NZC CESF Procurement RFP

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

Date: 21/10/2026

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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

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Request for Proposal

For: Expert Support to Facilitate the Community of Practice of Cities in Bulgaria

Date: 21/10/2026

1. Overview

1.1 Executive Summary

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

Services and/or goods requested	Expert Support to the Community of Practice of Cities in the
The legal entity requesting these goods and/or services	Stitching Climate-KIC International Foundation
Services and/or goods will be delivered to the following locations	Services will be delivered remotely to the following locations: Some onsite services may be required at: Annual in-person event, location within Bulgaria Republic to be determined
Climate-KIC contact points and email for Inquiries	Luisa Carretti Shuva Thapa CESF@netzerocities.eu
Email address for the submission of proposals Proposals shall be submitted by the deadline specified in Section 1.2 and in accordance with the submission requirements set out in Section 6.	bids@netzerocities.eu
Proposed contract term for successful candidates	**7 December 2026 – 31 November 2027**

Table 1: Procurement executive summary

1.2 Timelines

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

Planned Date*	**Milestones**
21 October 2023	RFP issued to bidders
4 November 2026 (23:59 CEST Time)	Deadline to submit questions
11 November 2026	Bidders submit proposals / **Submission Deadline (23:59 CEST Time)**

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Planned Date*	Milestones
25 November 2026	Assessment results announcement (subject to finished evaluations and selection of a winner)
7 December 2026 – 17 December 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.

1.5 NZC Climate City Contracts (CCC)

The **NZC Mission Platform** provides support in the co-creation of Climate City Contracts with local stakeholders and citizens. Drawing up, signing, and implementing Climate City Contracts is a central feature of the EU Mission on 100 Climate Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030. While not legally binding, these contracts represent a clear and highly visible political commitment. This commitment extends not only to the European Commission, national and regional authorities, but also to the citizens they serve. These contracts outline the city's path to achieve climate neutrality by 2030, accompanied by a comprehensive investment strategy.

1.6 NZC Pilot Cities Programme

The **NZC Pilot Cities Programme** supports large scale piloting activities to exploit, deploy, and scale R&I and systemic solutions combining social, cultural, technological, nature-based, regulatory, and financial innovation, and new business and governance models to underpin the climate transition. As such, the NZC Pilot Cities Programme and its subgrant-funded activities are an opportunity for Mission Cities to put into practise elements of their developing and/or finalised Climate City Contracts and the plans contained in them and learn by doing so in the process.

1.7 NZC Community of Practice

The NZC Community of Practice (CoP) is a collaborative space on the Mission Platform, which gathers city officials, experts and practitioners from public 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

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

The Cities of **Gabrovo** and **Sofia** are the **Mission Cities** from Bulgaria. Both were awarded the **EU Mission Label** for their Climate City Contracts in May 2025. The two cities focus on accelerating actions aimed at achieving climate neutrality by 2030 across key sectors: energy systems, mobility and transport, waste and circular economy, built environment, green infrastructure and nature-based solutions. Moreover, as part of the Mission, Gabrovo participates in the NetZeroCities Pilot programme, implementing a project "NetZeroHero" focused on creating a net-zero pilot district through deep energy retrofits, an energy community model, and capacity building, with results designed to be replicated across Bulgaria and Europe. Additionally, both cities take part in the NetZeroCitiesTwinning Learning Programme, through which they exchange knowledge and good practices on climate action with twin cities, while also benefitting from their valuable experiences.

There are many more Bulgarian cities that work hard to implement ambitious climate action and improve wellbeing of their citizens, with several Bulgarian cities engaged in the Covenant of Mayors initiative and a number of cities which are signatories of the Climate Adaptation Mission Charter. In addition, several Bulgarian cities have expressed interest in NetZeroCities becoming 'Mission Minded Cities'.

From a multi-level governance and multi-stakeholder cooperation perspective, there has been growing interest and participation across all governance levels in energy and climate dialogues in Bulgaria, which has also seen the involvement of Bulgarian cities and Bulgarian cities' networks. This has been apparent through the NECPlatform project, where the Center for Energy Efficiency EnEffect (EnEffect), the national Bulgarian coordinator within the project, has set up a multi-actor and stakeholder platform to enable dialogues on the Bulgarian National Energy and Climate Plans. Currently, EnEffect is also involved in the CapaCITIES 2.0 initiative, supporting Bulgarian cities in the dialogue with national and regional authorities aimed at strengthening efforts toward climate neutrality.

To strengthen national engagement and city-to-city collaboration, NetZeroCities has started a collaboration with NationalTrust EcoFund (NTEF) for the period October 2025 to October 2026, to provide expert support to the community of practice of cities in Bulgaria. This programme strengthens collaboration across municipal and national stakeholders, and addresses collective needs flagged by the cities. The local partner has delivered tailored expert assistance to cities, helping them strengthen local climate governance, policy design, and implementation capacity. Key activities included capacity building and policy training for local authorities, with a strong focus on building renovation, energy efficiency, and the strategic role of cities in achieving climate neutrality targets. These activities were aligned with the EU Mission for 100 Climate Neutral and Smart Cities and emphasized peer learning, multilevel cooperation, and the practical use of EU and national financing instruments.

It is therefore essential to continue strengthening and structuring collaboration on climate neutrality in Bulgaria, especially amongst the Bulgarian Mission cities and other interested cities. This will enable to strengthen the established knowledge exchange and the systematic transfer of good practices between cities operating in the same national context. It will also foster the collaboration among Bulgarian cities, helping them work together to identify, articulate and promote shared policy needs and priorities within a multi-level governance framework, while strengthening dialogue and coordination with regional, national and European actors. The active involvement and mobilization of national-level stakeholders is critical to ensuring impact.
To address these gaps and consolidate ongoing efforts, this assignment is designed to establish a structured and continuous engagement process building on the work delivered between October 2025 and July 2026. The services outlined in the scope below, which will be contracted through this RfP, are to be delivered by an individual or organization with deep expertise in the Bulgarian national context and experience in convening stakeholders from local, regional and national governments. This approach ensures targeted support that directly addresses the objectives outlined in this RfP.

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Finally, each country has a NetZeroCities partner responsible for coordinating and monitoring the work. In the case of Bulgaria, this role is fulfilled by Energy Cities. A strong coordination between the selected provider, Energy Cities, the City Advisor for Bulgaria and the NetZeroCities team is requested alongside the whole contracting period.

3.2 Scope

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

This assignment builds on previous work conducted within NetZeroCities, including i) a comprehensive baseline report outlining the current collaboration landscape, the existing platforms, the barriers and opportunities for the creation of a community of practice of Bulgarian cities; ii) 1 EU Cities Mission Event: "*Cities in Transformation: Strategic Vision, Building Renovation Solutions, Energy Communities and New Skills*" which took place in November 2025 in Sofia, within the XIX conference of the Association of Bulgarian Energy Agencies. The supplier is expected to build on, validate, deepen and operationalize the existing findings and the previous work through targeted stakeholder engagement and dialogue. Relevant background materials and analytical outputs will be shared with the selected supplier at the start of the assignment.

The following is a general description of the services and actions to be provided by the awarded supplier, followed in subsequent sections with detailed information. The **overall objective** of the described support is to enhance collaboration between cities in the Bulgarian context through the facilitation of training and peer-to-peer learning activities, the provision of specialized assistance, and other initiatives such as focusing on multi-level governance collaboration. It aims to strengthen the community of practice of Bulgarian cities, creating collaborative spaces where Mission cities and other cities committed to decarbonization goals can receive support, work on common challenges, share learnings and make progress toward these objectives.

(1) Expert support, namely collective support, aimed at fostering Mission-focused collaboration between cities, increasing their capacities and improving the cooperation of the community of practice of cities with national authorities and different stakeholders within Bulgaria, such as regional authorities, academia, financial institutions, civic society and private sector representatives.

The support will be directed towards Bulgarian cities: Mission Cities, Mission Minded Cities, cities participating in the NetZeroCities Twinning programme, online discussion groups, and other interested cities wanting to achieve climate neutrality.

(2) Coordination support aimed at establishing coherent collaboration processes for Bulgarian cities, regular meetings, feedback loops, process documentation, meaningful links to national authorities and other relevant stakeholders, and coordination with NetZeroCities to ensure Bulgarian cities can benefit from the different parts of the NetZeroCities programme offer.

(3) Organisation of two in-person "EU Cities Mission events" (one during the last quarter of 2026 and one in 2027) to support cities, promote co-implementation of projects and to enhance collaboration between cities, national and regional authorities, and other stakeholders. The services will also include encouraging the participation of CapaCITIES 2.0 partners or similar initiatives in this event.
As part of the organization of the two EU Cities Mission events, the supplier will support and coordinate with the implementation of Better Funding Dialogue (BFD) activities, in coordination with NetZeroCities partners: The BFD aim is to enhance financial flows to cities, mobilize private stakeholders, and drive systemic change in financing structures to achieve climate neutrality.

The supplier's work is intended to catalyze longer-term cooperation between national authorities, cities, private sector actors, and financial institutions. Therefore, the events should not be designed as standalone activities, but act as key milestones of a broader, structured multi-stakeholder engagement process. The supplier will be expected to design and implement preparatory activities at national and local levels to identify and address key challenges, opportunities, and priorities related to the selected

thematic focus. The supplier is encouraged to strategically leverage existing national events and platforms (e.g. sectoral fairs, national conferences) to organize complementary sessions or engagement moments, to maximize participation and cost-efficiency.

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

Finally, the support procured through this RfP should function as a catalyst for sustained engagement of cities and other key stakeholders (both throughout and beyond the scope of this RfP). It is expected to build a strong basis for a constructive and sustainable multi-level dialogue involving national and regional stakeholders, policy makers, research centres (etc.) in such a way to encourage continued engagement once the support described in this RfP is completed, and so that the success of these activities generates options for future funding by other parties.

The services will be delivered to meet the following project milestones (for reference, see the more detailed description of activities in table below):

Milestone	**Time frame**
Continuation of the advocacy process work with cities	Dec 2026 to Nov 2027
Multi-level capacity building sessions	Dec 2026 to Nov 2027
Multi-stakeholder dialogue meetings	Dec 2026 to Nov 2027
First EU Cities Mission Event	Dec 2026 to Mar 2027
Policy Brief	July 2027 to Nov 2027
Second EU Cities Mission Event	July 2027 to Nov 2027
Final report and recommendations	Nov 2027

3.3 Objectives

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

Objectives		
Objective		**Description**
1	Mobilise Bulgarian municipalities for the implementation of the EU Cities Mission	The EU Mission of Climate Neutral and Smart Cities become a catalyst for local governments in Bulgaria to accelerate their transition towards climate neutrality. The EU Cities Mission is promoted amongst Bulgarian municipalities. Learnings and knowledge from the Bulgarian Mission and Twin Cities are collected and shared with a broad range of Bulgarian municipalities. The NetZeroCities offer cities interested in the Mission is disseminated. The community of practice brings together Mission Cities and other Bulgarian cities interested in the Mission (Mission-minded cities) to offer a dedicated dialogue, learning, and workspace on key challenges linked to climate neutrality. It delivers relevant trainings, learning and capacity-building activities as well as provides needed expertise. The community of practice is a structured and coordinated space for municipalities that aims to operate long term and address systemic challenges for cities to transition to climate neutrality. It is managed by the subcontractor, including maintaining regular communication, documenting all meetings and processes, spotting windows of opportunities at the national level, and logically structuring thematic and/or policy processes for cities.
2	Strengthen and grow the community of practice amongst Bulgarian cities	
3	Mobilise relevant national authorities for the implementation of the EU Cities Mission	Design and deliver two EU Cities Mission events, each preferably two days in duration, within the framework of the EU Mission on 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities. Each event must be embedded in a broader engagement process and designed as the culmination of the preparatory activities (e.g. stakeholder consultations, bilateral exchanges, and targeted discussions). The involvement of both local and national authorities in engaging and exchange sessions is requested. Support shall be provided to the community of cities to engage in the multi-stakeholder and multi-level collaboration spaces, to facilitate the expression of their needs vis-à-vis other multi-level governance actors, to collaborate in the design of services proposed by national stakeholders, their governance, and in creating processes for better understanding and addressing policy barriers between different government levels. This support shall be delivered in close collaboration with national partners (incl. CapaCITIES partners) that NetZeroCities is engaged with, to avoid the duplication of efforts. The EU Cities Mission is a catalyst for policy, regulatory, governance, funding, and technical processes to be unlocked at the national level to support local governments in reaching climate neutrality. Relevant ministries and national institutions are aware of the EU Cities Mission and involved in the activities organised within the community of
4	Mobilise relevant stakeholders from outside of the public sector for the implementation of the EU Cities Mission civil society.	

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		practice amongst Bulgarian cities. Municipalities are included in key strategic discussions at the national level linked to local climate neutrality. The EU Cities Mission is also a catalyst for multi-stakeholder dialogue and collaboration with business, academia or civic society actors relevant for local climate transformations.

3.4 Services and Activities

3.4.1 General information

The following outline workplan defines the mandatory activities and expected outputs to be delivered under this assignment.
Bidders may propose their preferred methodology, sequencing of activities, stakeholder engagement approach and implementation arrangements, provided these remain within the boundaries of the scope of work and objectives defined in this RfP.
The Proposed Strategic Workplan submitted by bidders should therefore explain how the bidder intends to deliver the mandatory activities and objectives described in this document, including any methodological considerations considered relevant to the Bulgarian national context.

3.4.2 Workplan: Mandatory activities

To achieve the objectives stated in Section 3.5, the following activities must be carried out by the supplier in the 12-month period after the contract signature. All activities will be carried out in coordination the NetZeroCities partner responsible for coordinating the work, in this case Energy Cities. For each activity, the listed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) must be achieved.

Mandatory activities	
Activity 1. Organization of two in-person Eu Cities Mission Events	**According to objective: 1, 2, 3 and 4**
Description	The subcontractor will organize two in-person EU Cities Mission Events to bring together the national ecosystem supporting cities in achieving climate neutrality. The key objectives of the events are to: A) raise awareness about the EU Mission on Climate Neutral and Smart Cities in Bulgaria. B) discuss how to best implement the Mission in the national context. C) bring together stakeholders relevant for local climate neutrality transitions in Bulgaria. This event aims to include: ● Bulgarian cities interested in accelerating their climate neutrality efforts, including but not limited to the Mission Cities (City of Sofia and Gabrovo). ● Regional and national governments. ● Representatives of the private, research and civic sector in Bulgaria. The events will contribute to strengthening the capacities of cities by facilitating structured exchanges, sharing practical experiences, and fostering collaboration with national and regional authorities, as well as relevant stakeholders such as the private sector. A key objective of both events will be to initiate and nurture ongoing learning processes, encouraging participating cities to join a community of practice that will continue working on key challenges and solutions related to local climate neutrality transformations beyond the events themselves. The first annual EU Cities' Mission Event to be organised by February 2027, will focus on strategic challenges of cities identified in the first phase of the capacity-building programme in Bulgaria led by NTEF. Ideally embedded within a larger national conference or forum to maximise outreach, the event will combine high-level dialogue with interactive formats (e.g. workshops, peer exchanges, and thematic sessions) designed to build practical knowledge and skills among participating cities. It will bring together

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	representatives of Mission Cities and Mission-Minded cities, alongside national and regional authorities, and other relevant stakeholders, (e.g. private sector representatives, academia, research institutions and civil society). The content and structure will build on and reflect the results of ongoing dialogue processes and thematic work. This includes, but is not limited to, recommendations developed under relevant initiatives (such as the Better Funding Dialogue), outcomes of the previous EU Cities Mission Event and activities led by NTEF and CapaCITIES 2.0. The second annual EU Cities' Mission Event must be organised by October 2027 and will focus on consolidating and advancing the learning process by presenting the achievements and concrete results of the overall process. This includes showcasing progress made by participating cities, sharing practical experiences and lessons learned, presenting policy recommendations, and highlighting tangible outcomes in addressing key challenges. In addition, the event will provide space for peer-to-peer reflection and mutual learning, allowing cities to exchange implementation challenges and successful approaches. It will also serve to outline next steps, announce further commitments, and reinforce engagement within the community of practice, ensuring continuity of collaboration across governance levels and sectors. The events may be organised alongside key conferences in Bulgaria and will build on the outcomes of the first EU Cities Mission event held in Bulgaria in 2025, within the framework of the 19th Conference of the Association of Bulgarian Energy Agencies and Centres (ABEA). They will be organised in close collaboration with relevant national ministries, the NetZeroCities partner organisation Energy Cities, as well as local partners willing to contribute to the format. It is essential to ensure proper coordination with CapaCITIES to guarantee their active participation and to ensure that all organized events are complementary and mutually reinforcing.
Participating Stakeholders	Cities (Mission City, Mission-Minded Cities, other interested cities); relevant national ministries and state agencies; regional authorities; private sector; academia/research and civil society organizations.
KPI	• At least 50 participants. • At least representatives from 10 Bulgarian cities join the first EU Cities Mission Event and 15 representatives join the second EU Cities Mission Event, including political representatives. • At least 10 other national, regional and relevant stakeholders the two EU Cities Mission Events.
Activity 2. Organize a community of practice for cities & develop and deliver a capacity-building programme and policy advocacy process on climate neutrality	**According to objective: 1, 2,3,4**
Description	The subcontractor will establish or reinforce the community of practice that brings together cities committed to advancing their work towards climate neutrality in Bulgaria, including Sofia and Gabrovo (Mission Cities). The community shall be built upon existing initiatives and frameworks where cities are already collaborating. The community would be connected to the Mission Portal and granted access to NetZeroCities' resource repository, including useful tools, case studies, good practices and communication channels with other cities. The subcontractor will explain in its offer how the activities (in terms of approaches, or topics) will be complementary to existing initiatives, increase the impacts of the existing activities and avoid duplication. The subcontractor will organize a comprehensive capacity-building programme for committed individuals from local administrations and communities, either from political leadership or operational teams or both. The curriculum shall be practical, tailored to cities' needs and focus on developing concrete skills in cities, like monitoring and reporting GHG emissions, climate action planning, renewable energy system and energy efficiency project development, sustainable climate finance, partnerships with private sector, digital tools, energy management, and others. The supplier shall collaborate with different

	specialised organisations for different topics, e.g. NZC, CapaCITIES, Covenant of Mayors, CDP-ICLEI Track for GHG emissions accounting. In addition to the capacity-building programme, the supplier will design and implement a structured and ongoing **policy advocacy process** aimed at tangible improvements in the legislative, programmatic, and financial framework conditions for the climate neutrality, including the post-2028 EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and spanning some other critical areas for cities, e.g. residential and municipal building sector renovation policies, incl.net metering, renewable energy and energy community regulation (full transposition of the Renewable Energy Directive), Social Climate Plan measures, municipal heating and cooling plans. The activity will concentrate on reinforcing the enabling environment for cities, especially those participating in the EU Cities Mission (Gabrovo and Sofia) as well as other Bulgarian cities, by tackling regulatory and financial obstacles and promoting sustained multi-level collaboration. Within the process, the subcontractor will organise and facilitate a **series of multi-stakeholder dialogue meetings**. These sessions will not be treated as standalone events, but rather as milestones within a continuous policy development cycle, ensuring coherence, follow-up, and the gradual refinement of solutions between meetings. Participants will include representatives of cities, national ministries, and other relevant actors e.g. regional institutions, business and industry stakeholders, financial institutions. The discussions will focus on identifying and jointly addressing key barriers to implementing climate neutrality actions, including regulatory constraints, financing gaps, investment conditions, and administrative challenges. Building on the full cycle of dialogue and follow-up engagement, the supplier will develop targeted, concrete policy recommendations in the form of a **policy brief** addressed to national decision-makers. These recommendations will go beyond usual, general statements and will include specific, actionable proposals for within the areas of legislation, regulation, governance, programming, finance/other as needed, co-shaped with input from cities and stakeholders, including business if relevant.
Participating Stakeholders	City staff, e.g. strategic development and innovative projects departments, climate and environmental departments, finance departments and treasuries, infrastructure departments and others. Ideally, representatives of the political level will also be included.
Formats	The described sessions and activities may be delivered in two formats: • Joint sessions that bring together both groups: cities already involved in the Mission and other interested cities aiming to achieve climate neutrality. • Exclusive sessions for other interested cities working towards climate neutrality.
KPI	• Representatives from at least 12 Bulgarian cities (adding up to those already involved) join the community of practice in 2026 and 2027. • At least 4 sessions delivered for the community of practice between 2026 and 2027, including the capacity-building training. • At least 5 organisations join the Bulgarian national group on the Mission Portal. • At least 2 multi-level and multi-stakeholder dialogue meetings, including cities, national representatives and other relevant stakeholders. • One Policy Brief addressed to national policy makers summarising the recommendations harvested in the process
Activity 3. Enabling participation of cities in multi-stakeholder and multi-level collaboration spaces	**According to objective: 3,4**
Description	According to Objective 4, multi-stakeholder and multi-level engagement shall be strengthened, bringing together cities, regional public authorities, relevant national ministries, private sector representatives, academia, research institutions and civil society, with the aim to support cities in achieving climate neutrality. This National Platform shall foster information sharing, open dialogue, alignment of strategies, narratives, and objectives, collaborative problem-solving and cooperation among all participants.

	The awarded supplier in the cooperation with the CapaCITIES 2.0 will initiate at least three meetings over the 12 months of the contract with national stakeholders supporting the development of the National Platform, in order to improve the multi-level collaboration, and will support cities being part of the community of practice to prepare these meetings (providing inputs for the agenda, development of a common narrative, policy propositions, expression of needs and required services, etc.). During these meetings, feedback from the outcomes of Activity 2 will also be shared with the stakeholders engaged in the National Platform. Within the process, the supplier will: 1. Structure and coordinate city input Establish a process to gather and consolidate inputs from cities as short consultations, thematic working groups, bilateral exchanges, to have a deeper understanding of the cities' challenges and needs. Support cities in defining common positions, key messages and policy ask, ensuring coherence and strategic alignment. 2. Prepare cities for effective engagement Organise preparatory sessions to strengthen cities' capacity to engage providing practical tools and templates to support solid contributions, as policy asks. 3. Structure and facilitate a continuous dialogue process Structure discussions around key thematic priorities in alignment with Activities 1 and 2. Encourage the creation of thematic clusters or city groups working on shared challenges. Ensure continuity between meetings by framing them as part of an ongoing process rather than standalone events. 4. Ensure continuity Document outcomes of each engagement moment, including key decisions, identified barriers, and follow-up actions. Establish feedback loops to inform cities of progress and ensure transparency. Track the evolution of discussions and contributions over time, ensuring follow-up and maintaining consistency with the policy advocacy process under Activity 2.
Participating Stakeholders	Cities (Mission City, interested cities); relevant national ministries and agencies; regional authorities; private sector actors; academia/research and civil society organizations.
KPI	• Participation in at least 3 meetings with the national support structure. • At least 5 cities join the national community meetings with the national stakeholders.

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3.5 Deliverables

The following deliverables are requested:

Deliverable 1: Strategic workplan and brief baseline report

Requirements:

At the start of the contract, the awarded individual/organization will be required to deliver:

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

The strategic workplan will include:

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

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

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

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

The Deliverable shall be submitted in Month 2 (M2) of the contract start date.

Deliverable 2: Final Report

Requirements:

- At the conclusion of the contract, the awarded supplier will deliver a comprehensive Final Report. This report will provide a detailed account of the outcomes of the activities and services delivered during the support period, as well as the progress achieved in relation to the baseline situation documented in the Baseline Report. The report will aim to assess the advancements made, evaluate the effectiveness of the actions taken, and propose strategic next steps to further strengthen both the community of practice among local governments and the national platform.
- The Final Report will include details about the activities conducted throughout the contract period. It will include an evaluation of the outcomes achieved, highlighting key results, challenges encountered, and the strategies used to overcome them. Evidence shall be provided regarding the achievement of the KPIs (list of attendees, agendas, pictures, etc.). A survey (proposed by NetZeroCities) addressed to participants to events, and to the capacity-building program, to assess their satisfaction and gather suggestions shall be included in annex of the

report, as well as any materials developed (concept note, advocacy note, materials for capacity building sessions, etc.).
- Furthermore, it will reflect on the alignment of the activities with the overarching objectives, including their contribution to strengthening the community of practice among local governments and the national platform. Lastly, the report will provide actionable insights and recommendations to inform and guide future initiatives, ensuring continued growth and collaboration within the ecosystem. Additionally, the report will include any information the awarded individual/organization considers relevant.

The Deliverable shall be submitted in Month 12 (M12) of the contract start date.

Deliverable 3: NZC CESF Delivery Report

Requirements:

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

All deliverables shall be written in English at a suitably professional standard using a recognized (or specified) referencing style upon request. Visuals and infographics are welcome. 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.

3.6 Indicative Budget

All tasks are defined to be performed in time period of 12 months.
The total quotation must not exceed 34,000 EUR (excluding VAT). Within this ceiling, a maximum amount of 8000 EUR (excluding VAT) is allocated to event-related logistics, including but not limited to catering, venue rental, and related expenses.
Bidders are required to submit one single consolidated financial offer covering:

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

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

3.7 Required Experience and Capabilities

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

Minimum Requirements:

- Fluency in Bulgarian (native speaker or C1 level).
- Professional proficiency in English (minimum C1 level).
- Proven knowledge of local authorities 'competencies and national regulatory frameworks.

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

Desirable experience and capabilities:

- Good understanding of cities 'challenges in achieving climate neutrality at the latest by 2050; direct connection to cities.
- Good understanding of the Mission approach.
- Good understanding of the NetZeroCities and CapaCITIES projects.
- An apolitical / neutral role to ensure the ability to build trust among actors from different political spaces, both at the local and between other levels of government.
- Good embeddedness into national structures; direct connection to critical national institutions and penholders, including financial eco-system players.
- Enabler of cooperation with other stakeholders (private companies, third sector, etc.).
- Ability to coordinate the involvement of the national government, the European Commission and finance institutions (national banks, regional / cities public banks, etc).

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

3.8 Methodology

The supplier shall adopt a suitable and professionally accepted methodology to deliver the services. The methodology shall consider:

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

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3.9 Eligibility

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

- Has insufficient technical, professional or financial capacity to deliver the services.
- Has been bankrupt or insolvent (last 7 years).
- Is sanctioned by a relevant authority.
- Does not comply or has previously not complied with our Ethical Standards for Contractual Counterparties.
- Has been convicted of crime, 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 must 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 suppliers 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.
- 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 suppliers comply with the Ethical Standards for Climate-KIC Contractual Counterparties available at https://www.climate-kic.org/policies
- Suppliers 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 supplier to Climate-KIC (and affiliates) to be uncapped in respect of breach of data protection clauses. For all other heads, liability of the supplier to Climate-KIC (and affiliates) may be capped at a reasonable multiple of fees not less than 2X. If applicable, Climate-KIC liability to supplier also be similarly capped;
- No indemnities extended by Climate-KIC to suppliers.

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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%).

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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 x 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

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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 (p*lease 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.
5. The proposal must be submitted in EURO;
6. The proposal must be submitted using the PDF file format

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

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

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

6.2 Quotation requirements

1. Please provide a fully itemised quotation in Euros, detailing all applicable costs related to the assignment. The quotation must specify:
   - Whether prices are inclusive or exclusive of VAT;
   - Where applicable, costs must be clearly separated between professional service fees and event-related costs, in accordance with Point 2, below;
   - The supplier's VAT number, including country code, if applicable;
   - Whether the reverse charge mechanism is expected to apply.

2. **Invoicing Structure and VAT Treatment**

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

2.a) Event-related Costs:

- Event-related costs (e.g. venue rental, local logistics, catering, on-site services) must be clearly identified and itemised separately in the quotation.
- These costs shall be invoiced immediately following the relevant event.
- Event-related costs shall include local VAT, where applicable, based on the country in which the event takes place.

2.b) Professional Service Fees:

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

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

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

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

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

3. **Main Quote Table**: Suppliers must provide a **main quotation table, which constitutes the primary financial basis for evaluation and comparison of bids.** The Main Quotation Table shall summarise all Deliverables listed in Section **3.5** (Scope of Work) and shall clearly distinguish between professional service fees and event-related costs, in accordance with the Point 2, Invoicing Structure and VAT Treatment. In the event of an inconsistency between the Main Quotation, Rate Card and Resource Plan, the Main Quotation shall prevail for the purpose of financial evaluation, unless the inconsistency results from an arithmetic error which can be objectively corrected without changing the substance of the offer.

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

- Deliverable name or cost item;
- Cost category (Professional service fees / Event-related costs);
- Unit of measure (e.g. days, weeks, or months — use the most appropriate for the task);
- Quantity;
- Unit price;
- Subtotal Subtotal (EUR, excl. VAT) – calculated as Quantity × Unit Price
- VAT Rate – percentage rate applicable (if any)
- VAT Amount (EUR) – VAT calculated on the subtotal; 0 for professional service fees

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Standard conversion: 1 working day = 8 hours.

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

Required columns for Table 6:

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

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

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

This plan ensures full traceability between the resources, the deliverables and the associated costs.

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

- The **deliverable(s)** planned for that period (as listed in Section 3.5 – Scope of Work),
- The **role(s)** involved,
- The **number of days** allocated to each role,

- The **daily rate** (EUR/day) — as provided in the Rate Card (Table 6), and
- The **calculated cost** (EUR = days × daily rate).

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

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

Required columns for Table 7:

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

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

6. Travel and subsistence for this assignment are expected to be minimal and must be clearly itemised in the quotation. Bidders are required to estimate and include in their quote any potential costs related to travel or accommodation that may arise during the implementation of the assignment. This includes potential domestic and international travel. Please note that time spent travelling is not considered billable. Suppliers are encouraged to propose remote collaboration and digital engagement methods wherever possible to minimise environmental and financial impact. **Any travel or subsistence costs directly linked to in-person events shall be treated as event-related costs for the purposes of quotation**, VAT treatment and invoicing, in accordance with Point 2 *(Invoicing Structure and VAT Treatment*).
7. Please submit your quote on official company letterhead or a formal company document, in English. The quote shall be submitted in PDF format. The quote shall include company name, address and VAT/TAX code, contact details, date of submission, name and role of the authorized signatory.
8. The quotation shall remain valid at least 90 calendar days from the submission deadline.
9. Climate-KIC encourages environmentally sustainable business practices. Within the quote, where possible, suppliers are encouraged to indicate any sustainable approaches (i.e. digital documentation, remote collaboration) that can reduce the environmental impact during the provision of services.
10. The bidder shall explicitly declare any current or past institutional, commercial, financial, or organizational relationship with the Cities/ /Ministries/ National support structuresfor which the tender is issued, including but not limited to: a) Membership or affiliation in the bidder's organization b) Any contractual, financial, or in-kind support received from or provided to the Municipality c) Involvement in previous or ongoing projects funded or coordinated by the Municipality d) Participation in governance, technical, or advisory bodies.

Table 5: Example – Main Quotation Table

Deliverable ID / Name	Cost Category	Unit	Quantity	Unit price (EUR, excl. VAT)	Subtotal (EUR)	VAT Rate	VAT Amount (EUR)
D1 – Inception Report	Professional service fees	days	13	780	10,100	N/A	0
D2 – Final Report	Professional service fees	days	20	790	15,800	N/A	0
Event Logistics – annual meeting	Event-related costs	Lump sum	1	2.500	2,500	21%	525
TOTALS							
Total professional service fees (excl. VAT)					25,940		
Total event-related costs (excl. VAT)					2,500		
Total VAT on event-related costs					525		
Overall Total (excl. VAT)					28,440		
Overall Total (incl. VAT)					28,965		

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

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

Table 7: Example - Resource Plan (Monthly Allocation)

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

Terms of this RFP

1. Your proposal must be submitted according to the instructions as detailed in this section and shallbe valid for a period of at least ninety (90) days from the bid due date. Any proposal submitted outside the scope defined may be rejected without provision for re-submission.
2. Any further information pertaining to this RFP, of whatever nature, must be directed to the Contract Manager detailed in Section 1.1. If a point of clarification materially affects the RFP, our response will be circulated to all bidders, otherwise the response will only be sent to the bidder seeking clarification.
3. If any doubt exists concerning any element of this RFP, a clear statement shall be made on the assumptions taken to arrive at your quoted costs, or alternatively contact us prior to submitting your proposal to seek clarification.
4. Entering into contractual arrangements with Climate-KIC in connection with this RFP does not guarantee work will be awarded.
5. Climate-KIC/GARAC reserves the right to reject any proposal(s) received after the submission date/time.
6. Climate-KIC/GARAC reserves the right to seek clarification or, where necessary, conduct limited post-bid discussions with one or more bidders. Any such discussions will be conducted in accordance with the principles of equal treatment and transparency and will not result in a material change to the scope, minimum requirements or award criteria of the procurement. Where revised offers are requested, all bidders concerned will be given the same opportunity and a common deadline for submission.
7. Climate-KIC/GARAC, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to accept or reject any or all of the proposals received and not to award any business and shall not be bound to give reasons for any decision. Bidders will be informed of the outcome of the procurement and the reasons for the decision in accordance with the applicable procurement rules.
8. Climate-KIC reserves the right to procure services from alternative suppliers(s) where the successful bidder is, or becomes, uncompetitive within the market. However, issues over pricing and specification will be resolved through discussion and mutual agreement between Climate-KIC and the supplier.
9. Bidders are required to email soft copies of their proposal to the Contract Manager detailed in Section 1.1 based on the timeline at Section 1.2.
10. As per above and where applicable, bidders must acknowledge receipt of this RFP by return email to the Contract Manager detailed in Section 1.1 confirming whether they intend to submit a proposal by the Submission Deadline.
11. This RFP does not commit or obligate any Climate-KIC company to pay any expenses incurred by you in the preparation of your Proposal. All such expenses are solely at the risk of the bidder

and by submitting a proposal you automatically agree that proposal becomes the property of Climate-KIC.

12. Proposals are to be kept as clear and concise as possible and shall be sequenced and numbered in accordance with the format of this RFP.
13. The formatting of this document and the attached response document shall not be altered.
14. Whilst this RFP confers no legal rights on its addressees, it is not intended that any other persons acquire rights or obligations in respect of or arising under it.
15. Unsuccessful bidders agree, by the submission of their proposals, to return to Climate-KIC this RFP and any and all papers, records, data and materials supplied to them in connection with it, including all copies made by them.
16. This RFP is for consideration in whole and not in part or parts unless otherwise indicated.
17. All efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy and validity of information contained in this RFP. However, Climate-KIC does not warrant the information accurate or comprehensive.
18. Following notification of the procurement outcome, Climate-KIC will observe a standstill period of seven (7) calendar days before entering into the contract with the successful bidder. During this period, unsuccessful bidders may submit a written request for clarification regarding the evaluation outcome or request a review of the evaluation process where they consider that the procurement procedure has not been conducted in accordance with the provisions of this Request for Proposal. Any such request must be submitted in writing within the standstill period to the CESF Contract Manager, Luisa Carretti, by email at **cesf@netzerocities.eu**. Climate-KIC will consider all requests received before proceeding with contract signature. Upon expiry of the standstill period and provided that no outstanding review requests remain under consideration, Climate-KIC may proceed with the contract award and execution.