

Request for Proposal (RfP)

Umbrella Agreement for audits of grant-funded projects

C40 Cities Climate Leadership

44 Featherstone Street,

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United Kingdom

AUGUST 2026

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CITIES**

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1. C40 Cities Climate Leadership

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](#).

1. Summary, purpose and background of the project

C40 is seeking a qualified Audit Firm to enter into a long-term **Umbrella Agreement (Framework Contract)** for grant auditing and compliance services. Our portfolio consists of diverse funding streams, each with unique regulatory requirements and reporting cycles.

The successful bidder will serve as a strategic partner, providing high-level assurance and advisory services across our global operations. This Umbrella Agreement aims to move beyond transactional auditing by establishing a standardized, scalable approach to compliance. By centralizing our audit needs under one partner, we intend to improve reporting consistency, reduce administrative burden, and ensure that C40 remains a low-risk, highly transparent partner for our donors.

The expected volume of audits required is between three and six annually.

The Agreement is expected to run for a period of 4 years with an option to extend for an additional 5th year. C40 expects the pricing of the winning proposal to remain unchanged for the duration of the engagement.

2. Proposal guidelines

This Request for Proposal represents the requirements for an open and competitive process. Proposals will be accepted until *1 October*. Any proposals received after this date and time will not be accepted. All proposals should include clear timetables, how you will work with C40, clear costs and detail on experience in this area.

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;
- All costs must be itemized to include an explanation of all fees and costs. You must include adequate information about how your costs were calculated to enable evaluation of cost reasonableness.
- 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 governance and management, resumes of key personnel, key roles and responsibilities, and escalation procedure for issues.
- Organisation history and credentials to undertake grant audits
- Explanations of audit processes and methodologies, how a grant audit would typically be run;
- List of systems and technologies used during the audit, specifically how the audit firm uses AI tools to complete and validate its assurance processes.
- Information on Data Protection: C40 is subject to the European Union and United Kingdom data protection regulations and the winning proposal must ensure its continued compliance.
- Proposed contract terms including, but not limited to, data sharing agreement.

Any AI-supported tools used must be clearly outlined and justified in the methodology section. Furthermore, the methodology must explicitly detail how results will be validated and verified using a combination of independent human oversight and cross-referencing with trusted databases/sources. Any data C40 shares is strictly confidential and any of this data that is uploaded, shared or processed by AI tools must remain strictly confidential.

Project scope

The Umbrella Agreement shall govern the way that the firm and C40 shall work together, however the contractual conditions pertaining to each individual assurance engagement will be shared with the firm ahead of each audit, along with the financial report and transaction list. The work can be carried out remotely as all documentation is electronic. Opening and closing meetings shall be held for each project audit, which can be held remotely or in person.

Illustrative audits and their respective timings;

Project name	Funder	Project period	Value of grant subject to audit	Types of expenses	Timing of audit
Project X	Funder A	4 years	US\$15,000,000	Staff costs, consultant costs, sub-grants, travel	Annual, first audit February 2027
Project Y	Funder B	4 years	DKK 60m (US\$10m)	Staff costs, consultant costs, travel	Annual, March
Project Z	Funder C	2 years	US\$750k	Staff costs, consultant costs, travel	One off audit

Generally, the deliverable for each audit shall be an audit opinion along with an audit report containing details of any audit findings.

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 unable to accept contracts for professional services should not submit bids. Please share proposed terms including, but not limited to, the firm's data sharing agreement.

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.

3. RfP and project timeline

RfP timeline	Due date
Request for Proposal sent	20 August 2026
Questions submitted to C40	3 September 2026
C40 responds to questions	10 September 2026
Deadline for receiving Offers	1 October 2026
Clarification of Offers	2 October 2026 - 14 October 2026
Evaluation of Proposal	2 October 2026 - 14 October 2026
Presentation of Proposal	19 October 2026 - 23 October 2026
Selection decision made	28 October 2026
All Potential Suppliers notified of outcome	6 November 2026

4. Proposal evaluation criteria

Proposals will be evaluated against the following criteria.

Evaluation criteria	Weighting
Technical expertise - ability to meet the requirements listed, regulatory compliance and donor specific mastery and experience	30%
Partnership & Personnel - Resilience and customer focus of on-going support capabilities, team's stability to avoid 're-learning' each year	25%
Value for money - transparency of fee structure and value for money, way of working and use of digital platforms and compliance with C40's AI restrictions and safe data validation methods	30%
Experience with similar iNGOs, ability to provide references, global presence to support in-country audits (specifically Denmark and South Africa)	15%

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.

5. Project budget

All proposals must include proposed costs to complete the audits described in the project scope. Costs should be expressed as daily rates, and a quotation shall be given for each of the three project audits outlined in section 5. The available budget for the audits will depend on the individual projects.

All proposals must include proposed costs to complete the tasks described in the project scope, including all VAT and taxes. All costs incurred in connection with the submission of this RfP are non-refundable by C40.

6. 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](#)

7. Submissions

Each Potential Supplier must submit **one copy of their proposal** to the email addresses below by 5pm GMT 1 October 2026.

Jessica Bader

Head of Finance - Grants

jbader@c40.org

Keeping in copy in all communications - finance@c40.org

Based on the submissions received, C40 reserves the right to 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.