

**Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance Innovation Fund (CNCA)
Request for Letters of Intent to Propose a Project (LOIs)**

LOIs must be 3 pages or less and be submitted by 18:00 EST on 3 March 2016

REQUEST FOR LOIs - PROCESS AT A GLANCE

LOI Informational Calls	2 February 2016, 10:00 EST (add to calendar)	Optional informational call to walk applicants through the LOI-proposal process and answer any questions (same call held at different times to accommodate different time zones)
	3 February 2016, 19:00 EST (add to calendar)	
Due Dates	3 March 2016	LOIs Due
	26 May 2016	Draft Proposals Due
	14 July 2016	Final Proposals Due

BACKGROUND

The Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance (CNCA) Innovation Fund invests in high-potential, city-led projects that develop, test, implement, and amplify deep urban decarbonization strategies and practices. The long-term objective of the CNCA Innovation Fund is to support projects that will build a portfolio of tested tools, for cities to use to achieve deep carbon reduction goals. These projects, tested in the differing contexts of participating CNCA cities, will collaboratively address crosscutting issues identified by the majority of CNCA cities. This menu of tools will begin to define major greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction options, and help cities consider and communicate potential pathways to meet their goals.

The Round Two (2016) objectives of the CNCA Innovation Fund are to:

- Strengthen CNCA cities’ abilities to develop, test, and scale deep carbon reduction strategies.
- Increase city-to-city collaboration, to advance urban carbon neutrality goals locally and globally.
- Position CNCA cities as thought leaders and “go to” sources for worldwide carbon neutrality.
- Foster a “next wave” of cities formally adopting carbon neutrality goals.

The CNCA Steering Committee decided that Round Two (2016) of the CNCA Innovation Fund will support projects commissioned on behalf of CNCA cities¹ that benefit most or all CNCA cities, and advance overarching Alliance goals. Details are provided in the 2016 CNCA Innovation Fund Strategic Plan ([here](#)).

To streamline the selection process, a CNCA Innovation Fund Selection Committee (“Selection Committee”) will approve commissioned projects. CNCA cities will propose projects for consideration, and the Selection Committee (staffed by the CNCA Director and Fund Manager), will conduct a rigorous vetting process to identify the strongest projects. This Request for Letters of Intent to Propose (LOIs) is the first step in that process.

Toward the end of Round Two, the Selection Committee will assess whether the commissioned projects funding model is still relevant, and whether or not to apply different models – such as a formal competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process - to meet needs identified by CNCA cities.

¹ Current CNCA cities are: Berlin, Boston, Boulder, Copenhagen, London, Melbourne, Minneapolis, New York City, Oslo, Portland, San Francisco, Seattle, Stockholm, Sydney, Vancouver, Washington DC, and Yokohama.

HOW FUNDING DECISIONS WILL BE MADE

The Selection Committee will review and score incoming LOIs and proposals, and will ultimately select proposals for 2016 funding. Funding decisions will be brought before the CNCA Steering Committee before being finalized.

Round Two (2016) Selection Committee members are:

- Jørgen Abildgaard (Copenhagen)
- Michael Armstrong (Portland)
- Victoria Hart (Melbourne)
- John Lee (New York City)
- Malcolm Shield (Vancouver)

FUND AMOUNT AND ALLOCATION PROCESS

The CNCA Innovation Fund's Round Two (2016) budget is \$1,000,000 U.S. dollars (USD).

It is anticipated that in Year Two (2016), the CNCA Innovation Fund will support 8-12 commissioned projects. This is only an estimate; the Selection Committee is not obligated to fund that amount of projects, nor to allocate all the available funds in this Round. Projects of any size may be proposed, and will be considered. Depending on the number of strong proposals received, the Selection Committee may elect to set aside some funds for projects to be commissioned later in the year.

APPLICATION TIMELINE AND PROCESS

The following is the timeline for the 2016 CNCA Innovation Fund Round Two process:

21 January	Request for Letters of Intent (LOIs) Issued
2 February	Optional LOI Informational Call #1, 10:00 EST (add it to your calendar here)
3 February	Optional LOI Informational Call #2, 19:00 EST (add it to your calendar here)
21 Jan – 24 Feb	CNCA Director is available for one-on-one phone calls with anyone who wants to test their idea before submitting. <i>Applicants are strongly encouraged to do this.</i>
3 March	LOIs Due (with Request for Proposal Development Resources, if applicable) <i>Note: If a "mini-grant" for technical assistance in developing a full proposal (if invited) is requested, the request must be included with the LOI submission (pages 4 and 5)</i>
3 Mar - 17 Mar	Selection Committee review and scoring; clarifications/further information sought
17 March	Invitations to Submit Full Proposals Issued
	CNCA Director provides technical assistance to applicants to support their proposal development, based on Selection Committee's comments on the LOIs. Technical assistance may take the form of one-on-one coaching and/or webinars for more than one proposal developer.
26 May	Draft Proposals Due
20 - 21 June	A session at the CNCA Annual Meeting will provide an opportunity for all Alliance members to comment on/discuss/improve the draft proposals. Draft proposals will be circulated to all Alliance members in advance of the Meeting.
14 July	Final Proposals Due
	Selection Committee reviews, scores, and recommends proposals for approval; CNCA Steering Committee approves final awards
4 August	Awardees Notified

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE “MINI-GRANTS” FOR PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

Applicants may request Technical Assistance (TA) resources to develop a full proposal, if their LOI is invited. TA mini-grant funding can be used to:

- Conduct subject research or host a convening with proposing cities and partners
- Obtain technical assistance (e.g., facilitating meetings of the proposal team, proposal drafting)
- Access consultants or other expertise to on-board as part of the full proposing team
- Procure any other service needed to develop the strongest proposal possible

A maximum of \$5,000 USD in TA mini-grant funding can be requested. All requests must accompany the Applicant’s LOI, and follow the format provided on the *Request for Proposal Development Resources* form (page 5 of this document). TA mini-grants must be completed by the time the final proposal is submitted.

An option is available for CNCA to make direct payments to TA providers for proposal development, instead of to the lead city. If this option is preferred, please specify this in your LOI. The lead applicant must approve and submit all invoices for payment to CNCA immediately following delivery of the final proposal.

LOI REQUIREMENTS

- Each commissioned project must be led by a CNCA city. The individual who leads the project must be the primary CNCA contact for that city. That individual takes responsibility for project leadership, deliverables review and approval, and fiscal management.
 - Cities may conduct the funded work themselves or hire a consultant / firm to do the work on the cities’ behalf and with their scheduled input. In either case, the individual who is the primary CNCA contact for the applying city must oversee and bear ultimate responsibility for the project.
 - Any CNCA member city may submit an LOI. The applicant must be the primary CNCA contact for that city.
 - Any city—CNCA or otherwise—may participate in the grant project, as long as the project is led by a primary contact from a CNCA city.
 - The CNCA Director is happy to assist lead cities in identifying other cities that may be interested in collaborating.
- LOIs must be submitted by email **no later than 18:00 EST on 3 March**. LOIs must be emailed to CNCA Director [Johanna Partin](#) as a **word document**.
- LOIs must use the format provided and answer each question in the *LOI Format* form (page 4 of this document). LOIs must be **three pages or less** (with at least 11-point font and 1 inch margins).
- One additional page is allowed for the *Request for Proposal Development Resources* form (page 5 of this document), for a **total of 4 pages**.
- **The CNCA Director is available any time before the due date to discuss project ideas and provide suggestions for strengthening LOIs. *Applicants are strongly encouraged to do this.* Contact [Johanna](#) to schedule a call.**

**Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance Innovation Fund
Letter of Intent to Propose (LOIs) Commissioned Projects: LOI Format**

LOIs must be 3 pages or less and be submitted in this format by 18:00 EST on 3 March 2016

- I. **Project Title** (one line)
- II. **City Lead** – City and primary contact information (name, title, department, city, email, and telephone)
- III. **Partners** – List all cities and partners that will be involved in the project:
 - A. In addition to the lead city, list any other cities participating in the project (if already identified by the due date of the LOI):
 - “Primary” – Other cities actively engaged in the project and will receive funding
 - “Observing or Advising” – Other cities that will not receive funding but will serve as observers or advisors to the project
 - List all cities in alphabetical order (city name, state or province abbreviation, and county) by category.
 - List the Primary cities first, and indicate them with an asterisk (*). Then, list the Observing or Advising Cities
 - B. List any project partners (NGOs, consultants, etc.), if relevant
- IV. **Grant Amount Requested (in USD)** – Provide a breakdown of major budget categories, identify any additional sources of funding, and list the total CNCA request (if different from the total project budget)
- V. **Project Term** – State how much time is required to complete the project
- VI. **Project Narrative** – Provide one paragraph on each of the following (unless otherwise stated):
 - a. Problem Statement – Why this project is needed (1-2 paragraphs)
 - i. In one sentence, state what the problem is that needs to be solved
 - ii. In the description: Name the specific barrier that is preventing movement, what system levers will be employed to move that barrier, and what the outcome hypothesis is (i.e., if barrier X is moved by Y lever(s), then Z will be achieved)
 - b. Project Description – What will the project do, and how will it do it?
 - c. Project Impacts – Who will be impacted, and what will be impacted?
 - i. What will success look like? In other words, how will this project lead to quantitative and / or qualitative systemic change?
 - ii. How will the lead city (and the broader Alliance) apply results for scaled “transformation”?²
- VII. **Deliverables** – Bullet point list of main “products” or deliverables that will be produced by the project
- VIII. **Progress Measurement** – Bullet point list of 2-4 key performance indicators to be used to gauge success

² CNCA’s working definition of “transformational” is “a strategy that leads to carbon neutrality being an expected and eventually mandated feature of a sector’s operations by 2050 or sooner.” Use this definition or provide another. (If another is provided, it should be defined in 1 sentence.)

Request for Proposal Development Resources

This request for Proposal Development Resources must be included with LOI submissions (due by 3 March). Attach this additional sheet to the LOI if a mini-grant to develop the full proposal, if invited, is requested.

MINI GRANT PURPOSE AND PROCESS

Applicants may request Technical Assistance (TA) resources to develop a full proposal, if their LOI is invited. TA mini-grant funding can be used to:

- Conduct subject research or host a convening with proposing cities and partners
- Obtain technical assistance (e.g., facilitating meetings of the proposal team, proposal drafting)
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A maximum of \$5,000 USD in TA mini-grant funding can be requested. All requests must accompany the Applicant's LOI (submitted by 3 March), and follow the following format. TA mini-grants must be completed by the time the final proposal is submitted.

An option is available for CNCA to make direct payments to TA providers for proposal development, instead of to the lead city (which can be time consuming and involve a city's procurement process). If this option is preferred, please specify this in the request. The lead applicant must approve and submit all invoices for payment to CNCA immediately following delivery of the final proposal.

MINI GRANT REQUEST FORMAT

In one page or less, answer each of the categories below using the format below (with at least 11-point font and 1 inch margins). A maximum of \$5,000 USD in mini-grant funding can be requested.

- I. Assistance scope of work, and why it is needed is needed
- II. Budget (in USD)
- III. Service Provider / Partner
- IV. Entity to receive the mini-grant (the city, or the proposal development assistance service provider)