Request for Proposal (RfP)

Mission Innovation - Urban Transitions Mission

UTMC 2.0 Platform Revamp

Foreningen C40 Cities Climate Leadership Denmark

C/O Paragraf Plus Advokater

Radhusstraede 6,2

1466 Kobenhaven K

9 November 2026

C40 CITIES

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1. C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group

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 LinkedIn, X, BlueSky, Threads, Facebook, YouTube and Instagram.

2. Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy (GCoM)

GCoM is the largest global alliance for city climate leadership, uniting a global coalition of over 14,000 cities and local governments and 100+ supporting partners. The cities and partners of GCoM share a long-term vision of supporting voluntary action to combat climate change and towards a resilient and low-emission society. GCoM serves cities and local governments by mobilizing and supporting ambitious, measurable, planned climate and energy action in their communities by working with city/regional networks, national governments, and other partners to achieve our vision. Led today by UN Special Envoy for Climate Ambition and Solutions Michael R. Bloomberg and European Commission Executive Vice-President Teresa Ribera, the coalition comprises cities across 6 continents and 150 countries, representing over 1 billion people or more than 13 percent of the global population.

To learn more about GCoM, please visit our website, or follow us on X, Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

3. Urban Transitions Mission (UTM) of Mission Innovation

The Urban Transitions Mission (UTM), co-lead by the European Commission, the GCoM and the Joint Programming Initiative (JPI) Urban Europe, was launched at the COP26 in November 2021 with the aim to increase the capacity of cities worldwide, empowering them to shape urban transitions based on robust knowledge and a strong net-zero community of support and exchange. Thanks to increased capacity and access to knowledge, cities will be able to mobilise their inherent strength and the potential of their communities – and develop their own customised solutions to effectively transition to net-zero. The Mission aims to close the gap between research, development and deployment on systemic transition pathways to net-zero, resilient and human-centred cities through multi-level, multi-sectoral, and outcome-oriented partnerships.

The UTM works with a cohort of ambitious cities worldwide to demonstrate integrated pathways towards holistic, people-centred urban transitions built around clean energy and innovative net-zero carbon solutions. Currently engaging 150 cities from 54 countries, it brings together a growing cohort of cities with the aim of reaching 300 by the year 2030. In collaboration with a Global Innovation Alliance of national governments, financial institutions, international organization, and private sector partners, UTM mobilises decision makers across all levels of government to prioritise climate-neutral and net-zero pathways enabled by clean energy and systemic innovation across all sectors and in urban governance. By accelerating capacity-building and closing the gap between research, development and deployment, the Mission empowers cities to adopt innovative solutions and help reach tipping points in the cost and scale of those solutions for urban transitions.

The UTM serves as a critical catalyst for GCoM, directly driving its "Accelerate" mandate by mobilizing a rapidly expanding network of forward-thinking cities. By designing, testing, and refining scalable frameworks for rapid climate action, the UTM creates a repeatable blueprint for urban decarbonization. Ultimately, this tested approach is engineered to scale globally, providing the 14,000+ GCoM signatories with the actionable methodologies, technical pathways, and systemic solutions necessary to accelerate their transition toward net-zero emissions.

4. Summary, Purpose and Background of the Project

The Urban Transitions Mission and its Digital Platform (UTMC)

By applying the Net-zero Urban Transitions Framework, the cities that are part of the UTM cohort can strengthen and future-proof their plans in the context of their commitments to GCoM. All cities of the cohort are GCoM signatories, and have developed, adopted and monitored a comprehensive climate action plan as part of their political commitment to go beyond the ambition of their national government . Within UTM, cities are offered opportunities based on their needs, so that they can co-create knowledge and test innovative solutions, partnerships, technologies, and approaches to solve their most pressing challenges.

This is possible thanks to the role of UTM as broker of solutions, and via a Global Innovation Alliance (GIA) of partners and national governments committed to support cities in developing, piloting, and scaling innovative solutions for urban transitions. Cities benefit from global support for their net-zero journeys through the revamped Urban Transitions Mission Centre (UTMC) online platform (to be developed). This portal will provide user-friendly access to innovative solutions and opportunities to connect with peers, academia, and the private sector. Furthermore, it will host essential guidance on strengthening climate action and accessing climate funding and finance. The revamped platform will serve as a critical tool for facilitating global knowledge exchange within the UTM community and beyond.

Project Summary

While cities generate over 80% of global Gross Domestic Product, they also produce roughly 70% of worldwide greenhouse gas emissions and consume three-quarters of global energy consumption. With urban populations projected to climb to 70% by mid-century, sustainable local transitions are vital to hit the 1.5°C Paris Agreement targets. Although more than 1,100 cities have committed to net-zero targets, local administrations consistently encounter fragmented landscapes, multi-level governance bottlenecks, and a severe deficit in financial and technical implementation capacity.

To support this global cohort, the initiative relied on the services of an online platform – the Urban Transitions Mission Centre (UTMC) – from 2023 to 2025. However, the initial platform operated primarily as a traditional, static repository space. While user surveys in 2025 revealed high value for its content, for the Finance & Funding Helpdesk and the Net-Zero Urban Transitions Framework, city officials and stakeholders expressed significant frustration with its interface, hub model, and lack of active networking features. Consequently, the UTMC 2.0 revamp is being commissioned to replace more administrative-heavy workflows with data-driven automated systems, transforming the platform into an interactive, operational engine for urban transformation.

Objectives

The core objective of the UTMC 2.0 revamp is to transition the platform from a passive repository of information into an active, intelligent driver of implementation across four strategic areas:

- Scaling and strengthening systemic capacity building and support for new and existing cities of the cohort, reinforcing needs-based offers to implement holistic net-zero plans
- Accelerating the identification of pilots, deep-demonstrators, and investment opportunities
- Rolling out an online portal for knowledge exchange and climate finance guidance
- Providing user-friendly access to innovative solutions, opportunities to connect with peers, academia and private sector

The revamp seeks to shift the platform from a static index to an interactive matchmaking engine. Rather than requiring municipal practitioners to manually search through static document databases, UTMC 2.0 will feature an active networking system that intelligently connects cities with relevant solution providers, financing partners, and peer municipalities based on their specific net-zero challenges.

The upgrade prioritizes the automation of workflows. By replacing manual, resource-intensive submission processes, data reporting, and administrative tracking with automated, data-driven systems, the platform will link to existing databases and data sources, integrating plug-and-play digital tools, standardized frameworks, and dedicated areas for user exchanges.

Through a dedicated Finance & Funding Helpdesk, the development of secure investment profiles, and an aggregation dashboard mapping city-level investments, the new platform shifts away from generic guidance toward providing actionable, bankable asset development too.

5. Proposal Guidelines

This Request for Proposal represents the requirements for an open and competitive process. Proposals will be accepted until **Thursday, 26th November 2026, 23:59 CET Brussels. Any proposals received after this date and time will not be accepted.**

The selected subcontractor will be responsible for the end-to-end technical development, deployment, initial evolution and long-term sustainability of the UTMC 2.0 digital ecosystem. The requested engineering and deployment services include:

- AI-ready, API-First Architecture & Core Build: Design and implementation of a highly scalable, modular backend framework to ensure seamless data exchange across separate climate platforms. Core functionalities will be exposed to agentic workflows via the Model Context Protocol (MCP).
- Legacy Data Migration: Execution of a complete and secure data transfer of all legacy assets and user data coming from the original UTMC repository currently hosted in GCoM servers.
- An AI Engine Backend Integration: Development and deep optimization of an interactive "Digital Concierge" agent. The Digital Concierge serves as the agentic AI heart of the platform, managing the UX journey along the stages of the UTM Net-Zero Urban Framework, providing a self-guided roadmap for cities to progress from baseline assessments to full implementation, and iteratively interacting with the user via a conversational interface to reach an optimal package of solutions. When handling private data (such as contact information, finance profiles,...) the agent should run in a zero-trust environment preventing exfiltration of protected information.
- Secure Infrastructure Deployment: Coding and implementation of encrypted "Investment Profiles" and restricted-access financial data shells to protect municipal project pipelines.
- Platform Maintenance: Provision of systematic system maintenance and code performance updates to guarantee the operational integrity of the portal, including a platform sustainability strategy to be developed within the activities foreseen in the project.

Value proposition

The UTMC 2.0 platform must use a multi-sector mobilization matrix to personalize user experiences. The automated outreach and user dashboards should be aligned with these stakeholder criteria:

- Helping them build skills and providing peer mentoring through the steps of the Net-Zero Urban Transitions Framework and the GCoM City Journey.
- Showing how city climate plans can help meet national climate targets (NDCs)
- 'Translating' the findings of academic research so it fits immediate city procurement and project needs while staying true to methodology and takeaways
- Matching private funding with grouped, low-risk city green projects.
- Supporting fair climate solutions, community inclusion, and grassroots ideas.

Target Audiences:

- Cities, Local Policymakers, and Urban Practitioners

- Mission Innovation Members and National Governments
- Academia, Research, and Think Tanks
- Businesses, Industry Providers, and Financial Institutions
- Local Communities, Citizens, and Civil Society

Products Specifications & features

The UTMC 2.0 must transition from a static repository into a "Plug-and-Play" interactive hub, centered on providing a seamless and interactive UX experience. The product must strictly comply with the following technical blueprints:

A. Technical Stack & Interoperability

- Base Frameworks: Highly scalable modular architecture utilizing modern frameworks (e.g., React, Node.js, or Python-based configurations).
- Vector Infrastructure: Integration of RAG-compatible vector databases (e.g., Pinecone, Weaviate) to process complex contextual semantic queries.
- API Integrations: Live, continuous data bridge linking with GCoM reporting systems (e.g., GCoM Regions Portal and any future tools/services) and, upon availability, CDP-ICLEI Track and MyCovenant to automate city data updates. It must be set up to securely consume external data feeds from open tools such as Google Earth, GCoM Climate Action Knowledge Engine (CAKE), among others.

B. Core Functional Modules

- **The AI Digital Concierge agent:** A proactive AI-based guidance tool that supports a city user by providing recommendations based on the city profile and user input. The AI Digital Concierge interacts with the user, tracks a city's updated GCoM profile, and proactively maps capability shortfalls, cross-references opportunities and "Solution Bundles" (such as curated training assets, twinning peer results, toolkits, peer cities, financial opportunities, etc) that are aligned with the GCoM climate journey of the city, serving them to the user in an iterative and conversational way. The Concierge should be linked to the APIs and to existing and upcoming GCoM platforms and repositories (such as CAKE) to ensure maximum interoperability and resource efficiency. The AI Digital Concierge could be composed of several specialised agents that coordinate with each other, or be the coordinating agent of many specialised agents (to be defined).
- **The UTM Academy and expert corner**: The UTM Academy is a cross-referenced space supporting city officials getting professional training along the UTM Net-Zero Urban Transitions Framework. The Academy will index an evolving number of training modules, technical assets, into a self-guided user journey along a light touch MOOC style tool, allowing city officials to build technical capacity at their own pace and UTM to track their progress.
  The expert corner function operationalizes a dynamic digital calendar with automated scheduling for Virtual Office Hours and rapid 30-minute consultations, connecting municipal practitioners directly with partners and academic experts.
- **The Financing & Funding Helpdesk:** A centralized Project Pipeline dashboard integrated with de-risked market standards (e.g., GRESB, ISO certifications, and ESG materiality considerations). The helpdesk functions should be compatible with existing GCoM digital services, to allow for interoperability and long-term sustainability of the features.

- **Secure Investment Profiles**: Private, password-protected sections built as a safe add-on to existing city profiles, allowing municipalities to safely disclose sensitive financial projects to verified capital investors. These will need to be accessible by the AI digital concierge in order to provide recommendations to the city user, yet without disclosing sensitive data unless in aggregated form.
- **Action Learning Environment**: Shared collaboration spaces moving research partnerships from disconnected email threads into interactive, searchable environments hosting Action Learning Groups supporting filling the R&I gaps and providing concrete opportunities to co-create innovative solutions following UTM R&I priorities.

C. Compliance & Sustainability Standards

- Security: Enterprise-grade encryption applied to all restricted city and financial data, ensuring full alignment with GDPR and SOC2 handling regulations.
- Accessibility: Strict universal design adhering to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines to support worldwide city teams.
- Sustainability: Mandated use of certified "Green Hosting" providers and software engineering practices engineered to minimize LLM token computational overhead and water/energy usage.

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;
- Adequate information about how your costs were calculated to enable evaluation of cost reasonableness;
- Proposed timeline of implementation;
- 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.

In addition, Potential Suppliers should provide the following items as part of their proposal for consideration:

- Description of experience in designing platforms and/or webpages for NGOs, governments and/or related to topics of climate, sustainability and net-zero.
- Examples of at least two relevant past works.
- Description of experience and expertise on the development of platforms integrating Artificial Intelligence functionalities and agentic workflows, UX design and digital platforms design, including expected risks and challenges.
- Description of the company size and organisational chart, including information on the developer, and of the processes / project planning of the company.
- List of key personnel who would be working on the contract and their job titles.
- Submit relevant reference letter(s) or recommendation letter(s) from the past three (3) years as part of their proposal.

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.

Proposals are welcome from bidders in any location; however, please note that the UTM team operates on Brussels time CET. Submissions must not exceed a maximum length of 35 pages.

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

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. Subcontracting cannot be used for core tasks part of this RfP.

6. RfP and Project Timeline

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.

RfP timeline	**Due date**
Request for Proposals sent	*Monday, 9 November 2026*
Questions submitted to C40	*Friday, 13 November 2026*
C40 responds to questions by bidders	*Wednesday, 18 November 2026*
Deadline for receiving Offers	*Thursday, 26 November 2026, 23:59 CET*
Clarification of Offers following C40 requests to the bidders	*Monday, 30 November - Friday, 4 December*
Evaluation of Proposal	*Monday, 30 November 2026 - Friday, 11 December 2026*
Presentation of Proposal by shortlisted bidders following the evaluation	*Monday, 14 December - Wednesday. 16 December*
Selection decision made by C40	*Friday, 18 December 2026*
All Potential Suppliers notified of outcome	*Monday, 21 December 2026*

The technical development lifecycle spans 12 months, running in parallel with the broader 16-month operational window for the project. The project is strictly tied to the current Mission's grant period, which ends in March 2028.

- **Months 1–2 (Phase I Launch)**: Rigid legacy infrastructure audit, API schema mapping, and initial platform blueprint design; data acquisition from previously existing platform.
- **Months 3–4 (Beta Development)**: Core engine development, deployment of the RAG backbone, and training of the AI on the Net-Zero Framework.Deliverable of the Data Management Plan (DMP) alongside the Beta platform launch.
- **Months 4–10 (Integration Window)**: Launch of the unified API data bridge with GCoM servers and activation of live Action Learning Groups.
- **Months 11–12 (Full Rollout)**: Activation of secure transaction rooms, password-protected financial modules, and final technical handover.
- **Months 13–16 (Phase II Scaling)**: Continuous platform maintenance, ecosystem activation, and optimization alongside the 2028 Global Innovation Summit.

Here below a project timeline outlines the main phases of the projects and expected completion month:

Project timeline	**Due date**

The project initiation phase must be completed by	*March 2027*
Project planning phase must be completed by	*April 2027*
Project implementation phase is expected to be completed by	*October 2027*
The project is due to run until	*March 2028*

Associated with the table above, the table below are key milestones to take into consideration for the delivery of the project:

Output / Milestone	**Description & Verification Component**	**Tentative Due Date**
Technical Audit, UTMC Data Transfer & API mapping. (Initiation phase)	Data migration flows, and logic frameworks are established; GCoM API Sync is Active, other APIs are mapped and prompted.	February 2027
Beta Launch of UTMC 2.0 & Academy UI: the AI concierge and UTM Academy features are ready and operational. (Planning phase)	Platform live in Beta version; user profiles are active; functional Digital Concierge open to cohort testing.	April 2027
Strategic blueprint and Operation manual including data management provisions. (Planning phase)	Operational manual and roadmap of roll-out of all platform's components. The document will include a structured data management framework that establishes standardized protocols for the lifecycle collection, storage, and processing of multi-sector data to guarantee system consistency, data quality, and conform with FAIR data principles.	April 2027
Expert corner and action learning groups features are established and running. (Implementation phase)	Private groups chat functions and expert corner functions are active.	June 2027
Helpdesk, investment profiles. (Implementation phase)	Activation of helpdesk function and launch of secure profiles feeding a centralized Project Pipeline dashboard.	October 2027

Platform Sustainability Strategy, Operational Training & Docs	Complete documentation transfer, source code release, and administrative training for internal coordinators.	March 2028

7. Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated against the following criteria:

Evaluation criteria	Weighting
1. Robustness of the project delivery proposal and ability to meet the requirements listed. The Potential Supplier will need to demonstrate robustness of the technical proposal against the guidelines provided and project timeline; additional attention will be devoted to proposal outlining a feasible and robust path for interoperability with GCoM digital services. A risk mitigation strategy, including risk likelihood and risk mitigation measures will need to be included in the proposal.	30%
2. Capability, experience, and availability of the proposed team. The Potential Supplier will need to have team members with suitable experience and qualifications to address the project requests, and a lean decision process to allow prompt feedback and reaction time if needed.	20%
3. Cost Effectiveness and Financial Value. The proposal will need to demonstrate a clear, competitive pricing structure, transparent cost breakdown, and an efficient allocation of financial resources that ensures maximum value for money relative to the high-quality technical services and deliverables proposed[1]. Cost reasonableness is measured by: a. Economy (Spending Less): Minimising resource costs through competitive pricing and transparent expense structures. b. Efficiency (Spending Well): Optimising the ratio of platform outputs, deliverables, and service levels against the required budget. c. Effectiveness (Spending Wisely): Demonstrating that budget allocation directly supports the realization of project outcomes and long-term platform impact.	20%

[1] The budget allocation is left to the supplier's discretion, leveraging their expertise to determine the optimal distribution.

d. Equity (Spending Fairly): Ensuring financial resources are budgeted to make the platform accessible, inclusive, and reaching all intended user groups.	
4. Quality of previous work done. The Potential Supplier will be working on a large project with tight timelines, working in close collaboration and under the guidance of the UTM team. Applicants will need to demonstrate their capacity to work in an international environment, to manage complex and innovative development projects, provide a plan for regular touch bases and report to the UTM team. The quality of previous works done in developing web portals and/or web pages will be taken into consideration for scoring, including at least 2 references from previous clients (with particular reference to not-for-profit organisations).	15%
5. Environmental responsibility. The Potential Supplier will be evaluated according to the environmental principles utilised for the development of the digital service, including the minimisation of the impact of the AI components, with attention to energy efficiency, resource use and long-term sustainability of the proposals.	10%
6. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). 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.	5%

Following the initial proposal evaluation, C40 reserves the right to invite top-ranked bidders to an interview or technical presentation (30-40 min.) to clarify and validate their written submission. If conducted, the results of these sessions will be incorporated into the final technical score as outlined in the evaluation criteria.

8. Project Budget

Potential Suppliers should submit a detailed cost breakdown that reflects the creative ambition of a project of this nature while maintaining cost-efficiency. The maximum budget should be inclusive of all value added taxes, other taxes and charges.

Payment will be made according to meeting project milestones as approved by the C40 point of contact. If travel is expected for this work, estimated expenses are to be included in the budget. All travel is to be pre-approved by the C40 point of contract prior to incurring the cost.

All proposals must include proposed costs to complete the tasks described in the project scope, including 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.

Contracts and disbursements may be denominated in local currency; however, exact currency terms remain subject to negotiation during the final contracting stage. Where applicable, standard monthly exchange rates are applied.

9. 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
- EC rules for contractors (GDPR, EU-based etc)
- C40 Non-Staff Travel and Expenses Policy - if applicable - here

10. Submissions

Each Potential Supplier must submit **one copy of their proposal** to the email addresses below by 26th November 2026, 23:59 CET Brussels.

- Bruna Magnoni, UTM Governance Support, bmagnoni@globalcovenantofmayors.org
- Nicola Iezza, Finance & Funding Helpdesk Manager, niezza@globalcovenantofmayors.org
- Tommaso Santapaola, GCoM Head of Operations and Finance, tsantapaola@globalcovenantofmayors.org
- Hester de Klerk, GCoM Operations Manager, hdeklerk@globalcovenantofmayors.org

Questions can be submitted here (link). 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.