

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

CLEAN ENERGY POLICY STRATEGIES CONSORTIUM

**ZERO EMISSIONS CODE ENVIRONMENT STRAGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT;
MICROGRID AND VIRTUAL POWER PLANT STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT;
ZERO EMISSIONS TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE
STRAEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT**

RFI Number: RFI-25-31-03

RFI Issuance Date: APRIL 3, 2025

RFI Due Date: Beginning APRIL 15, 2025 (*open until closed*)

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

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1. Calendar of Events

The anticipated schedule of activities related to Clean Energy Policy Strategies Consortium Request for Information (RFI) is as follows:

Activity	Responsibility	Date
RFI release	Consortium	April 3, 2025
Responses Due	Respondents	Beginning April 15

All dates are subject to change at the discretion of the Consortium.

The Consortium reserves the right to ask clarifying questions about submitted responses.

2. Key Definitions

- a. **Zero Emissions:** For purposes of this RFI, the term **Zero Emissions** shall have the same meaning as the term is defined in the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund.
- b. **Zero Emissions Transportation:** For purposes of this RFI, the term **Zero Emissions Transportation** shall have the same meaning as the term is defined in the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund.
- c. **Net Zero Emissions:** For purposes of this RFI, the term Net-Zero Emissions shall have the same meaning as the term is defined in the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund.
- d. **Plan to Net Zero:** For purposes of the project, the term **Plan to Net-Zero** shall have the same meaning as the term is defined in the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund.

3. General Information

A. Purpose of the RFI

The purpose of this RFI is to solicit information from qualified, experienced and capable firms, entities, consultants, organizations, corporations (Respondents) who are interested in providing the Clean Energy Policy Strategies Consortium with services related to its City of Tuskegee initiative designed to provide a multi-prong strategy to develop actionable strategic plans that will: (1) Establish a city net-zero emissions code environment that includes developing supporting zoning, permitting, and inspection ordinances and procedures, and relevant customer incentives; (2) Establish a networked microgrid; (3) Create a virtual power plant within the city; and (4) Jump-start electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure growth.

All strategic plans should be completed within a six (6) months period, and should provide the city with an actionable roadmap for implementation, including proposed funding streams.

The Project is part of the Consortium's partnership with the city of Tuskegee in response to the Coalition for Green Capital (CGC), Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF), [Municipal Investment Fund](#) (MIF) Request for Proposals (RFP) issued January 6, 2025, closing on March 5, 2025. At the time of issuing this RFP, the Consortium is unable to confirm whether the city will receive an award for the proposed project. This RFI is issued in preparation for such an award.

Consortium's objectives for this RFI are to:

- 1) Understand the market for net-zero emissions codes, microgrid, virtual power plant, and zero emission transportation planning and implementation service providers and their respective qualifications; and
- 2) Solicit feedback from the market regarding:
 - Industry best practices applicable to the project's planning and implementation activities; and
 - Project financing estimates and funding strategies.

Responses to this RFI will be utilized strictly for the purposes of information gathering so that the Consortium can determine the best options available to develop and implement the project in line with industry best practices. Information provided as a response to this RFI document may or may not be used by the Consortium for development of a future RFP bid opportunity.

Submission of information pursuant to this RFI does not give any vendor an advantage or disadvantage in any future solicitation, should one result from this RFI.

B. Issuing Officer

The sole point of contact for this RFI shall be the "Issuing Officer," Vincent Barnes, Principal, Clean Energy Policy Strategies Consortium, vbarnes@epsconsortium.com. All inquiries regarding this RFI shall be referred to the Issuing Officer via e-mail.

C. Response Instructions

Respondents are asked to respond to the questions in ***Attachment A - Response Template***. Respondents may submit additional information that they determine to be relevant. Respondents should e-mail the Issuing Officer: (1) **electronic PDF version** of the written response and any relevant additional information provided (in a searchable format). Responses must be submitted in conformance with this RFI on or before the RFI Due Date set forth in Section 1 of this RFI. The subject line for all e-mailed submittals must include "[Name of Respondent] – RFI-25-031-03 – Tuskegee ZE". The submitted PDF should also include the name and address of the Respondent in the body of the submission.

The Consortium will not pay for the preparation of any response, nor for information submitted to the Consortium, nor for the Consortium's use of such information. The Consortium may, at its sole discretion, use information provided in response to the RFI to develop the Program and/or the Project. However, the Consortium is not obligated to use any information received as part of this RFI process.

Information Access

Respondents should give specific attention to the identification of those portions of their responses that they deem to be confidential, proprietary information or trade secrets and provide any justification why such materials, upon request, should not be disclosed by the Consortium.

D. Meetings

Respondents shall indicate in their response to the questions set forth in Attachment A – Response Template whether they are willing to participate in a virtual one-on-one meeting with the Consortium to provide feedback, information and/or materials to supplement the information provided in RFI responses. While the Consortium currently anticipates that all one-on-one meetings will be conducted virtually, should meetings be held in-person, Respondents will be solely responsible for all costs associated with travel and attendance. In-person meetings for responding to this RFI, if held, would be conducted in the Reston, VA / Washington, DC area. The Consortium reserves the right to meet with any, all, or none of the Respondents that indicate that they are willing to participate in a virtual one-on-one meeting.

Note that any response provided by the Consortium during one-on-one meetings are to be considered Draft and subject to change.

4. Program/Project Details

A. Background and Program Overview

In January 2025, the Coalition for Green Capital (CGC), a \$5 billion Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) National Clean Investment Fund (NCIF) awardee, in partnership with ICLEI USA, issued an RFP for communities to receive technical assistance and grant funding “to develop public-private partnership plans that can accelerate the deployment and financing of [National Clean Investment Fund](#)-qualified projects and qualify for a later round of market-building and predevelopment funding. In Phase I, CGC and ICLEI USA will select 100 local communities (a target of two per state) and up to 4 Tribes, District of Columbia, or local governments in federal territories.” “In Phase II, CGC will select up to 10 communities to join CGC’s Municipal Investment Fund inaugural cohort, receive additional... grants, and become the focus of concentrated investing and local community and economic development.” While up to 10 communities will ultimately join the cohort, all 104 participating communities will benefit from the technical assistance and planning process.”

According to the RFP, funding is available to support market-building activities, as defined by the U.S. EPA as: (i) Building the market for financeable qualified projects; (ii) Are not tied directly to Qualified Projects the Recipient intends to finance; (iii) Are necessary and reasonable for the deployment of Financial Assistance to Qualified Projects.

B. Project Description

Plan Descriptions

All strategic plans will be completed within the grant period. Additionally, prior to closing the grant period the city anticipates commencing implementation of most of the MIF plans (not all plans are part of this RFI). These include the net-zero emissions code environment and jump-starting EV infrastructure growth, for purposes of this RFI.

Net-Zero Code Environment

The City will develop and enact a plan to establish a net-zero emissions code environment. The plan will include direct engagement with the mayor, city council, the city's Buildings, Codes, & Inspection Division, and the Utility Board of Tuskegee (UBT). The UBT engagement will be necessary to effectively plan and strategize for the additional renewable energy resources coming online and anticipated load change dynamics from other clean energy investments. The plan will develop a roadmap to establish an optional net-zero emissions code for the city that also includes zoning amendments and incentives connected to permitting and inspections. The roadmap will include single family, multifamily, commercial and industrial buildings, and will encompass new construction, rehabs, and retrofits, where city codes apply.

Networked Microgrid

In direct partnership with UBT, Energy Southeast, Macon County Commission, and South Central Alabama Development Commission, Tuskegee will develop a plan to establish a networked renewable-focused microgrid. This would be similar to the city's 2024 EPA Community Change grant proposal (available upon request), and would be designed to provide UBT, Energy Southeast, and county the opportunity for future microgrid development as additional solar development expands from the Tuskegee project. The Tuskegee microgrid will be grid-connected, but can also be island, and will serve as a tool to assist UBT in load management and grid resiliency.

Virtual Power Plant

In direct partnership with UBT, Energy Southeast, Macon County Commission, and South Central Alabama Development Commission, the city will develop a plan to establish a virtual power plant which will be grid and microgrid connected. Among other things the plan will focus on best practices for inclusion of low-income households, and incentives for their participation.

EV Charging Infrastructure

Tuskegee will also develop a plan to expand and deploy Level-2 and DC electric vehicle charging infrastructure for the purpose of jump-starting the city's investments in EV charging. The city will work closely with UBT and the University of Tuskegee to strategically guide the placement of the first investments.

When completed, the Market-Building strategy will provide a roadmap to accelerate climate investments in Tuskegee and will set the stage for additional investments in the county, region, and state. Increased investments in the city will also have the effect lowering energy costs, reducing carbon emissions, and growing the local economy. Moreover, increased city revenue from these investments will serve as a springboard for Tuskegee to develop relevant strategies to support public facilities, fleets and GGRF-eligible retrofits.

C. Potential Project Scope of Work

The Consortium is interested in entering into agreement(s) with third-party qualified, experienced and capable firms, entities, consultants, organizations, or corporations (Respondents) to provide the following scope of work for the Project. These same scope items may apply for supplemental projects that comprise the Program:

- **Net-Zero Emissions Code Environment:** Develop a strategic plan for the City of Tuskegee, Alabama to adopt a voluntary net-zero emissions code environment. The plan should include existing buildings and new construction (single-family, multifamily, commercial, industrial), and should also identify zoning, permitting, inspection and other incentives when building or applying the voluntary code. [Model Government Zero Emissions Buildings Policy](#), *Language and Considerations for Jurisdictions to Develop a Zero Emissions Asset Portfolio*, which was published by the New Buildings Institute (NBI) may be used as a guide. The plan could contemplate partial implementation prior to the close of the six (6) months planning process and must provide the city with a clear roadmap toward adopting a voluntary net-zero emissions code structure. At a minimum the roadmap should demonstrate a three (3) months runway toward strategic adoption, including but not limited to community and stakeholder outreach and education, identification of program costs, identification of supportive implementation resources, and at what period on the roadmap the city should commence code adoption.

Should a vendor(s) be selected to perform the identified services it is expected that the selected vendor(s) will advise and lead on additional scope development.

- **Grid-Connected Microgrid:** Develop a strategic plan for the City of Tuskegee, Alabama and the Utility Board of Tuskegee (UBT) to build a grid-connected microgrid. The strategic plan at a minimum must include through the Conceptual Design phase, plus a roadmap through 100% completion, including funding needs and financing strategies. Conceptual Design is defined as “an early-stage design that evaluates design options against system performance metrics at a high level to establish sufficient system understanding and predictability to enable planning and funding activities. It provides a reasonable estimate of the major elements, capabilities, and functions that a final design will have. This is generally considered a 15% design by architectural and engineering firms.”¹ The U.S. Department of Energy [Microgrid Conceptual Design Guidebook](#) may be used as a guide.

¹ [Microgrid Conceptual Design Guidebook](#)

Should a vendor(s) be selected to perform the identified services it is expected that the selected vendor(s) will advise and lead on additional scope development.

- **Virtual Power Plant:** Develop a strategic plan for the City of Tuskegee, Alabama and the Utility Board of Tuskegee (UBT) to develop a virtual power plant. The plan could consider city-wide, community, or other options, including as connected to the net-zero emissions code environment. The plan at a minimum should provide the city and UBT a clear roadmap to VPP implementation. At a minimum the roadmap should identify funding needs and possible financing mechanisms; identification of necessary partners or partner-types; compensation models for participating customers, including models for low-income and disadvantaged communities; identification of the most optimum VPP models; and identification of milestones that demonstrate the ability to successfully commence VPP deployment beyond planning within twelve (12) months of the completion of the initial strategic planning process.

Should a vendor(s) be selected to perform the identified services it is expected that the selected vendor(s) will advise and lead on additional scope development.

- **Electric Vehicle Infrastructure:** Develop a strategic plan for the City of Tuskegee that provides an actionable roadmap for the city to accelerate the availability of electric vehicle infrastructure. The strategic plan may also include Tuskegee University, and should consider strategies for homeowners, commercial and business districts, and public spaces. A plan could result in initial strategic limited implementation before the close of the six (6) months planning process. At a minimum the plan will provide the city an achievable pathway to full implementation within a reasonable period of time following initial planning, as identified based on goals established during planning. Additionally, the plan should identify funding needs and financing strategies that can be applied at the homeowner, commercial/business, and public spaces levels.

Should a vendor(s) be selected to perform the identified services it is expected that the selected vendor(s) will advise and lead on additional scope development.

5. Attachments

A. Attachment A – Response Template

The Clean Energy Policy Strategies Consortium (Consortium) welcomes feedback in response to the below prompts. Respondents are not required to respond to all questions. The Consortium may also follow-up directly with Respondents with more detailed questions or to clarify submissions.

Respondents are requested to provide clear and concise answers in writing to the following questions using the numbering system below. Responses in aggregate, should not exceed three (3) pages.

- 1) Please briefly describe your firm and your experience with conducting the activities identified in the above scope of work.
- 2) Please identify which scope of work your firm or you would be able to lead, including all.
- 3) Please identify the earliest time by which you can commence vendor services.
- 4) Given the information provided regarding the project, what are reasonable scheduled estimates?
- 5) Based on the information provided, are there any additional challenges or risks the Consortium should be aware of regarding the Project's scope and goals.