



NZC CESF Procurement RFP

**CESF Procurement of external expert support to assess
and strengthen Climate Transition Finance Capacity,
Investment Prioritisation and Portfolio Development for the
Cities of The Hague and Eindhoven**

SGA3-MCCC-026 The Hague&Eindhoven

Date: 17 July 2026

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Abbreviations and acronyms

Acronym	Description
NZC	NetZeroCities
CESF	City Expert Support Facility
CCC	Climate City Contracts
RFP	Request for Proposal
GARAC	Grant and Resource Allocation Committee
CoP	Community of Practice

Request for Proposal

For: Capacity Building and Climate Transition Finance Portfolio Development for the Cities of The Hague and Eindhoven

Date: 17 July 2026

1 Overview

1.1 Executive Summary

This is a Request for Proposal (RFP) that details Climate-KIC's requirements for services to support cities in the NetZeroCities programme, through the NZC City Expert Support Facility. Please treat this document in accordance with the confidentiality obligations detailed further in this document.

Services and/or goods requested	Climate-KIC, acting on behalf of NetZeroCities, is seeking expert support to assist the Cities of The Hague and Eindhoven in strengthening their capacity to develop strategic approaches to climate transition finance, investment prioritisation and portfolio development. The assignment will support both cities in enhancing their internal capabilities, developing prioritisation logic and financing roadmaps, and facilitating a structured capability-building programme through collaborative learning, expert engagement and knowledge sharing. The support will also generate practical recommendations and transferable outputs to inform future investment planning and wider replication across Mission Cities.
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	The Hague and Eindhoven Services will be delivered remotely to the following locations: • The Hague and Eindhoven (The Netherlands) Some onsite services may be required at: • The Hague and Eindhoven (The Netherlands)
Climate-KIC Contract Manager for submitting proposals and inquiries	Luisa Carretti Mateusz Hoffman CESF@netzerocities.eu
Proposed contract term for successful candidates	01 September 2026 Expected duration: approximately 6 months

Table 1: Procurement executive summary

1.2 Timelines

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

Planned Date*	Milestones
17 July 2026	RFP issued to bidders
31 July 2026 (23:59 CEST Time)	Deadline to submit questions
12 August 2026 (23:59 CEST Time)	Bidders submit proposals / Submission Deadline

Planned Date*	Milestones
21 August 2026	Assessment results announcement (subject to finished evaluations and selection of a winner)
04/08 September 2026	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.

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.

1.4.3 NZC Community of Practice

The [NZC Community of Practice \(CoP\)](#) is a collaborative space on the Mission Platform, which gathers city officials, experts and practitioners from public organizations, private organisations or public-private organisations directly involved in climate neutrality programmes, activities or solutions. Through this community, we recognize that there are already many existing resources, knowledge, and solutions available, and we aim to foster their connection to cities to help them achieve their climate goals. Through the online portal group and monthly webinars, the CoP encourages the sharing of challenges, questions, and solutions related to climate neutrality, facilitating discussions that inspire innovative collaborations and drive city strategies for achieving climate goals.

The CoP plays a complementary role in the context of the City Expert Support Facility. While participation in the CoP is not required to submit an offer and has no influence on the evaluation process, it may provide added value for suppliers in other contexts. It provides a space where city needs can be openly shared and discussed, and where suppliers can stay engaged, respond to emerging opportunities, and contribute their expertise. For more information on how to join the CoP and present your services, please contact helena.suarezgroen@lgi.earth.

2 Confidentiality

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

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

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

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

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

3.1 Background

The Hague and Eindhoven are actively engaged in the EU Mission for 100 climate-neutral cities by 2030. As part of their Climate City Contract through which they have received their respective mission labels, they have created a climate action plan setting out key investment needs. To achieve climate neutrality and prepare the respective cities for the impacts of climate change, large-scale investments are needed, both in public and private assets: Public infrastructure, public spaces, utilities, public and private buildings. Whilst some of these investments can take place on the basis of discreet project funding, in many cases the investments are inter-related, i.e., investment in one system or place depends on investment in another system or place. The scale of the investments needed is a challenge at a time of constrained local government resources.

The cities actively acknowledge the scale and complexity of the investment needs and have begun addressing this funding and finance gap, as well as the associated, knowledge, and capacity gaps. They also acknowledge that some investments are 'bankable' (i.e., appropriate for different forms of traditional project finance), whereas this is more complex for other investments. The constraints on public finance clearly also play a role in investment considerations.

Broadly, the challenges can be divided into two categories:

1. Cities lack the capacity and expertise to create project pipelines and portfolios that are appropriate and attractive (in terms of feasibility, scale, commercial / non-commercial return, co-benefits and synergies with other stakeholder objectives, risk profile, etc) for a range of potential investor parties (public / private / philanthropic / civic); the cities are aware they need a clear prioritisation logic enabling them to envision what type of projects can be financed through which type of resources and to understand what processes are required to unlock these.
2. The financial mechanisms of which the cities are aware seem partly ill-suited to answer fundamental large-scale and long-term questions the cities face with regards to financing a holistic sustainable and resilient urban future (the need to address both climate mitigation and adaptation, the need to address urban infrastructure systems in an integrated way, the need to address residents' multiple needs and priorities, social justice, economic development opportunities, etc), prompting questions about what financial instruments would be appropriate and feasible given the scale of the challenge, and what the cities' role is in developing and deploying those instruments.

These two challenges are clearly connected: Effective capital deployment (public, private, blended) requires well-designed processes of engagement and decision-making, with a key role for municipalities. This points to a need to build internal municipal capacity around prioritisation and portfolio formation, sustainable investment mechanisms, stakeholder / co-investor engagement, societal impact, risk and return expectations, innovative financial instruments and integrated (e.g. area-based) approaches and decision-making.

As such, the cities have identified several key interrelated topics, including but not limited to:

1. The need for a portfolio-development approach to understand the interrelation between projects and investments and decision-making processes (including building capacity);
2. A systematic approach to prioritising investment needs (what are the most urgent/top priority areas of investment, and which areas currently lack other avenues for investment?);

3. Options for using public funds effectively, to attract private investors within a strategic transition approach, considering overall transition priorities, the different perspectives / expectations of diverse private sector investors, social justice and long-term public value, testing e.g. the possibilities of blended finance for this purpose;
4. The need to recognise the risk of 'cherry-picking' where less bankable investment needs aren't met/are left behind on more bankable ones;
5. The need to bundle investments to achieve economies of scale and scope, whether on an 'area-based' (district approaches) or thematic basis ('energy solutions') and the impact of different approaches on investment risk profile.

3.2 Scope

Climate KIC, acting on behalf of NetZeroCities is requesting proposals to support The Hague and Eindhoven with addressing the challenges set out above. Specifically, the support should focus both on the capacity building and expertise development, and on the second (the need for appropriate tools and financial mechanisms – including novel mechanisms if needed – as well as processes and decision-making pathways), enabling the cities to progress tangibly with the ambitions set out in their CCCs.

The cities have engaged support both from NetZeroCities and other communities of practice, both in the Netherlands and beyond, and through commissioning a range of capacity building through their own respective budgets. The main relevant documents are cited in Annex 1. The cities have therefore already addressed different aspects of financial innovation in varying ways. The cities also are different, with a variety of instruments and knowledge and know-how they bring to the table. The cities' aim is to systematise and complement their learning to date by engaging expert support to facilitate the next steps in capacity building and process development. This consists of the following key ingredients. Bidders are encouraged to propose a methodology (including the frequency of sessions) within the maximum budget indicated;

1. Creating a shared understanding of the two cities' different climate transition financing needs and potential solutions on the basis of relevant documentation such as documents shared in Annex 1 including the cities' Climate Investment Plans (non-public – to be shared by cities), as a basis for developing a range of city-wide portfolio finance options, to enable strategic decision-making by each city.
2. Creating a tailored capability building approach with key municipal team members from the two cities, facilitating their learning process over approximately a 4-month period. This will involve both sessions with the individual cities and knowledge exchange between the two cities, systematising insights in a way that make insights and lessons learnt sharable with both Dutch and other Mission Cities. The facilitation of this capability building should include:
 - Designing the overall learning arc and objectives together with the participants, and checking against / iterating this overall learning arc as the support is delivered.
 - preparing, facilitating, and documenting regular sessions;
 - bringing in outside expert perspectives where relevant and appropriate - It is expected that this will involve NetZeroCities experts, including from the NetZeroCities Capital Hub, some of whom have worked with the cities already; NetZeroCities' expertise can be accessed without additional cost; however, bidders may suggest an approach that brings along additional external experts (i.e. beyond the core facilitator team). For indicative purposes, we suggest bidders price for up to four experts beyond the core facilitator team, suggesting experts they think may be relevant.
3. Supporting the cities in developing a prioritization logic based on work already done (see Annex 1) and a way to systematically prioritize different types of investments and match them to

appropriate financing tools as the basis of portfolio management and a roadmap for funding the two cities' climate ambitions;

4. Supporting the cities in gaining insights in the diversity of their investment needs and their differential financial and societal (e.g. climate / social) return profile;
5. Supporting the cities in gaining insight in the current investment landscape in the cities and on the national level, to understand where the cities' needs and demands match supply of available funding and finance options, or where these are lacking;
6. Supporting the cities in gaining an overview of finance tools and instrument options, and finance structuring approaches, to match them to their needs;
7. Supporting the cities in gaining insights in the different roles they can play, including stakeholder engagement and decision making processes..

The proposal should consider the following:

- The support should genuinely engage with the local context in each city to provide a tailored approach to capacity building and knowledge formation, in sync with the lived reality of municipal team members working on different aspects of the climate transition vis a vis what is needed to achieve acceleration of impact in line with the Mission ambition. It is critical that a collaborative and co-creative, interactive approach with the cities is achieved
- The support should build on the report completed by ERAC for the City of The Hague in February/March this year about potential financial instruments and capacity and knowledge questions that need to be addressed (Annex 1), and on conversations the City of The Hague and Eindhoven have with the European Investment Bank such as on potential instruments and the possibility to build up a cross-city collaboration for instruments, to match the above with the supply side. Relevant insights from these conversations will be shared at Inception stage.
- The two cities are actively aiming to build on the outcomes of the support scoped in this RfP, e.g. in terms of bringing in further capacity for financial structuring into the cities' teams, and the support provided as described in this RfP would form an important basis for informing such next steps.

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

- Any activities that duplicate the advice and recommendations already obtained by the participating cities, such the documents included in Annex 1.
- Detailed financial investment case development or financial modelling for any specific project or bundle of projects; NB illustrative modelling of hypothetical investment cases may be relevant as part of the approach.
- Activities related to long-term implementation beyond the duration of the assignment
- Stakeholder engagement processes beyond those with NetZeroCities experts or other experts as agreed with the cities, are considered out of scope. This includes direct potential investor engagement being out of scope.
- Direct engagement with EU institutions such as the EIB is considered out of scope.

3.3 Phased Tasks / Activities

The cities imagine the following phases to the work. Bidders are invited to consider this in their methodology.

3.3.1 Phase 1 Inception phase (week 1-3)

What needs to be done:

- Discuss any questions around baseline documentation (as set out in Annex 1) and identification of any additional documentation the appointed supplier needs to engage with. Bidders are invited to reserve a limited number of days for this.
- Achieve a good, mutual understanding of the state of play in the two municipalities and the Dutch context more generally
- Co-design of the overall learning approach, timeline, focus, outcomes and success metrics

The cities and NetZeroCities will provide the supplier with relevant information through an agreed information request procedure. The cities will share their climate action plans and climate investment plans, and other relevant information, insofar as confidentiality arrangements allow.

Expected output: Deliverable 1: Inception report and work plan

3.3.2 Phase 2a Capability building Deployment Phase (week 3-20)

What needs to be done:

- Delivery of regular capability building sessions over four months with appropriate level of preparation, documentation, and, where needed, iteration of the learning plan. This includes mapping out existing knowledge & capabilities – and knowledge & capabilities gaps - on financing needs, relevant finance structuring tools, financing opportunities and processes in the Dutch context.
- Delivery will be in Dutch, for a group of ~6 people as regular participants from across the two cities, and will be in person in principle, both with each city individually and together. The participating cities will make meeting space available in their respective cities at no cost. Bidders are encouraged to take note of the suggestion that engagements take place every three weeks, but within those parameters bidders should make suggestions on the cadence, frequency and length of the meetings as part of an appropriate methodology within the maximum budget available.
- Organisation of NetZeroCities or other specialist / external experts' input as appropriate.

The cities and NetZeroCities commit to enabling relevant team members to participate at the required frequency.

Expected output: Deliverable 2 - Summary of Capability building documentation.

3.3.3 Phase 2b Prioritisation Logic & Roadmap development Phase - Concurrent with Phase 2a (week 3-20)

What needs to be done:

- Supporting cities in developing their prioritisation logic, portfolio management practices and a financing roadmap, including decision-making processes. It is suggested that this happens both in the in-person meetings sessions and through in-between work by the cities, using tools and methods delivered by the successful bidder. Bidders are encouraged to suggest a suitable methodology.
- Gaining insight into investment needs and opportunities and differing municipal roles through the regular learning sessions

The cities commit to actively sharing their considerations around prioritisation, investment needs, opportunities, and considerations with regards to the role the municipality can take, as well as highlighting knowledge gaps. The cities also commit to actively co-creating and reviewing the associated Deliverable on the basis of the collaborative work undertaken.

Expected output: Deliverable 3: Summary of key insights and recommendations for prioritisation logic informed by key insights in investment needs, investment landscape, and city roles

3.3.4 Phase 3 Synthesis phase (week 20-24) What needs to be done:

- Synthesising insights and lessons learned on the basis of ongoing documentation throughout the process in order to make it relevant not just for wider audiences in the cities involved, but also for mission cities and mission-minded cities across the Netherlands and Europe.
- Appointed suppliers are expected to make themselves available for at least one online presentation / workshop to present the findings of the work to other Mission cities.

Expected output: Deliverable 4: End of support report meant for wider audience in cities across Europe.

The cities and NetZeroCities commit to actively reviewing this deliverable.

The delivery mode is expected to be in person for the regular engagement with cities, whether individual or together. This is deemed essential for relation building and quality of the interaction.

Online meetings can be considered from time to time.

Meetings are expected to take place in the participating cities, The Hague and Eindhoven.

City staff will organize venues and the supplier only needs to account for the supplier's travel and subsistence cost, within the suggested session frequency parameters set out above.

Given the importance of enabling other Mission cities to benefit from knowledge and insights gained from through support from NetZeroCities, it is expected that the appointed supplier makes themselves available for one (online) knowledge sharing session (webinar style) to present and discuss findings from the work undertaken, to be organised by NetZeroCities.

3.4 Milestones

The services are expected to be delivered according to the following (indicative) milestones:

Milestone	Time frame
Contract start date and kick-off meeting	04/08 September 2026
Phase 1 - Inception complete	Early October 2026
Phase 2a & 2b – Learning Community and Prioritisation Logic	Early October 2026 – end of January 2027
Phase 3 complete (Final report output)	Mid/End February 2027

3.5 Expected Budget

As planning assumption, it is expected the support will take the Supplier up to three person-days per week on average across senior and junior team members over a maximum of six months across Phase 1-3, leading to a total of approximately four person-months for this assignment. Bidders are expected to propose the team composition they consider most appropriate to deliver the assignment and must show a breakdown of proposed team roles, effort allocation and applicable day rates, including involvement of any specialist / external experts insofar as they deem relevant.

The maximum budget available for the support is EURO 85.000,00 (VAT excluded) including travel cost and budget for specialist / external experts.

3.6 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:

1. Experience in the context of Dutch municipalities and the barriers they face in delivering on ambitious climate goals, given the scope of their responsibilities, mandate and financial powers;
2. Experience and capabilities in developing ambitious and innovative yet realistic climate finance structuring options, both at project and at portfolio level, in the Dutch institutional context, taking into account considerations such as the multilevel governance dynamics in the Netherlands; the multiple priorities of public policymaking; the interplay between public and private sector stakeholders and investors; the importance of an intentional governance approach to ensure equitable ways to distribute risk and reward, and to ensure public value; the need to ensure climate justice and a long-term-focussed approach; opportunities and trade-offs between various co-benefits; the interplay between whole-city, area-based and multi-city approaches in developing financing strategies and their institutional requirements;
3. Experience and capabilities in planning, guiding and facilitating public sector learning trajectories, including session planning, execution and documentation;
4. Ability and willingness to listen well to municipal needs and concerns and connect these to best practices and innovative approaches, and an ability to be agile in delivering project ambitions in response to needs and concerns;
5. An understanding of the role that EU-level institutions may play in climate finance.
6. Developing and delivering analytical and audience-friendly reports and presentations;

7. Adherence to evaluation professional ethics and quality standards, and a commitment to public value;
8. Project and financial management showcasing on time and on budget delivery;
9. Written and spoken local language competency in Dutch.

3.7 Methodology

Bidders are asked to propose a suitable and professionally accepted methodology to deliver the services based on the Scope as set out above, paying attention to the context and ambitions as set out in the Background section, with due regard to the Phased Tasks / Activities, Deliverables and suggested budget.

The methodology should consider:

- Within Phase 2a and 2b, bidders are encouraged to set out their proposal for how to achieve the goals of the Capability Building and Prioritisation logic within the budget and time parameters, indicating process design considerations and trade-offs as relevant.
- All interventions should focus on excellent collaboration with city staff and be tailor-made to their needs. Bidders are expected to set out their approach to collaboration and co-creation with the two cities, and in particular how they can be agile with their proposed approach in response to feedback from the cities whether at inception stage or throughout the process.
- As the documentation of session materials, discussion note etc is an important part of this assignment (for knowledge harvesting purposes – see Section 3.6 Deliverables below), bidders are encouraged to provide details of their use of digital / AI tools to provide effective and time-efficient yet accurate and validated insight harvesting so that this does not become an overly onerous task, whilst ensuring high-quality documentation.

As set out above, NetZeroCities experts are to be engaged proactively throughout the process (at no cost to the appointed supplier). Bidders are also encouraged to consider involving up to four specialist / external experts (i.e. beyond the core facilitator team), whether from their own organisation or from other organisations. Bidders are expected to set out how they aim to involve NetZeroCities experts, as well as to consider and set out what fields of finance expertise they suggest is essential to provide beyond the core facilitator team.

3.8 Deliverables

The following deliverables are requested – all are to be delivered in English.

Deliverable 1 – Inception report and work plan

Requirements:

- In Dutch, with an English-language summary suitable for public release, for Mission-wide knowledge management and to enable sharing of key insights with other cities for scaling / replication;
- Sets out key relevant aspects derived from the baseline information and inception meetings;
- Documents any specifically relevant observations from the inception phase and their implications for subsequent phases;

- Confirms the agreed work plan and detailed timeline for all phases, confirming any agreed changes to the methodology set out at Proposal stage, on the assumption they are cost-neutral vis-a-vis the budget set out at Proposal stage;
- Delivery of draft report: end of week 3 from contract inception, unless otherwise agreed at Inception stage. A final report is to be delivered two weeks after receiving feedback from the cities on the draft report.

Deliverable 2 – Summary of Capability Building session documentation

Requirements:

- In Dutch, with an English-language summary suitable for public release, for Mission-wide knowledge management to enable sharing of key insights with other cities for scaling / replication;
- Summarises the documentation of capability building sessions, including both materials created as preparation material for sessions and notes taken during sessions and thoughts shared afterwards, to capture the essence and key nuances and insights from such documentation (insofar as non-confidential) for Mission-wide knowledge management, replication and scaling purposes;
- Links to presentation materials and other relevant documentation are expected, even if in Dutch;
- Documentation of any contributions by specialist / external experts (presentation materials, discussion insights, etc) is expected to be included on the same basis;
- Delivery of draft report: end of week 20 from contract inception, unless otherwise agreed at Inception stage. A final report is to be delivered two weeks after receiving feedback from the cities on the draft report.

Deliverable 3 – Recommendations for prioritisation logic & financing roadmap informed by key insights in investment needs, investment landscape, and city roles

Requirements:

- In Dutch, with an English-language summary suitable for public release, for Mission-wide knowledge management to enable sharing of key insights with other cities for scaling / replication;
- Builds on the documentation and knowledge capture activities in Deliverable 2, and specifically sets out the recommendations for a financial structuring prioritisation logic and financing roadmap for both cities, informed by key insights in investment needs, investment landscape, and city roles, thus enabling strategic decision-making in both cities with regards to an impactful approach to financing the climate transition.
- Summarises the documentation of key steps taken in developing the prioritisation logic, including both materials created and insights from any discussions in this Phase 2B. It is expected that materials, notes and post-meeting session reflections can be in Dutch and at times may be confidential, so that this Summary deliverable captures the essence and key nuances and insights from such documentation for Mission-wide knowledge management, replication and scaling purposes;
- It is expected that the two cities actively participate in the co-creation / review of the prioritisation logic and hence in the development of this report (details to be agreed at Inception stage);

- Links to presentation materials and other relevant documentation are expected, even if in Dutch;
- Documentation of any contributions by specialist / external experts (presentation materials, discussion insights, etc) is expected to be included on the same basis;
- Delivery of draft report: end of week 20 from contract inception, unless otherwise agreed at Inception stage. A final report is to be delivered two weeks after receiving feedback from the cities on the draft report.

Deliverable 4: CESF Delivery Report

Requirements:

- Upon completion of the delivery of support, the appointed provider must submit the CESF Delivery Report. This report should be validated by the city/ies in receipt of the support, as described in the Assignment contracted. It should serve as a brief but comprehensive report summarizing the entire process, outcomes and learnings, and any identified follow-on actions, next steps and/or deployment of/connectivity to NetZeroCities and Mission Platform services and offers.
- In English, using Dutch technical terminology and nomenclature as required, with translation of Dutch-language terminology and nomenclature to English.

Deliverables 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.

3.9 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 the overall Climate-KIC Group (discretionary basis)
- Will continue to be a full-time employee of an EU grant recipient or a Net Zero Cities Consortium partner during the contract term (discretionary basis)
- **Has a price more than the Public Procurement Directive threshold, currently EURO 221,000. Bids of this size cannot be accepted under this procurement process.**

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

Moreover, Net Zero Cities Consortium partners should not participate in this request for proposals as subcontracting between consortium partners is prohibited under EU funding rules.

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.

3.11 Annex 1- Overview of key documents

- Climate Investment Plans developed as part of each city's Climate City Contract (CCC) - confidential and will be made available to successful bidders
- Memo Klimaatfinanciering Den Haag (In Dutch) by ERAC - see [here](#)
- General NZC documentation on climate transition finance, such as:
 - NZC Deliverable 7.1 - City climate finance: landscape, barriers and best practices
 - NZC Deliverable 7.6 - Financing Methods for Co-Benefits
 - NZC Deliverable 7.7 - Financing Net-Zero Projects
 - <https://netzerocities.app/QR-Finance>
 - <https://netzerocities.eu/2026/04/29/the-money-trail-how-european-cities-are-rewriting-climate-finance/>

4 Contracting (third parties)

4.1 Payment & Invoicing

- Payments will be made following provision of a correctly rendered undisputed digital (via email) invoice to Climate-KIC. Climate-KIC contract manager will inform the successful bidder where to submit invoices.
- The standard payment term is 100% of the total contract value upon acceptance of the Final Delivery Report. Invoices for the Final Delivery Report may only be submitted following formal written acceptance by the Climate-KIC Contract Manager.
- Payment terms associated with the delivery of goods and/or services must be not less than net 30 days from the date a correct and undisputed invoice is received.
- Any request for a deviation from the standard payment term (e.g., payment in tranches) must be explicitly raised within the bidder's proposal and is subject to the review and prior written approval of the Climate-KIC Contract Manager. If a deviation is approved, all payments will be strictly linked to the achievement of one or more clearly defined deliverables. The Contract Manager reserves the right to approve or reject any requested payment schedule deviation.
- Climate-KIC can provide a purchase order number to be referenced on invoices.
- Requests for deposit payments are generally not accepted.
- If submitting invoices for subscription services, please ensure these fees are itemised and priced at line level.

4.2 Contract Management

A one-off agreement is proposed for award of work.

Climate-KIC can share its standard terms and conditions on request. Bidders may propose their own terms and conditions; however, any final contract must incorporate the requirements below regarding Intellectual Property, liability, data protection and ethical standards:

- Background IPR
 - Each party keeps ownership of the Intellectual Property Rights it held before the contract or created independently of the assignment ("Background IPR").
 - The supplier must grant Climate-KIC a non-exclusive, royalty-free, perpetual and transferable licence to use any supplier Background IPR needed for Climate-KIC to use, adapt or further develop the contract deliverables. This licence may be sub-licensed to Climate-KIC group companies, affiliates or project partners for the same purpose.
 - The supplier receives no rights over Climate-KIC's Background IPR beyond what is strictly necessary to perform the services.
- Foreground IPR: All Intellectual Property Rights created in providing the services ("Foreground IPR") will be owned by Climate-KIC. The supplier must be able to assign these rights to Climate-KIC and take reasonable steps to support this.
- Climate-KIC will ask that service providers comply with the Ethical Standards for Climate-KIC Contractual Counterparties available at <https://www.climate-kic.org/policies>
- Service providers are required to comply with Climate-KIC's standard data protection clauses (can be provided in advance on request) and provide an indemnity for any breach;
- The liability of the service provider to Climate-KIC (and affiliates) to be uncapped in respect of breach of data protection clauses. For all other heads, liability of the service provider to Climate-KIC (and affiliates) may be capped at a reasonable multiple of fees not less than 2X. If applicable, Climate-KIC liability to service provider also be similarly capped;
- No indemnities extended by Climate-KIC to service providers.

5 Award Criteria

5.1 Evaluation across quality criteria

To ensure consistency across quality criteria evaluation, each criterion shall be scored on a scale of 0-5 using the following methodology. This score is to then be adjusted to align with the % weighting of the specific area being evaluated.

For example, if the specific criterion has a weighting of 15% and the supplier scores a 4 out of 5, the supplier will receive a weighted score of 12% for that specific criterion.

Score Awarded	Definitions	Commentary
0	An unacceptable response	No response at all or insufficient information provided in the response such that the solution is totally un-assessable and/or incomprehensible.
1	A poor response	Substantially unacceptable submission which fails in several significant areas to set out a solution that addresses and meets the requirements: little or no detail may (and, where evidence is required or necessary, no evidence) have been provided to support and demonstrate that the Bidder will be able to provide the services and/or considerable reservations as to the Bidder's proposals in respect of relevant ability, understanding, expertise, skills and/or resources to deliver the requirements.
2	A below expectation response	Weak submission which does not set out a solution that fully addresses and meets the requirements: response may be basic/ minimal with little or no detail (and, where evidence is required or necessary, with insufficient evidence) provided to support the solution and demonstrate that the Bidder will be able to provide the services and/or some reservations as to the Bidder's solution in respect of relevant ability, understanding, expertise, skills and/or resources to deliver the requirements.
3	A satisfactory response that meets expectations	Submission sets out a solution that largely addresses and meets the requirements, with some detail (or, where evidence is required or necessary, some relevant evidence) provided to support the solution; minor reservations or weakness in a few areas of the solution in respect of relevant ability, understanding, expertise, skills and/or resources to deliver the requirements.
4	A good response	Submission sets out a robust solution that fully addresses and meets the requirements, with full details (and, where evidence is required or necessary, full and relevant evidence) provided to support the solution; provides full confidence as to the relevant ability, understanding, expertise, skills and/or resources to deliver the requirements.
5	A very good response	Submission sets out a robust solution (as for a 4 score – above) and, in addition, provides or proposes additional value and/or elements of the solution which exceed the requirements in substance and outcomes in a manner acceptable to Climate-KIC; provides full confidence as to the relevant ability, understanding, expertise, skills and/or resources not only to deliver the requirements, but also exceed it as described.

Table 3 - Quality Criteria scoring table

5.2 Evaluation Criteria

5.2.1 Expertise / Experience (30%)

Expertise and Experience as a criterion determines whether or not the proposed supplier is able to actually deliver the services. The questions to be asked and evaluated in this criterion are:

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

5.2.2 Capacity to Deliver (10%)

Once it has been established that the supplier has the relevant expertise and experience, the next criteria examines whether the supplier has the capacity to take on the work. This criterion is to be addressed via the following questions:

1. Current Workload – The suppliers shall provide the current list of projects being delivered by the individuals proposed for this package, this shall include the effort required for existing work as a % of their time (5%).
2. Management Measures – The supplier shall provide detail into how they manage capacity issues as well as provide any additional resources or measures they have in place in the event of capacity issues, or if there is a need for scope increases or acceleration (5%).

5.2.3 Methodology (20%)

The purpose of this criterion is to assess the suitability of the technical approach detailed by the supplier in the offer, particularly with regard to the overall scope of the contract and specifically with regard to the services therein comprised. The proposed methodology should be, therefore, fit for purpose, considering the specific characteristics of the services, the needs of the city or local authority, and risks identified in relation to the contract execution, among other aspects. Some aspects to consider for assessing the proposed methodology:

1. The specific methods and tools the supplier will use to deliver the services and attain the overall objectives of the assignment;
2. The proposed logical sequence of phases for the deliverables (e.g., intake, analysis, reporting, implementation);
3. The intellectual and professional approach to the challenges or issues indicated in the tender specifications, and more in particular, how the team proposed by the supplier will work together and how their specific expertise will be applied to the assignment;
4. How the team will identify potential project risks and what mitigation strategies they propose;
5. The internal quality controls to ensure that the deliverables provided are of a consistently high standard.

5.2.4 Price Criteria (40%)

Price will consist of 40% of the evaluation weightings. The evaluation method will ensure that the lowest price total of the Pricing Schedule achieves the maximum available marks, with other Bidders scores calculated proportionately. The scoring methodology will be applied per pricing schedule section and combined to identify the overall lowest price submission. The lowest price submission will achieve the maximum available score with the other Bidders prices scoring points inversely proportionate to the lowest.

1. Pricing evaluation will follow the universally accepted formula of (Lowest Price / Tendered Price x Price Criteria Points (40)).
2. An example of how this formula operates in practice can be found below:

Description	Formula	Tenderer		
		T1	T2	T3
Tendered Price	A	€500	€490	€510
Lowest Price	B	€490		
Calculation	$C = B/A$	0.98	1.00	0.96
Convert to Points	$D = C \times 40^*$	39.20	40.00	38.43

* The conversion to points will be based on the weighting attributed to price in the total evaluation.

Table 4 - Example scoring methodology for price lots

6 Instruction to Bidders

6.1 Responding with your proposal

Climate-KIC are requesting the following are submitted to bid on this contract:

1. **A Proposal** that sufficiently details the bidder's solution and responds to the prompts and requests contained in this RFP. The bidder is, amongst other items, also kindly asked to provide:
 - 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.

All proposals/offers must be submitted via email to bids@netzerocities.eu by the deadline indicated in this RFP.

For **any requests for clarifications or questions** related to the contents of this RFP, bidders must send an email to cesf@netzerocities.eu.

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

6.2 Quotation requirements

1. Please provide a fully itemised quotation English and in Euros, detailing all applicable costs related to the assignment. The quotation must specify:
The supplier's VAT number, including country code, if applicable.

- Whether prices are inclusive or exclusive of VAT.
- Where VAT is applicable, the exact VAT rate (%) to be applied.
- Whether the reverse charge mechanism is expected to apply.

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

If VAT will not be charged:

- Confirm whether the reverse charge mechanism applies.
- Provide a brief explanation of the legal basis (e.g. intra-EU B2B supply of services under Article 196 of the EU VAT Directive).

If VAT will be charged:

- Explicitly state the VAT rate (%) that will be applied to the invoice.
- If the supplier is established in an EU Member State other than the Netherlands, briefly explain why the reverse charge mechanism does not apply, with reference to the relevant national or EU VAT provisions.

Invoicing will be directed to the company **STICHTING CLIMATE-KIC INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION, VAT NL860987541B01**.

Please note: The correct application of VAT and related legislation is the sole responsibility of the supplier. Climate-KIC reserves the right to request supporting documentation or legal clarification regarding VAT treatment at the contracting stage.

2. **Main Quote Table:** Suppliers must provide a **main quotation table** summarising all deliverables listed in Section 3/3.8 (Scope of Work/Deliverables).

The financial proposal shall be submitted as a fixed-price quotation covering the full scope of the assignment. Unless expressly stated otherwise in the Request for Proposal, no additional costs, expenses or fees (including travel, accommodation, subsistence, overheads, administrative costs or any other incidental expenses) shall be reimbursed by Climate-KIC during contract implementation.

Each row of the Main Quote Table must correspond to a deliverable and include:

- Deliverable name (as listed in Section 3.4)
- Unit of measure (e.g. days, weeks, or months — use the most appropriate for the task)
- Quantity
- Unit price
- Subtotal

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

The subtotal for each deliverable shall be fully traceable to the corresponding effort and daily rates presented in the Resource Plan (Table 7) and Rate Card (Table 6).

3. **Rate Card:** Suppliers shall provide a **rate card** listing each personnel category/role that will contribute to the assignment, together with the applicable **daily rate in EUR (EUR/day)**. Rates must be **specific to each role** and **must not be blended or averaged** across personnel.

If your organisation normally operates with **hourly rates**, you must also indicate the equivalent **daily rate**, applying the following standard conversion to ensure comparability across bids:

Standard conversion: 1 working day = 8 hours.

The rate card must include all roles foreseen in the delivery of the assignment (including subcontractors or external specialists, where applicable.) and shall use **the same role names** that appear in the **Main Quotation (Table 5)** and the **Resource Plan (Table 7)**. All rates must be **fixed for the entire contract duration** and expressed in EUR, excluding VAT (VAT treatment is covered in the previous section).

Required columns for Table 6:

- Role (use consistent naming across all tables)
- Daily rate (EUR/day)
- Hourly rate (EUR/hour) — optional
- Short description of role

Please check below "**Table 6**" which is a simple and non-exhaustive example of the rate card table.

4. **Resource Plan:** Suppliers shall also provide a **Resource Plan**, showing the allocation of human resources across the project life cycle. The plan must use a **single consistent time unit**, which for this assignment is **monthly** (i.e. time buckets in calendar months).

This plan ensures full traceability between the resources, the deliverables and the associated costs. The total cost shown in the Resource Plan shall reconcile with the total quotation submitted in Table 5.

For each **month** (or project phase, if more relevant), the supplier shall indicate:

- The **deliverable(s)** planned for that period (as listed in Section 3.4 – Scope of Work),
- The **role(s)** involved,
- The **number of days** allocated to each role,
- The **daily rate** (EUR/day) — as provided in the Rate Card (Table 6), and
- The **calculated cost** (EUR = days × daily rate).

The **same role names and rates** used in Table 6 must be used in this table and referenced consistently in the **Main Quotation (Table 5)**.

Suppliers may also include a **summary line** at the end of the table totalling the days and cost per role, as well as overall totals per deliverable.

Required columns for Table 7:

- Month / Phase
- Deliverable ID (ref. Section 3.4)
- Role
- Days in month
- Daily rate (EUR/day)
- Cost (EUR = days × rate)

Please check below "Table 7" which is a simple and non-exhaustive example of the resource plan table.

5. For External Suppliers (Non-NZC Consortium): Travel and subsistence costs required for the delivery of the assignment shall be fully included in the fixed-price quotation and clearly itemised. No additional reimbursement of travel or accommodation costs will be made during contract implementation. Time spent travelling is not considered billable. Bidders are encouraged to propose remote collaboration and digital engagement methods wherever possible to minimise environmental and financial impact.
6. Please submit your quote on official company letterhead or a formal company document, in English. The quote should be submitted in PDF format. The quote shall include company name, address and VAT/TAX code, contact details, date of submission, name and role of the authorized signatory. The quotation shall be signed by an authorised representative of the supplier.
7. The quotation should remain valid at least 90 calendar days from the submission deadline.
8. Climate-KIC encourages environmentally sustainable business practices. Within the quote, where possible, suppliers are encouraged to indicate any sustainable approaches (i.e. digital documentation, remote collaboration) that can reduce the environmental impact during the provision of services.
9. The bidder shall explicitly declare any current or past institutional, commercial, financial, or organizational relationship with the City/Municipality for which the tender is issued, including but not limited to: a) Membership or affiliation in the bidder's organization b) Any contractual, financial, or in-kind support received from or provided to the Municipality c) Involvement in previous or ongoing projects funded or coordinated by the Municipality d) Participation in governance, technical, or advisory bodies. The bidder shall also declare any potential conflict of interest that could reasonably be perceived to affect the impartial performance of the assignment.

Table 5: Example – Main Quotation Table

Deliverable ID / Name	Unit	Quantity	Unit price (EUR)	Subtotal (EUR)
D1 – Inception Report	days	13	–	10,100
D2 – Final Report	days	20	–	15,800
Total				25,900

Table 6: Example – Rate Card (Resource-Based Quotation)

Role	Daily rate (EUR/day)	Hourly rate (EUR/hour, optional)	Short description of role
Project Manager	900	112.50	Overall coordination and liaison
Technical Expert	700	87.50	Technical lead on energy audits

Table 7: Example - Resource Plan (Monthly Allocation)

Month / Phase	Deliverable ID	Role	Days	Daily rate (EUR/day)	Cost (EUR)
Month 1	D1	Project Manager	5	900	4,500
Month 1	D1	Technical Expert	8	700	5,600
Month 2	D2	Analyst	12	450	5,400

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 ninety (90) days from the bid due date. Any proposal submitted outside the scope defined may be rejected without provision for re-submission.
2. Any further information pertaining to this RFP, of whatever nature, must be directed to the Contract Manager detailed in Section 1.1. If a point of clarification materially affects the RFP, our response will be circulated to all bidders, otherwise the response will only be sent to the bidder seeking clarification.
3. If any doubt exists concerning any element of this RFP, a clear statement 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 0.
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.
18. Following notification of the procurement outcome, Climate-KIC will observe a standstill period of seven (7) calendar days before entering into the contract with the successful bidder. During this period, unsuccessful bidders may submit a written request for clarification regarding the evaluation outcome or request a review of the evaluation process where they consider that the procurement procedure has not been conducted in accordance with the provisions of this Request for Proposal. Any such request must be submitted in writing within the standstill period to the CESF Contract Manager, **Luisa Carretti**, by email at **CESF@netzerocities.eu**. Climate-KIC will consider all requests received before proceeding with contract signature. Upon expiry of the standstill period and provided that no outstanding review requests remain under consideration, Climate-KIC may proceed with the contract award and execution.