only cover your costs. Cities are responsible for their own travel unless otherwise agreed separately with NetZeroCities.

18. What travel assumptions (in expert-hours per year) should we include for fee calculations or travel cost calculations?

We understand that it may be challenging to estimate annual travel costs with precision. As outlined in the RfP, CFS are expected to engage in significant in-person work with Mission Cities. However domestic travel and subsistence will not be reimbursed unless agreed in advance in writing and international travel must be clearly estimated in your quotation. Please also note that travel time is not billable. We recommend that you:

- Include reasonable travel assumptions based on your delivery approach (e.g. min. 1 to 2 in-person visits per city per quarter).
- Estimate associated expert hours for travel accordingly.
- Clearly indicate those assumptions in your proposal.

International travel for events (such as the Cities Mission annual conference, NZC consortium meetings, etc.) should also be factored into your cost estimation and presented as a separate line item in your quotation.

19. Do the business development objectives (e.g., number of LOIs, investor engagement) apply per city, or are they expected to be achieved collectively across all cities covered by the contract?

These objectives are set per CFS or per country-level contract, not per city. The target of 10 Letters of Intent (LOIs) is based on the existing CFS model, where each CFS covers between 5 and 10 cities. In this case, the objective of 10 LOIs is cumulative across all the cities

included in your scope. However, efforts should be distributed proportionately across the supported cities.

20. Does the project foresee collaboration between cities within different countries? For example, would it be acceptable to organize joint workshops or meetings with multiple cities and for example representatives from EIB/EBRD, especially if they share similar needs?

Yes, the project does foresee collaboration between cities across different countries. While this is not explicitly stated in the RfP, such collaborative initiatives would be welcome. However, they should be clearly communicated and well-coordinated with NetZeroCities activities, particularly with the City Advisors and the Climate City Capital Hub.

21. If we are submitting a bid to multiple countries, can you confirm this should be in one proposal document versus one proposal document per country?

A single proposal document covering multiple countries is preferred. Please clearly structure your offer to identify the specific countries covered.

22. We acknowledge next Wednesday 30 July 2025 as the submission deadline, but if there a specific time cutoff we should consider?

The submission deadline has been extended to Friday August 15 by 23h59 CET. Please ensure your proposal is submitted before this time to be considered eligible.

23. Proposal Format & Structure: Is there a specific template or outline for the proposal (e.g., sections for methodology, work plan, team, budget)? Is a cover page or executive summary required?

There is no mandatory template but we recommend proposals to follow a logical structure as a clear and concise format will facilitate the evaluation process.

24. Word Count or Page Limits: Are there recommended page limits for individual sections (e.g., technical approach, experience, CVs)? Do annexes count toward the 30-page limit?

The main proposal document should not exceed 30 pages. Annexes (CVs, references, etc.) do not count toward this limit. While no annex limits are set, we encourage conciseness throughout.

25. Submission & Deadline Details: Should proposals be submitted in a specific file format (e.g., PDF, Word)? Are there naming conventions for files? Is the 30 July 2025 deadline based on a specific time zone (e.g., 23:59 CET)? We wish to request an extension to submit our bid by no later than August 5th 2025.

While no specific file format is indicated, we recommend submitting in PDF format to ensure formatting consistency.

There are no mandatory naming conventions but please ensure the file name clearly includes your organisation's name and, if possible, the countries covered.

The submission deadline has been extended to Friday August 15 by 23h59 CET.

26. Budget & Fee Structure: Should fees be quoted as daily rates, overall project cost, or both? Should costs be disaggregated by task, location, or deliverable? Are travel expenses reimbursed separately?

Fees must be presented using the budget template provided. Fees should be quoted as daily rates, with the estimated number of days per task and the total cost broken down by task and by country. The budget must clearly distinguish between: professional fees (daily rates), travel and subsistence costs and any other costs.

27. Contract Duration & Workload: What is the expected effort distribution (e.g., hours per week) over the one-year contract? How many trips or days per city are anticipated for in-person engagements?

There is no set number of hours or trips. On-site engagement is encouraged but we leave it to bidders to estimate travel and expert hours accordingly to their proposal.

28. City-Specific Priorities: Are city-specific priorities or Climate City Contracts available for the target cities (e.g., Sofia, Tartu) to tailor the proposal?

While the RfP does not annex Climate City Contracts (CCCs), many are publicly available. Bidders are encouraged to tailor their approach to reflect known city-specific priorities and incorporate relevant public CCC information in their methodology.

29. Deliverables & Schedule: Are milestone deliverables predefined, or will they be finalized post-contract? Are regular presentations required alongside written reports?

Deliverables are outlined in Section 3.4 of the RfP. Regular communication and updates are expected throughout the contract. While formal presentations are not explicitly required, they may be requested as part of the coordination process.

30. Team Composition & Expertise: Is a solo expert acceptable, or is a team-based bid preferred for the geographic scope?

Proposals from both individual experts and teams are accepted, provided they meet the required qualifications and capabilities outlined in Section 3.2.

31. Institutional & Administrative Requirements: Are specific insurance policies (e.g., professional liability) or legal certifications required beyond indemnities and Ethical Standards compliance?

Applicants must comply with the ethical standards, confidentiality, conflict of interest and data protection requirements outlined in the RfP. This includes adherence to GDPR and related obligations. No additional legal certifications or insurance policies are required beyond these provisions.

32. Pre-submission Q&A: Will answers to bidder questions be shared publicly with all bidders? Is there a Q&A document or webinar you can provide us with?

Yes, answers to clarification questions will be shared with all interested suppliers to ensure transparency. A consolidated Q&A document will be circulated as an annex to the updated version of the RfP prior to the submission deadline.

33. Post-Award Engagement: Will there be an onboarding process or briefing with NetZeroCities and the Capital Hub team? Who is the primary contact for ongoing progress reporting?

Yes, an onboarding programme and meetings will be organised with NetZeroCities, including the Climate City Capital Hub team. Climate-KIC, as the coordinator of NZC, will be the primary contact point for coordination and reporting.