TERMS OF REFERENCE

Develop ICLEI’s Climate Neutrality Framework technical guidance for subnational governments to accelerate climate action

20 April 2021

1. BACKGROUND

Since 30 years, ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) has been promoting and supporting local & regional governments (LRGs) worldwide to address sustainable development and accelerate climate action, by mobilizing political commitments/targets, guiding the definition of strategies and plans (through methodological process support), representing subnational governments at the UN level, as well as supporting implementation and access to finance. Our focus is on serving the ICLEI network of 2,500+ member & network cities, towns & regions in 125+ countries – impacting 25% of people living in urban areas.

ICLEI has 24 offices worldwide which roll out the 5 interconnected development pathways: low emission, resilient, nature-based, circular, and people-centred development. Each of these pathways is relevant to local climate action, and can provide an additional and necessary lens for coherent action.

The GreenClimateCities™ Program is ICLEI’s global climate impact program, offering guidance on climate change adaptation, resilience, and mitigation, as well as access to renewable energy and finance, using a robust process methodology. Responding to the global climate emergency, ICLEI adopted the Climate Neutrality Framework as part of the GCC Program to tackle climate change, and encourage setting and achieving climate neutrality as a target aligned to global warming remaining well below 2 degrees Celsius (°C), and a maximum of 1.5°C. ICLEI’s Climate Neutrality Framework (CNF) is a service to the ICLEI network to support them in achieving their climate neutrality commitments under the Paris Agreement and ensure their visibility in the UNFCCC Race to Zero Campaign (via Cities Race to Zero for local governments and their cities, towns and counties).

The CNF has three pillars (see below), with resilient development as entry point to ensure communities are protected and have the capacity and ability of a community to withstand stress, survive, adapt, bounce back from a crisis or disaster and rapidly move on. The Climate Neutrality Framework was launched in October 2020, and is one of the recognized mechanisms of the UNFCCC High Level Action Champions for the Race to Zero Campaign.

Subnational governments are well placed to define coherent and inclusive plans that address integrated climate action, namely climate change adaptation, resilience and mitigation. Existing targets and plans need to be reviewed to bring in the necessary level of ambition and outline how to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 at the latest. Creating roadmaps for climate neutrality will include the establishment of an organization framework and identify priority sectors for action, while considering essential elements such as climate justice, inclusiveness, local job creation and many other impacts that can also deliver on sustainable development.

ICLEI engages in global initiatives such as the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy (GCoM) and the Cities Race to Zero, also helping to streamline reporting for such initiatives through the CDP-ICLEI Unified Reporting System.

ICLEI’s GreenClimateCities™ Program

The GCC Program is ICLEI’s global climate impact program tailor-made for local and regional governments. By participating in this program, they can access guidance framed around a comprehensive process methodology, to identify local priorities and investment needs, and progress form planning to action.
To participate in GCC Program follows 4 steps:

- Commit
- Plan
- Act
- Report

ICLEI’s definition of Climate Neutrality

To guide ICLEI’s network of cities, towns and regions, climate neutrality is defined as follows:  

*Climate neutrality in the context of local and regional governments is defined as the targeted reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and GHG avoidance in own operations and across the community in all sectors to an absolute net-zero emission level at the latest by 2050. In parallel to this, cities, towns and regions must adapt to climate change and enhance climate resilience across all sectors, in all systems and processes. To achieve climate neutrality local and regional governments should set a clear goal and advance rapidly following a holistic and integrated approach that leads to a wide range of co-benefits for sustainable development, such as creating socio-economic opportunities, reducing poverty and inequality, and improving the health of people and nature.*

Three pillars of climate neutrality to achieve this goal are as follows:

(i) Drastically reduce and sequester greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions accounted for by source and removals in all sectors, both in governmental operations and across their whole territory (city/region-wide). It is recommended to set science-based targets, strive for net zero emissions, and follow a consumption based approach.

(ii) Divest, repurpose and reinvest: Identify where investments have been made and divest or mobilize divestment from fossil fuels and other polluting fuels. Identify repurposing priorities and the range of co-benefits from different reinvestment plans. Re-invest these funds in climate and sustainable energy action (e.g. improved resilience, energy efficiency, renewable energy, carbon sequestration projects) using approaches, technology and innovation, with measurable impact (e.g. transforming towards 100% renewable energy supply, supporting a just transition).

(iii) Offset and compensate any GHG emissions that cannot immediately be removed, reduced or avoided, through carbon off-setting mechanisms (UN recognized and/or voluntary) and/or donations to climate funds. Start with governmental operations, and upscale to progressively reduce 100% of community emissions. For the latter, explore offsetting / compensation mechanisms that can be used by citizens, businesses and other target groups, as voluntary mechanisms to support the achieving the local Climate Action Plan and community-wide targets - also addressing scope 3 when using a consumption-based approach.

2. SCOPE OF WORK

Globally relevant guidance for subnational governments is needed to unpack the CNF into a guide with practical actions, showing options any local/regional government in the ICLEI network can consider, adapt to local conditions and implement, as part of their holistic action plans.

The expected outcome of this assignment is a document of maximum 36 pages of concise guidance tailor-made to local and regional governments to offer options to accelerate climate action across all sectors, and help them understand the robustness of actions required to achieve climate neutrality.

Work for this short assignment will commence on the 1st of May 2021. A final robust draft document is to be delivered at the latest by early July 2021.

The consultant will closely coordinate with and report to the project manager Cesar Carreño, Head of Climate Data, ICLEI World Secretariat. A half day kick-off meeting will be scheduled to guide the selected expert and co-frame the contents list.

Task 1: Develop technical guidance for subnational governments as part of ICLEI’s Climate Neutrality Framework

The main areas to be addressed in the guidance document must include the following elements:

- Recommended priority action examples for both government operations and in their city/town/country territory, per sector, that address climate change, bring the lens of each of the 5 ICLEI pathways (see image below) to show options and co-benefits when following a holistic approach.
Under the Resilient Development pathway, the focus is on adapting to current and anticipated climate change impacts, as well as improving climate change resilience across all sectors, systems and processes relevant to LRGs and their territories.

Under the Low Emission Development pathway, the focus is on reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) to net-zero, ideally also including short-lived climate pollutants (SLCPs) to address air pollution and Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs).

Accelerating climate action efforts across all sectors requires working with key stakeholders. Recommendations should be made on how to work with: all levels of government, civil society and NGOs, locally based business and industry, as well as the research and academic community.

Recommendations on how to identify synergies and co-benefits.

Crosscutting recommendations to set KPIs for monitoring purposes

3. REQUIRED EXPERTISE AND EXPERIENCE FOR ASSIGNMENT

ICLEI seeks a senior expert with extensive experience in local climate action across all sectors, working with subnational governments, and with an understanding of the typical roles and visions of subnational governments to achieve climate neutrality in their communities.

Skills and essential experience needed for this assignment include:

- Technical skills:
  - Experience with identifying synergies and co-benefits of climate action
  - Experience with reporting frameworks for subnational governments
  - Experience with Science-Based Targets
  - Experience in data, both quantitative and qualitative assessment
- General expertise:
  - Proven track record in working with subnational governments on climate action
  - Excellent communications skills in English
  - Experience in desk research
  - Experience in writing scientific paper and/or guidance
  - Proven experience in Word
  - Previous experience in a city network or similar organizations

4. BUDGET AND PAYMENT

The total available budget for this assignment is at 3,000 Euro. A single payment will be made upon submission of a robust 1st draft of the guidance, and upon receipt of an invoice.

5. CONDITIONS

- The assignment will be completed within 3 months, starting in May 2021.
- Regular consultation will be held with ICLEI’s Climate Data team and the Director of the carbonn Climate Center.
• All documents, reports and other materials developed under this contract is the property of ICLEI.
• The consultant shall not pass on to any third party data, documents, reports or other materials shared, prepared or obtained during the assignment.

6. APPLICATION

Interested applicants should apply by 18:00 CEST on 30 April 2021. Kindly send the following documents to jobs.bonn@iclei.org:

• Expression of interest, with qualifications and confirmation of availability for the work duration
• Latest Curriculum Vitae, max 5 pages