

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RfP)

Breathe Cities Knowledge Product: *A seat at the table: centering communities in clean air decision making*

C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, Inc.
120 Park Avenue, 23rd Floor
New York, NY 10017
United States of America

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1. C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group Inc. ("C40")



C40 is a network of nearly 100 mayors of the world's leading cities who are working to deliver the urgent action needed right now to confront the climate crisis and create a future where everyone, everywhere, can thrive. Mayors of C40 cities are committed to using a science-based and people-focused approach to help the world limit global heating to 1.5°C and build healthy, equitable and resilient communities. Through a Global Green New Deal, mayors are working alongside a broad coalition of representatives from labour, business, the youth climate movement and civil society to go further and faster than ever before.

The strategic direction of the organisation is determined by an elected Steering Committee of C40 mayors, which is co-chaired by Mayor Sadiq Khan of London, United Kingdom, and Mayor Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr of Freetown, Sierra Leone. Three term Mayor of New York City Michael R. Bloomberg serves as President of the C40 Board of Directors, responsible for operational oversight. A nine-person management team, led by Executive Director, Mark Watts, leads the day-to-day management of C40. C40's three core strategic funders are Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) and Realdania.

To learn more about the work of C40 and our cities, please visit our [Website](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

2. Background and Project Summary

Breathe Cities:

The [Breathe Cities Programme](#) is a global initiative jointly delivered by C40 Cities, the Clean Air Fund, and Bloomberg Philanthropies. By working with cities and coalitions to advance urban clean air action, the Programme will save lives, improve health, and reduce air pollution and climate emissions.

The fourth pillar of the Breathe Cities initiative (knowledge sharing) focuses on sharing lessons and best practices in air quality action. The pillar has two objectives: (1) to support the 14 cities in the Breathe Cities cohort to deliver ambitious action by creating opportunities for them to learn from each other; and (2) to inspire cities and stakeholders outside the initiative to take action by sharing lessons and best practices from Breathe Cities more widely.

One way that the Breathe Cities initiative does this is through the publication of knowledge products - written materials, such as reports and toolkits, that support action by highlighting lessons, examples and best practice approaches.

Purpose of this project:

This project aims to support cities to build meaningful engagement into clean air policymaking processes by developing a report that brings together lessons, city case studies and existing tools and approaches for community engagement. Specifically, the report will add value to the existing literature by:

- Highlighting, through city examples, what approaches to community engagement can work well for clean air policy making, when, in what contexts and for whom

- Tailoring existing resources specifically to an air quality context, including by focusing on communities most affected by poor air quality and that face unintended consequences from clean air policies
- Focusing specifically on some of the common challenges that cities face when engaging communities on clean air issues, such as (a) moving beyond the usual suspects in stakeholder consultations; (b) sustaining engagement over time; and (c) tailoring approaches according to audience, objective and stage of the policy process.

Rationale for the project:

Experience shows that clean air policies can encounter public resistance and produce unintended consequences if not designed carefully and inclusively. This means that local governments cannot make meaningful progress alone. The communities they seek to support must be placed at the heart of the process, helping to shape policies that truly benefit residents and the city as a whole. If done well, these efforts have the potential to generate support for new policies, and build acceptance and trust over time. Placing communities at the heart of the process is not a one-off activity. It requires sustained engagement across multiple channels and approaches. The question is, when and how is it most effective and meaningful to engage communities; with what purpose; and at what stage of policy making?

Reaching and engaging the communities most impacted by poor air quality and the policies being implemented, and sustaining this engagement over time, is a challenge that many cities are navigating. The Breathe Cities initiative is supporting cities within the initiative to engage communities as they develop and implement ambitious clean air policies, through its stakeholder and community engagement pillar. This engagement looks different from city to city, depending on the context, the stage of the policy process, the group being engaged and the outcome the city hopes to achieve.

As this work progresses, there is an opportunity to share these experiences beyond Breathe Cities - unpacking what approaches to community engagement are working well, when, in what contexts and for whom, and to provide a framework for both Breathe Cities and non-Breathe Cities looking to place communities at the heart of clean air decision making.

3. Description of the project

Breathe Cities is looking for a supplier with expertise in air quality and community engagement, and experience delivering high quality written materials to work with the Breathe Cities team (C40 Cities, the Clean Air Fund and Bloomberg Philanthropies) to deliver a high-quality externally-facing report that showcases how cities are building meaningful community engagement into different stages of clean air policy making and overcoming common challenges.

Audience:

The **primary audiences** for this report are

1. City technical officials working in air quality teams in non-Breathe Cities, including cities in the wider C40 Clean Air Network. By reading the report, city technical officials will:
 - Understand how to identify the communities most affected by poor air quality and/or air quality policies in their own context
 - Identify the types of approach to community engagement that will help them to achieve their desired impact and how to navigate common challenges
 - Be inspired by what other cities have been able to achieve by placing communities at the heart of clean air policymaking
 - Know where to look for further practical tools and resources
2. Technical officials in Breathe Cities - who can use the report to showcase their city's leadership and take inspiration from the work happening across other cities in the initiative

The **secondary audience** for this report is:

- Civil society and community-based organisations working in the air quality space - who will use the report to support conversations in their own work in cities around the importance and impact of meaningful community engagement in air quality policymaking

Deliverables:

The scope of work is anticipated to include the following stages. Responses may propose reasonable alternative approaches, provided all deliverables are met.

Work package 1: Planning and researchActivity 1.1. Desk research and content gathering

The supplier will carry out desk research and liaise and engage with key members of the Breathe Cities team to collate relevant information to include in the report to meet the report objectives. This should include:

- Identifying existing known frameworks and resources on meaningful community engagement methods and outcomes, particularly in the air quality and climate space, from leading academia and organisations (a) to help guide the development of the research; and (b) that could be included as 'additional tools and guidance' for readers of the report
- Liaising with the Breathe Cities project team and key members of the Breathe Cities regional teams to identify possible case studies to showcase in the report

Activity 1.2. Report structure and key messages

The supplier will liaise with the Breathe Cities project team to agree on a clear structure for the report and key messages for each section.

Activity 1.3. External peer review panel

In consultation with the Breathe Cities team, the supplier will identify 3-5 appropriate external peer reviewers for the report and work with the Breathe Cities project team to secure their involvement.

Work package 2: Report development

Activity 2.1. Report drafting

The supplier will draft an approximately 20-30 page report, based on the content gathered and structure agreed in work package 1. The primary audience of the report should be city technical officials working in air quality teams in cities (both Breathe and non-Breathe Cities). The report should be written in plain English and include:

- An executive summary
- Clear key messages on the ways in which cities can embed meaningful community engagement into clean air policymaking, including practical advice on common challenges
- A framework or set of guiding questions to support cities to identify suitable approaches for community engagement and measure the outcomes following key principles for meaningful engagement
- At least 5 case studies from Breathe Cities cities that showcase where cities in different contexts are doing this well (the report may also draw on other non-Breathe city examples as agreed with the Breathe Cities project team)
- A toolkit (list) of additional resources and tools for cities to draw on
- A reference list

Work package 3: Review and finalisation

Activity 3.1. Breathe Cities and external review

The supplier will seek and incorporate feedback on the draft report from the Breathe Cities team. The supplier will provide an updated version of the report for any further feedback from the Breathe Cities team. Upon agreement with the Breathe Cities team, an updated draft will be shared with external peer reviewers for their feedback. The supplier will agree with the Breathe Cities team on how to incorporate feedback from external peer reviewers.

Activity 3.2. Copy-editing and design of English report

Once the report content has been agreed between the supplier and the Breathe Cities team, the supplier will professionally copy-edit the report and produce a designed version in Breathe Cities branding, using a template provided by Breathe Cities. The supplier should produce:

- A high quality, designed and copy-edited report (in English), suitable for external publication
- A stand-alone, designed and copy-edited executive summary (in English), suitable for external publication

Activity 3.3. Typesetting of translated reports

The final designed report and executive summary will be made available in the following Breathe Cities languages (English, Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese, Thai and Bahasa). Breathe Cities will procure translation of the final copy separately and will provide this to the supplier for typesetting into the designed report template. Using the translated copy provided, the supplier should produce:

- A design version of the report (in Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese, Thai and Bahasa), suitable for external publication
- A stand-alone, designed executive summary (in Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese, Thai and Bahasa), suitable for external publication

4. Proposal Guidelines

4.1 Proposal Requirements

This Request for Proposal represents the requirements for an open and competitive process. Proposals will be accepted until **5pm EST, December 11, 2025**. Any proposals received after this date and time will not be accepted. All proposals should include clear timetables, a description of how you will work with Breathe Cities, clear costs, and details on your experience in this area.

The proposal should give the Breathe Cities team evaluators all the information they need to assess your bid. Proposals should be limited to 8 pages not including a cover page / letter and attachments. All applications must be submitted in PDF and Microsoft Word formats with at least one inch margins. The text type must be 11 points or larger. **The proposal needs to be submitted in English.**

Your proposal must include adequate information about how it responds to the evaluation criteria, assumptions about the project, risks you have identified, and appropriate mitigation measures. In addition, your proposal also needs to show that the costs were calculated to enable evaluation of cost reasonableness. Your proposal should be organised accordingly and should include (but is not limited to) the information below:

1. Organisational Profile and Key Staff
 - a. Details of organisation and proposed project team - please include relevant previous experiences and expertise, limiting CVs to two pages per person.
 - b. Information about the organisation's commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and ethical alignment with [C40's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Statement](#). How you intend to apply EDI considerations in this project.
2. Proposed Workplan and Timeline
3. Management Plan
 - a. Explanation of how the service provider proposes to work with and involve the Breathe Cities team - key roles and responsibilities, reporting, change requests, escalation of issues, sign-off of work stages and acceptance criteria.
4. Risk Management Approach
 - a. Description of any risks and assumptions made in planning the project, along with appropriate management and mitigation strategies. Details on how a risk assessment would be completed and what it would include.

5. Budget
 - a. Detailed breakdown of costs in USD for each project task. You must include adequate information about how your costs were calculated to enable evaluation of cost reasonableness.
6. Examples of past work (e.g. published reports of a similar nature)

4.2 Supplier Diversity

Breathe Cities is committed to supplier diversity and inclusive procurement by promoting equity, diversity, and inclusivity in our supplier base. We believe that procuring a diverse range of suppliers gives us a wider range of experiences and thoughts from suppliers and thus best enables us to deliver to the whole range of our diverse cities and the contexts that they operate within.

We strongly encourage suppliers (individuals and corporations) that are diverse in terms of size, age, nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation, majority ownership and control by a minority group, physical or mental ability, ethnicity, and perspective to put forward a proposal to work with us.

Feel welcome to refer to [C40's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Statement](#), as supplier diversity and inclusive procurement are two elements of applying equity, diversity, and inclusion to help the world limit global heating to 1.5°C and build healthy, equitable, and resilient communities.

4.3 Contract

Please note this is a contract for professional services and not a grant opportunity. Organisations unable to accept contracts for professional services should not submit bids. The work will be completed on the [C40 Standard Service Provider Agreement](#).

These terms and conditions are non-negotiable. Organisations unable to accept them as drafted should not submit bids in connection with this opportunity.

If Breathe Cities is unable to execute a contract with the winner of this competitive process, we reserve the right to award the contract to the second-highest Potential Supplier.

4.4 Subcontracting

If the organisation submitting a proposal needs to subcontract any work to meet the proposal's requirements, this must be clearly stated. All costs included in proposals must be all-inclusive of any outsourced or contracted work. Any proposals that call for outsourcing or contracting work must include a name and description of the organisations being contracted.

5. Budget

The total contract amount for this project will be between USD 40,000 and USD 45,000, including applicable taxes. The contracting entity will be C40 Inc. registered in the United

States. Payment will be made according to meeting project milestones as approved by the Breathe Cities point of contact.

6. RfP and Project Timeline

RfP Timeline:

RFP Timeline	Due Date
Request for Proposals sent out	By 18 November 2025
Questions submitted to C40	01 December 2025
C40 responds to questions	02 December 2025
Deadline for receiving Offers	11 December 2025
Evaluation of Proposals	12-18 December 2025
Interviews with shortlisted Suppliers	08-14 January 2026
Selection decision made	16 January 2026
All Potential Suppliers notified of outcome	19 January 2026

Project Timeline	Due Date
Supplier kick-off call	w.c. 02 February 2026
Project research/info gathering phase must be completed by	02 March 2026
Project report drafting phase is expected to be completed by	30 March 2026
Project report review phase is expected to be completed by	05 May 2026
Report design and translation is expected to be completed by	22 May 2026
The project is due to run until	22 May 2026

7. Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated against the following criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Weighting
Workplan and approach to project delivery	30%

The proposal should demonstrate a clear understanding of the project requirements, ability to meet the requirements listed within the timeframe, and clear approach and proposed ways of working.	
Knowledge and experience The successful applicant and team members will need to demonstrate a track record of delivering similar projects to a high standard and have relevant subject matter expertise (i.e. relating to community engagement in policymaking process, ideally within air quality-related policy)	30%
Written communication Through the proposal and examples of previous work, the applicant should demonstrate an ability to write in a clear and engaging manner, tailored to different audiences.	20%
Equity and Ethical Alignment Breathe Cities is looking to appoint an organisation that shares our values and is grounded in local contexts. The proposal should demonstrate clear consideration of equity and inclusion principles and how to ensure relevance of the report for cities in different contexts. Organisations based in the global south are strongly encouraged to apply.	10%
Cost reasonableness The proposal should set out a clear rationale for costs proposed, demonstrating value for money: • Economy: minimising the cost of resources used / spending less • Efficiency: the relationship between the output from goods / services and the resources to produce them • Effectiveness: the relationship between the intended and actual results • Equity: the extent to which services reach the intended recipients fairly	10%

7. C40 and CAF Policies

Breathe Cities expects third parties to be able to abide by these C40 policies

- Non-Staff Code of Conduct Policy [here](#)
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy [here](#)

8. Submissions

Proposals will be accepted until **5pm EST, December 11, 2025**. Any proposals received after this date and time will not be accepted.

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AND

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Anonymised responses to questions will be provided here ([link](#)) when the Q&A period closes.

Disclaimer

Clean Air Fund and C40 will not accept liability or responsibility for potential suppliers' costs incurred in preparing a response for this RFP. Responses submitted will be accessible to all Clean Air Fund and C40 staff and external evaluators (if any).

Neither the issue of the RFP, nor any of the information presented in it, should be regarded as a commitment or representation on the part of Clean Air Fund or C40 (or any of its partners) to enter into a contractual arrangement. Nothing in this RFP should be interpreted as a commitment by Clean Air Fund or C40 to award a contract to a Potential Supplier as a result of this procurement, nor to accept the lowest price or any tender.