

Request for Proposal (RfP)

C40 Water Safe Cities Diplomacy and Advocacy - Consultant

C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, Inc.

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United States of America

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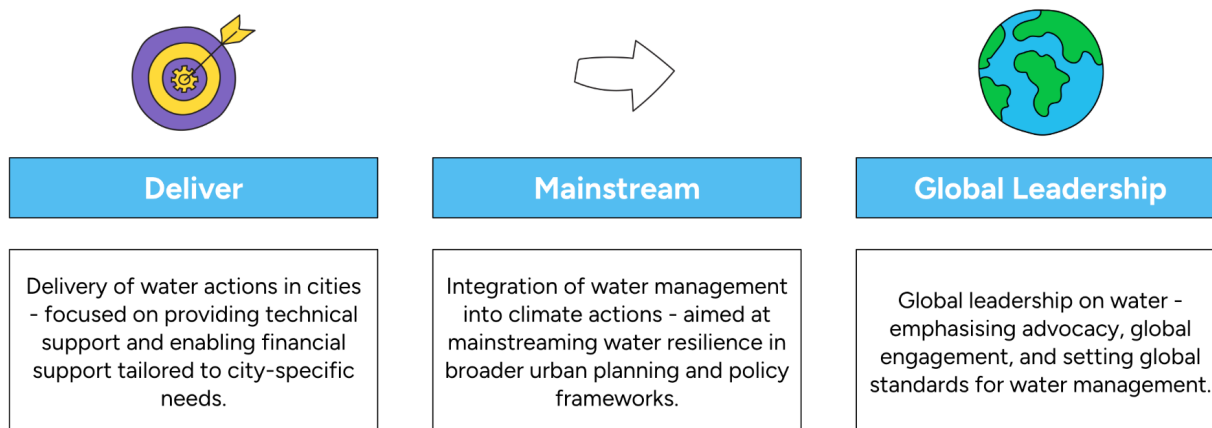
1. C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group Inc.

C40 is a network of nearly 100 mayors of the world's leading cities 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 limit global heating in line with the Paris Agreement and build healthy, equitable and resilient communities. We work alongside a broad coalition of representatives from labour, business, the youth climate movement and civil society to support mayors to halve emissions by 2030 and help phase out fossil use while increasing urban climate resilience and equity.

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

2. Summary, purpose, and scope of work

OVERVIEW: We are seeking a short-term individual consultant to support the development of C40's strategic approach and engagement on global water advocacy & diplomacy, as part of the C40 Water Safe Cities (WSC) Programme. The WSC Programme supports cities in tackling the dual challenges of too much and too little water by **delivering** water-safe solutions, **mainstreaming** multi-sector collaboration, and **leading** a global movement of city action on water resilience.



The Global Leadership pillar of the WSC Programme, focused on advocacy and diplomacy, complements its programme delivery and mainstreaming work to support C40 cities in achieving their ambitious [Water Safe Cities Accelerator targets](#). It aims to influence select national governments, multilateral institutions, and other key stakeholders to support cities in accelerating and scaling urban water resilience. To achieve this, the following three key needs have been initially highlighted by C40 mayors surveyed as part of the programme:

1. Vertical integration across all levels of government: Cities need to be proactively integrated into the design and implementation of national frameworks and plans related to climate and water resilience (such as policies and investments in housing, water, sanitation, transport, disaster managements, environment etc. as well as NAPs), in order to have the necessary resources (data, mandates, financing, funds) to protect their communities.

C40 high level advocacy ask: Partner with cities in the design and implementation of national roadmaps and strategies to deliver on climate adaptation and resilience targets by 2030.

2. Disaster preparedness with a focus on Early Warning Systems for All in cities: To expand multi-hazard early warning systems to all residents, cities need alignment with national and regional governments on authority over preparedness and response, data-sharing and communication protocols, as well as clear policy mandates to implement effective, multi-hazard EWS and disaster response systems in their cities.

C40's high level advocacy ask: Partner with cities to expand multi-hazard early warning system coverage to 100% of residents by 2027, prioritising the most vulnerable and equipping cities with the mandates and data to detect, monitor, and communicate warnings in time.

3. Urban inclusion in the financial global ecosystem (transform): To transform, cities need direct access to funds and financing needed to deliver both the emergency response systems and the transformative resilient infrastructure required to build water-resilient cities.

C40's high level advocacy ask: Increase channels in global and national financial architecture for cities to directly access resilience funds and financing (specific finance asks to be developed).

These three needs above are being used to inform C40's theory of change and narrative framing - that **cities need to be integrated into national plans** (national resilience, adaptation and disaster risk management plans); that in the short term cities urgently need support to **'protect'** their cities for example giving them the mandates and power to expand early warning systems; but in order to **'transform'** cities for long term resilience cities need access to direct financing and funds to implement, maintain, and scale up resilience-building for urban flooding and water security via large scale infrastructure.

To focus and prioritise in 2026 we will focus our advocacy on the integration of cities into national planning and on 'protecting' residents by working with cities to expand multi-hazard early warning systems; while at the same time developing our 2027 approach to support cities to 'transform' for resilience through access to funds and finance.

SCOPE OF WORK:

The consultant would leverage their expertise and network to support C40's strategic advocacy on water resilience and our presence at the 2026 UN Water Conference.

1. Landscape mapping, analysis and engagement:

Through mapping and analysis the Consultant would support C40 to identify and engage the most strategic partners and national governments we need to be working with to unlock results and support us to refine our advocacy asks where needed:

- **Existing efforts, gaps and potential partners:** What are ongoing advocacy and diplomacy efforts in the urban water and climate adaptation landscape, in particular on Early Warning Systems as well as finance for water resilience, across key partner networks and institutions? Which efforts present the best opportunities for strategic partnerships and collaboration for C40? What is C40 and its cities' distinct value-add in this space?
- **National government and multilateral engagement:** Which governments should be championing our advocacy asks, including those governments who are more active in engaging cities and those who need to be more supportive. Which multilateral institutions should we be engaging with to deliver on our asks? This mapping should take C40's regional diversity into consideration and should cut across national governments, multilateral development banks, and UN agencies, identifying the rationale and best entry points for engagement. .
- **Refining our advocacy asks:** Based on the landscape mapping refining of our understanding of the the needs of cities and the existing advocacy asks including:
 - Understanding what the high level narrative and advocacy asks of other organisations are on finance, governance and regulation for short-term response to water shocks (including Early Warning Systems) and long-term urban resilience to flooding and drought, informing how best to position the needs of C40 cities.
 - Refinement of the needs of cities and advocacy asks, including evidence, stats and analysis to support the asks; tactics for how to employ them in our advocacy and measures of success.
 - Specifically:
 - Refine our advocacy ask on Early Warning Systems - including what has happened since the United Nations Secretary General's call for EWS for all by 2027; what does

partnering with cities on EWS really mean and what do cities specifically need for this to happen.

- Refine our advocacy ask on finance for water resilience, including mapping examples of relevant initiatives led by institutions and national governments —such as dedicated funds, guarantee instruments, project preparation facilities, aggregation platforms and other financing mechanisms—as well as the associated policy and advocacy asks they are advancing. This analysis will help identify gaps, opportunities for collaboration.

2. Diplomacy and advocacy roadmap:

The development of a roadmap for our advocacy for 2026 - 2028. Which diplomatic and advocacy events across 2027 and 2028 (e.g., UNFCCC COPs, UN Water events, World Bank Spring Meetings, etc) present the best opportunities for C40 to deliver on its objectives? At these events, which stakeholders should C40 partner with or influence, and what can C40 expect to achieve from these engagements?

- Summarize the key findings and recommendations into a high-level advocacy roadmap and timeline, highlighting the strategic objectives to be pursued at each milestone event. The roadmap should articulate a coherent pathway for C40's engagement on urban water resilience, identifying key advocacy moments, expected outcomes, and opportunities to build momentum through 2027 and 2028, culminating in a clear vision and set of ambitions for C40's future water diplomacy and advocacy

DELIVERABLES *(to be considered for the Consultant's proposed work plan):*

- D1: Initial discussion following analysis of our existing work and asks on Early Warning Systems ahead of New York Climate (wc 20th September)
- D2: Produce a briefing paper and deliver a presentation outlining outcomes of mapping and with recommendations on which partners, institutions and national governments we should be engaging with and why; and any refinements to the advocacy asks based on mapping. Include a list of strategic contacts.
- D3: Contribute to C40's participation in the UN Water conference (December) through providing strategic advice and input into concept notes and briefings for the events and participation of C40 and our Mayors; and strategic introductions to key partners and governments (note - C40 team will lead on event management, coordination and directing and overseeing briefings and concept notes).
- D4: Produce a roadmap document, outlining suggested objectives, milestones, and a stakeholder engagement until 2028; with final presentation to the team.

ADDITIONAL POINTS/REQUIREMENTS

- To support the consultant with their work, C40 will organize an onboarding call, to present and discuss the Water Safe Cities Programme, existing water diplomacy work and how this fits within the wider resilience diplomacy work also including heat as a political priority hence the focus on multihazard Early Warning Systems. Documents will also be provided in advance in order for the Consultant to ask any questions.
- Regular calls (timing TBC but suggest weekly 30 minutes) to unblock any issues, provide any updates that will support some of the immediate work priorities on water diplomacy, including C40's engagement in the UN Water Conference and national government and partner engagement

REQUIRED EXPERIENCE

- Demonstrated expertise and knowledge on urban water resilience and adaptation policy and advocacy
- Demonstrated knowledge and connection to the water and adaptation global environment and landscape.
- Evidence of understanding, and experience working with, key stakeholders in water and adaptation diplomacy, including national governments, UN agencies, multilateral development banks, other city networks, and relevant advocacy groups
- Experience supporting organisational strategy development for advocacy and/or diplomacy, kn
- Demonstrated verbal and written communication skills for a range of audiences.

USE OF AI TOOLS

We recognise that consultants may utilise AI tools to streamline, simplify, and expedite specific tasks. Although the use of these tools would not be a disqualifying factor for this RfP, it is essential that all submitted work maintains the highest quality standards, which includes a comprehensive review and validation of the AI-generated content.

Proposals must clearly state any intention to use generative AI or similar technologies, specifying the exact tasks that these tools will help deliver. C40 reserves the right to reject any AI-generated work that was not previously agreed and that fails to meet the adequate standards.

3. Proposal guidelines

This Request for Proposal represents the requirements for an open and competitive process. Proposals will be accepted until **5pm BST 13 August 2026**. Any proposals received after this date and time will not be accepted.

The proposal should give C40 evaluators all the information they need to assess your bid. Please clearly indicate where applicable:

- How your proposal is responsive to the Evaluation Criteria;
- The assumptions you are making about the project;
- Risks you have identified and appropriate mitigation measures;
- Information about your fee, with a clear cost breakdown by unit (e.g. hourly or daily fee);
- Work plan demonstrating how you will deliver on the work areas in the project scope within timescales
- Proven experience in the areas, including your CV and proof of related or similar work done in the past
- Minimum 2 reference letters or recommendation letters from the past 3 years (required)
- Any additional support that you need to make the project a success, including any inputs you will need from third parties or C40 staff;
- Proposed working partnership with C40, including (as applicable) project governance and management, key personnel, key roles and responsibilities, and escalation procedure for issues.

You must include adequate information about how your costs were calculated to enable evaluation of cost reasonableness.

Supplier diversity

C40 is committed to supplier diversity and inclusive procurement through promoting equity, diversity and inclusivity in our supplier base. We believe that by procuring a diverse range of suppliers, we get a wider range of experiences and thoughts from suppliers and thus are best able 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 size, age, nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation, majority owned and controlled 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](#). Supplier diversity and inclusive procurement is one element of applying equity, diversity and inclusion to help deliver the goals of the Paris Agreement and build healthy, equitable and resilient communities.

Contract

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

These terms and conditions are accepted as drafted by the majority of our suppliers and we reserve the right to penalise your bid on the basis of non-acceptance of terms. If you do wish to include any requested amendments with your proposal, please do not mark up the document in tracked changes but provide [a separate negotiation document](#) for review setting out clearly your rationale for the change.

If C40 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.

Subcontracting

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

4. RfP and project timeline

RfP timeline	Due date
Request for Proposals sent	21 July 2026
Questions submitted to C40	21-24 July 2026
C40 responds to questions	21-24 July 2026
Deadline for receiving Offers	13 August 2026, 5pm BST

Clarification of Offers	17-18 August 2026
Evaluation of Proposal	18-19 August 2026
Selection decision made	19 August 2026
All Potential Suppliers notified of outcome	19 August 2026

Important note: As part of the evaluation process, shortlisted consultants may be invited to **present their proposals to the panel online on 19 August**. All bidders are kindly requested to prepare for this potential step during the bidding phase. We will provide shortlisted candidates with at least 24–48 hours' notice regarding whether a presentation session will take place.

Project timeline	Due date (assuming start date is beginning of August)
Onboarding call and initial analysis and discussion of our existing work on advocacy asks and research including multihazard EWS ahead of New York Climate Week (wc 20th September)	First week of September
Call to discuss initial analysis and discussion of our existing work on multihazard EWS advocacy asks ahead of New York Climate Week (wc 20th September)	First week of September (can also be joint with the onboarding call, as preferred).
Landscape and mapping report, refinement of asks	30 October
Strategic input to UN water conference participation and stakeholder engagement via weekly 30 mins calls (timing TBC)	Ongoing until 8 December 2026
2026-2028 Roadmap	18 December 2026
The project is due to run until	23 December 2026

5. Proposal evaluation criteria

Proposals will be evaluated against the following criteria.

Evaluation criteria	Weighting
Clarity and Feasibility: Work plan that clearly demonstrates how they will address the work areas in the project scope and within the 4 months?	35 %

Experience and Qualifications: • Demonstrated expertise and knowledge on urban water resilience and adaptation policy and advocacy • Demonstrated knowledge and connection to the water and adaptation global environment and landscape. • Evidence of understanding, and experience working with, key stakeholders in water and adaptation diplomacy, including national governments, UN agencies, multilateral development banks, other city networks, and relevant advocacy groups • Experience supporting organisational strategy development for advocacy and/or diplomacy, kn • Demonstrated verbal and written communication skills for a range of audiences.	35 %
Financial proposal: Competitive pricing with an itemized budget	30%

Following the evaluation of written submissions, C40 reserves the right to invite a shortlist of the highest-ranked bidders for an interview or technical presentation to further validate their proposals. If conducted, the results of these sessions will be incorporated into the final technical score as outlined in the evaluation criteria.

6. Project budget

This RfP is for a short term collaboration of 4 months, whose maximum budget is set at USD 34,500 (inclusive of all applicable taxes). We will assess potential extension (if relevant) in terms of duration, scope and budget during the execution of the project.

All proposals must include proposed costs to complete the different tasks described in section 2 of the RfP, and detail any assumptions made to calculate the financial needs, (for example, estimated task duration).

Costs must be inclusive of all VAT and all other applicable taxes and be quoted in USD, C40 work currency for this RfP. Please note which exchange rate has been applied to convert the quoted costs in USD if applicable.

When developing the budget, please indicate which services are included / not included.

If travel is expected for this work, please ensure to include travel costs in the proposed budget. All travel is to be pre-approved by the relevant C40 point of contact prior to incurring the costs.

Costs should be stated as one-time or non-recurring costs or monthly recurring costs. All costs incurred in connection with the submission of this RfP are non-refundable by C40.

Payment will be made upon satisfactory completion of each project deliverable, in line with the project timeline outlined above, after approval by the C40 point of contact.

7. C40 policies

C40 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

Each Potential Supplier must submit **one copy of their proposal** to the email address below by 5pm BST 13 August 2026:

- Shelley Nania, Head of Global City Diplomacy and Advocacy: snania@c40.org
- Amanda Ikert, Head of Resilience, aikert@c40.org
- Cc: Kiana Shahbazi, Senior Manager, City Diplomacy & U20, kshahbazi@c40.org
- Cc: Veronica Sabino, Senior Campaigns Project Manager, vsabino@c40.org

Anonymised responses to questions will be provided here ([link](#)) on an ongoing basis until 24 July, when the Q&A period closes.

Based on the submissions received, C40 reserves the right to promote the establishment of consortium relationships or request potential suppliers refine their submission after receipt.

Have a concern?

C40 is committed to the highest standards of ethical behaviour. As such, we are committed to being open and responsive to complaints and suggestions on how we can improve from outside the organisation. Please refer to [C40 Complaints Procedure](#) on how to reach us.

Disclaimer

C40 will not accept any liability or be responsible for any costs incurred by Potential Suppliers in preparing a response for this RFP. Responses submitted will be accessible by all 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 C40 (or any of its partners) to enter into a contractual arrangement. Nothing in this RFP should be interpreted as a commitment by C40 to award a contract to a Potential Supplier as a result of this procurement, nor to accept the lowest price or any tender.