Request for Proposal (RfP)

Consultancy Service for the Development of a Global Knowledge Paper on Mainstreaming Climate Considerations into City-Level Procurement.

C40 Cities Climate Leadership Denmark

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C40 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.

2. Summary, purpose and background of the project

Background

Tackling the climate crisis requires more than ambitious targets or signature projects. It demands transformation of how cities work: embedding climate action into every decision, every department, and every dollar spent.

Public procurement represents 13–20% of global GDP and contributes to ~15% of global GHG emissions[1], making it one of the most powerful levers cities have to influence markets and accelerate climate action. Yet, in most cities, the transformational potential of procurement as a tool to accelerate climate action is yet to be fully realised, often due to limited technical resources, capacity, and knowledge sharing on sustainable procurement practices.

Procurement governs how cities deploy capital and operating budgets, making it the most potent yet under-utilized tool for scaling climate action and ensuring resilient infrastructure. Climate-aligned procurement can enable cities to direct public spending towards low-carbon and climate-resilient

[1] https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/173331642410951798/pdf/Synthesis-Report.pdf

solutions, while also supporting resource efficiency, lifecycle cost savings, improved health, innovation, and market transformation.

By embedding climate goals directly into procurement policies and evaluation criteria, cities can move beyond isolated projects to a whole-of-government approach to climate action. While sector-specific examples exist, cities urgently require a practical framework to bridge the gap between climate ambition and operational implementation.

To leverage procurement as a key driver for climate action, C40 is engaging a consultant to develop a global knowledge paper on mainstreaming climate considerations into city procurement systems. Serving as a **foundational global reference for C40 cities**, the paper will compile evidence, data, and leading city practices to establish a compelling business case, highlight practical approaches, and offer actionable insights for widespread replication.

This initiative directly supports C40's Leadership Standard B(b) to mainstream climate within city procurement processes and governance by 2030.[2] Drawing on pioneer models like Copenhagen, the paper aims to provide a roadmap as to how cities can turn city procurement from a routine administrative function into a strategic engine for market transformation and measurable emissions reduction.

Objectives:

The knowledge paper must achieve the following objectives:

1. **Establish the case for mainstreaming climate into city procurement:** Develop an evidence-based narrative on the role of city procurement as a lever for climate action and leading by example, including key statistics and data on the purchasing power and procurement expenditure of C40 member cities and, where available, its climate-related impacts.
2. **Identify and synthesise learnings from leading city approaches:** Synthesise key approaches, enabling factors, and challenges from leading cities to inform a global knowledge paper, emphasizing the importance of setting specific climate and circular targets for municipal procurement and mainstreaming.
3. **Develop a practical implementation roadmap:**
    a. Translate the research and city-level learnings into a practical implementation roadmap **identifying key principles for mainstreaming climate into city procurement systems, including critical steps, entry points** (such as the Cities Climate Action Plan and targets) and **relevant tools** and **resources for cities.**
    b. Define key principles and recommendations for **Post-Implementation Effectiveness and Sustainability**: Analyze the critical success factors, resource requirements, and institutional frameworks needed following the introduction of climate aligned procurement practices (including routines for quality control [QC], monitoring, evaluation, and reporting [MER], and staffing), examining common underfunding risks and strategies to ensure long-term effectiveness and impact.

[2] Leadership Standard B(b) on mainstreaming climate in city procurement processes (pg 7-10) https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BlmLtdn1KeQRL-nbwMboQBjSUZxHvatN/view

Scope of work - The supplier will:

Initiation Phase

- Develop the project work plan and timeline
- Agree upon Ways of working with C40
- Develop a proposed outline and structure for the knowledge paper for agreement with C40.
- In consultation with C40 identify at least 7 leading city approaches and conduct a minimum of 7 interviews with leading cities. C40 will provide introductions and confirmation of cities to approach. All interviews will be virtual, no travel is required for this project.

Workstream 1 Research and Evidence

- **Review existing evidence and C40 knowledge on climate-aligned procurement, including C40's proprietary knowledge, landscape assessments, tools and existing case material.**

- Develop a powerful narrative for the importance of setting climate-related procurement targets and mainstreaming climate into city-wide procurement processes as a powerful lever for accelerating climate action.

    - Research **key statistics** related to climate aligned procurement, the purchasing power of C40 cities, how much are cities spending on procurement per year, how does this relate to total city budget (operation and investment).

    - Where available, **explore the climate breakdown of procurement expenditure or impacts**, including mitigation/adaptation and Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions. Identify evidence on how climate-aligned procurement can contribute to cities' overall climate targets, emissions reductions, climate resilience, resource efficiency, improved public health, lifecycle savings and market transformation.

- **Identify leading city approaches** to mainstreaming climate into procurement and the key approaches being used across policies, governance, procurement processes and sectors.

- Conduct interviews with at least 7 leading cities, including Copenhagen, to understand their approaches, implementation experience, challenges and enabling factors, and the role of procurement reform to achieve their Climate Action Plan targets.
    - Identifying best practices to mainstream climate targets into city-wide procurement processes - how cities are mainstreaming climate - what approaches are being taken.
    - How is procurement used by leading cities to achieve their GHG emission targets and goals set out in their Climate Action Plan, such as Copenhagen and Stockholm.
    - How does this help cities develop and deliver their climate budgets
    - **How cities are using procurement to lead by example to inspire and support new markets and technologies**
    - **Synthesise cross-city learnings to identify common approaches, gaps, opportunities and lessons that can inform development/ adoptions of policies, frameworks and governance structures and support implementation and operationalisation at the project level.**

Workstream 2 Development

Development of the Global Knowledge Paper based on the research and city engagement, the consultant will develop a **6–8 page global knowledge paper**, framed as a foundational white paper for C40 cities. The audience for this strategic paper is city leaders and senior officials.

The paper should have a clear narrative and should not function simply as a compilation of case studies. It should **connect the global evidence and city experience to provide a clear understanding of how climate can be mainstreamed into city procurement systems and its potential impacts.**

The paper should include, at minimum:

1. **The case for climate-aligned city procurement. Why procurement is a strategic lever for climate action, key global and city-level data on procurement and purchasing power, the potential contribution of procurement to climate action and market transformation.**
2. **What does mainstreaming climate into procurement mean? A clear understanding of climate-aligned procurement, the distinction between individual initiatives and systematic mainstreaming across city procurement systems.**
3. **Learnings from leading cities: synthesis of approaches from leading C40 cities, key lessons, enabling factors and challenges from city experiences, procurement processes and approaches that can be adapted or replicated by other cities.**
4. **A practical implementation roadmap: Define 5-10 key principles, steps and entry points for cities to mainstream climate into procurement, institutional, policy, process, implementation and capacity considerations.**
5. **Tools and resources: relevant tools, resources and approaches that cities can adapt.**

The final paper should be evidence-based, visually engaging and practical, combining concise analysis, data, case studies and visual frameworks rather than presenting a lengthy literature review.

Expected Outputs:

1. Inception package, including the agreed work plan, methodology, city interview plan and paper outline.
2. Research and evidence base, including key data, literature and findings from city interviews.
3. Draft global knowledge paper for review by C40.
4. Final 6–8 page global knowledge paper in a publication-ready format, incorporating C40 feedback. Including professional proofreading of the final document.

Supplier Requirements

Mandatory

- Applicants can be a firm or a consortium with the required experience. Individual consultants applying independently are not eligible.
- Minimum 10 years of experience in public procurement, sustainable/climate-aligned procurement, urban governance, climate policy and/or climate mainstreaming.
- Demonstrated experience working with local governments, preferably across multiple geographies.
- Proven experience in developing global/ multi-city knowledge products, white papers, implementation roadmaps and similar resources.
- Strong research experience and the ability to synthesise research into concise, easy-to-engage-with reports and documentation.

- The supplier will need to participate in periodic review meetings with the C40 Mainstreaming Team and relevant Global Teams.
- The supplier will need to accommodate working globally, i.e. flexibility to work across time zones which might require work outside typical 9 am–5 pm hours to accommodate global coordination.

Desirable

- Experience working with C40 Cities, city networks, international organisations or multilateral institutions.
- Experience in urban climate action, climate governance and city-level sustainable procurement.
- Familiarity with C40 procurement resources and Leadership Standards.
- Experience developing publication-ready knowledge products and data visualisations.

3. Proposal guidelines

This Request for Proposal represents the requirements for an open and competitive process. Proposals will be accepted until 17:00 pm SAST (South African Standard Time), *6 November 2026*. 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:

- Relevant information about the service provider, including contact details;

- 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;
- A detailed timeline outlining key stages, milestones, and points of engagement with C40, including adequate review periods;
- An overview of relevant expertise and experience in public procurement, sustainable/climate-aligned procurement, urban governance or climate policy, climate mainstreaming, and working with cities, including references to previous work on similar assignments
- Share global/ multi-city knowledge products, white papers, implementation roadmaps and similar resources previously developed.
- Details of the organisation and proposed project team, including relevant experience and expertise. CVs should be limited to two pages per person. Clearly indicate the project lead, roles and responsibilities of each team member.
- A description of the proposed **research and work approach**, including the approach to reviewing existing evidence, engaging with cities, synthesising cross-city learnings and developing the knowledge paper and implementation roadmap.
- A detailed financial proposal. The proposed fee should include all professional fees, professional proofreading fees, overheads, and any miscellaneous costs. A clear cost breakdown and explanation of expenses must be provided (see Section 6: "Project Budget")
- Contact details for at least two recent references
- Confirmation of adherence to C40's terms and conditions

- 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.

- Any additional deliverables and/or information relevant to this tender

Please note: Proposals should be written in English, saved in pdf format and should not exceed 10 pages of text. Reference material may be placed in annexes. CVs should not exceed 2 pages.

You must include adequate information about how your costs were calculated to enable evaluation of cost reasonableness. **Costs are required to be presented in USD.**

The use of AI-supported tools must be kept to an absolute minimum, and no output (text or visuals) should be produced by AI. 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 cannot be shared with any AI tools.

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. 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	*19 October 2026*
Questions submitted to C40	*28 October 2026*
C40 responds to questions	*29 October 2026*
Deadline for receiving Offers	*6 November 2026, 17:00 pm SAST*
Clarification of Offers	*9 November 2026 - 11 November 2026*
Evaluation of Proposal	*12 November 2026 - 13 November 2026*
Presentation of Proposal	*16-18 November 2026*
Selection decision made	*20 November 2026*
All Potential Suppliers notified of outcome	*27 November 2026*

Project term: The duration of the assignment is just under six (6) months, starting 4 December 2026, and ending by 31st May 2027.

Project timeline	Due date
The project initiation phase must be completed by	*15 December 2026*
Inception Package – Agreed work plan, methodology, paper outline, structure and city stakeholder interview plan	*+ 0.5 months*
Workstream 1: Research and Evidence- Key findings from desk research, data analysis and city interviews, including synthesis of leading approaches and learnings	*12 March 2027*
Workstream 2: Draft Global Knowledge Paper- Draft 6–8 page knowledge paper, including key evidence, cross-city learnings and proposed implementation roadmap	*15 March - 16 April*
Workstream 2: **Final Global Knowledge Paper** – Final paper incorporating C40 feedback, with publication-ready format.	*21 May 2027*

The project is due to run until	*31 May 2027*

5. Proposal evaluation criteria

Proposals will be evaluated against the following criteria.

Evaluation criteria	Weighting
Technical Approach Project delivery approach proposed, including project management approach (ability to deliver outputs on time and with quality). Clear timelines for milestones and deliverables Clear methodology for delivery of the outputs listed in the RFP and details on the stakeholder engagement process proposed.	*40%*
Past experience Relevant expertise and understanding of topics outlined in the proposal; Track record in public procurement, city procurement and climate mainstreaming, reference to similar projects and reports delivered on related themes, and experience working with city governments.	*30%*
Financial Proposal Cost Reasonableness measured by: Economy: minimising the costs 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	*20%*
Commitment to diversity and inclusion C40 is seeking to appoint an organisation that shares our values and is grounded in the context of the local community, and having a tram that clearly incorporates C40 policies (e.g. gender balance in teams and roles, etc). See policy section below.	*10%*

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

A **maximum budget of USD 10,000 is available including all applicable taxes. Bids must not exceed this value**. Payment will be made according to meeting project milestones as approved by the C40 point of contact. Travel is not required for this work. The selected supplier should inform C40 of its plans to engage government stakeholders.

All proposals **must include proposed costs to complete the tasks described in the project scope, including professional proofreading of the final document and all VAT and taxes**. 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.

7. C40 policies

C40 expects third parties to 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 cityprocurement@c40.org (please cc Tarryn Quayle and Devashree Ragde) by **17:00 pm SAST** (South African Standard Time), **6 November 2026**:

Submit your proposal to: cityprocurement@c40.org

Please include the following email addresses in copy (cc):

Tarryn Quayle, Head of Climate Mainstreaming, tquayle@c40.org and

Devashree Ragde, Manager Climate Finance and Governance, dragde@c40.org

Anonymised responses to questions will be provided here (link) 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.