

# **Clean Air Fund India Portfolio Evaluation**

## **Request for Proposals**

### **August 2025**

**We are seeking specialist expertise to conduct a strategic evaluation of Clean Air Fund's India Portfolio.** The consultant/firm will have demonstrated experience working with INGOs or preferably foundations, to evaluate contributions to complex policy outcomes and developing results and analysis to guide future strategy and programming. The consultant/firm will also have significant experience conducting Theory Based, learning focussed evaluations and generating tangible, evidence-based strategic recommendations. The consultant/firm must have an in-depth understanding of India's institutional and policy context. Experience with evaluation methodologies including Process Tracing, Contribution Analysis and Outcome Harvesting is desirable. Experience of working in the unique context of re-granting is also valuable.

#### **Background to Clean Air Fund**

Launched in 2019, the Clean Air Fund (CAF) is a philanthropic initiative with a mission to tackle air pollution around the world. Our aim is to help build and support a powerful global movement for clean air. We achieve this by bringing together funders, researchers, policy makers and campaigners working on a wide range of issues to find and scale solutions that will provide clean air for all. We work where the need and potential for impact are greatest: in the EU, Poland, Ghana, India, South Africa and the UK and global cities across Africa, Latin America, Asia and Europe. We also have global thematic programmes, raising air pollution up the international climate and health agendas. Our global themes span data, health, advocacy, super-pollutants and private sector engagement. More information about the Clean Air Fund can be found on our website: <https://www.cleanairfund.org/>

The India portfolio is one of CAF's oldest and largest country programmes. It supports government efforts to reduce air pollution, while catalysing innovations in air quality management. The work includes:

- Enabling improvements in air quality monitoring, evidence and research
- Technical assistance to sub-national (state, city) governments, in their air quality management initiatives
- Engagement with key stakeholder groups such as the private sector

In India, CAF is primarily focused on the Indo-Gangetic Plain (IGP) region. Currently, we have 17 active projects with 14 partners including India's foremost universities, thinktanks, consulting firms and other civil society organisations.

#### **Background to the Assignment**

India is home to 35 of the world's 50 most polluted cities and experiences over 2 million deaths annually due to air pollution. The Clean Air Fund has been working to support departments within several Indian state governments to progress air quality since 2019.

Our strategy supports India's air quality agenda, with a focus on enabling the implementation of the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), which targets a significant reduction in particulate matter concentration. CAF supports this objective through strategic grant-making, institutional partnerships, technical assistance to subnational governments, and engagement with civil society and industry stakeholders.

We are now preparing for our next strategy cycle in India and are considering how to best optimise our grant giving. As part of this process, this assignment is designed to deliver an assessment of progress and to identify strategic and tactical lessons. The assignment will generate concrete recommendations to inform strategic decisions on the approaches necessary to achieve greatest impact in the next iteration of our work in India.

This evaluation will provide insight into the India Portfolio's contribution to air quality improvements and inform future strategic planning of our work in India. The evaluation will assess the extent of progress made against the outcomes sought under the current strategy in the context of the portfolio Theory of Change, detail enabling factors and the barriers to progress, identify lessons and opportunities to adapt and apply to strategic decisions for the Portfolio.

### **Evaluation purpose**

This is a learning focused, formative evaluation intended to shape the next Portfolio strategy. The purpose of the evaluation is threefold:

1. Assess the effectiveness of CAFs approach to progressing the strategic goals of the Portfolio, across support at the national, regional and city levels, as well as for the private sector.
2. Evidence of significant outcomes, intended and unintended, associated with the delivery of the current Portfolio strategy.
3. Generate lessons and insights which can be applied to maximise impact and inform the development of the next Portfolio strategy.

### **Evaluation scope**

This evaluation will cover the full range of work under the India Portfolio since the start of the current strategic period (2023). It will explore the effectiveness of Clean Air Fund's approach in India across the national, regional, city and private sector areas.

Crucially the evaluation will detail lessons identified from the above, specifically, how Clean Air Fund can amplify the future impact of its work in India, detail the approaches which have been less successful to date and identify new avenues which could be pursued in the future.

Out of scope: Modelling of pollutant concentration trends or quantification of specific health impacts.

### **Equity**

Equity will be considered throughout the evaluation, drawing on and reflecting the principles set out by the [Equitable Evaluation Initiative](#) and in line with CAF's 'equity sensitive' approach.

### **Evaluation objectives**

Reflecting the purpose and scope, the evaluation has three key objectives:

**Objective One: Evidence the degree to which the direction of, and approaches taken within, the India portfolio have been effective in progressing strategic aims.**

This objective involves assessing the strength of the ToC, the extent to which the strategy has been achieved and exploring the enablers and barriers to progress. It will assess the contribution of the Portfolio to observed outcomes at national, regional and city levels, in the context of the other factors (notably: governance, economic and social factors) with an influence on Air Quality.

Objective one is expected to have a weighting of approximately 30% in the assignment.

**Objective Two: Assess the effectiveness of the Technical Assistance and Project Management Units.**

This objective will provide an assessment of, and tailored recommendations for, the Technical Assistance / Project Management Unit models implemented across four states. It will provide strategic recommendations on whether and to what degree, CAF should continue with this model in the next strategy (and/or offer alternatives).

Objective two is expected to have a weighting of approximately 30% in the assignment.

**Objective Three: Identify lessons and evidence to develop strategic recommendations for CAF's future work in India, to help shape the next Portfolio strategy.**

This objective will deliver a deep dive on strategic opportunities for CAF India to maximise air quality, health and climate impact. It will generate recommendations on the most effective ways for CAF to pursue impact with the available funding. This will include but is not limited to generating recommendations on the future:

- a) Geographic focus
- b) Sectoral focus
- c) Partner focus

Objective three is expected to have a weighting of approximately 40% in the assignment.

**Key evaluation questions**

There are four proposed key evaluation questions (KEQs):

1. How effective have Portfolio investments been in supporting AQ progress at the national, state and city levels and within the Private Sector?
2. What is the relative effectiveness of each of the Technical Assistance / Project Management Unit models implemented in different states?
3. What has helped and hindered the Portfolio to progress its strategic aims?
4. What recommendations can be drawn from an assessment of the progress and emerging opportunities, which will deepen future impact, including through:

- a. Adopting a sectoral approach and the selection of prioritised sectors (such as transport, industry, health, urban planning and waste)?
- b. The current and proposed geographic focus of the Portfolio (such as work in the Indo Gangetic Plain)?
- c. Partnership choices, including with the private sector, civil society, intermediaries and finance institutions

### **Proposed methodological approaches**

There are several potential approaches which are suitable to give us the insight required to assess CAFs contributions to outcomes seen. We are open to considering different options but would like the evaluation to employ a Theory Based approach, such as Contribution Analysis or Process Tracing, combined with elements of Outcome Harvesting.

These methodologies are well suited to a Portfolio (Programme) level evaluation of support to policy and interventions in a complex environment. They can help understand the relative contribution of a given set of actors within an area of change. Both options will seek to establish to what extent, and how, the support from the Clean Air Fund has enabled outcomes relating to air quality progress. This will be based on a hypothesised change process (expected to be reflected as a Theory of Change) with evidence generated to support or refute the theory and develop alternative or supplementary explanations for how change might have occurred.

An integration of Bayesian Confidence Updating may also be used, to give further rigour to the evaluation results.

Included as part of the evaluation methodology we would expect a series of evidence and sense making workshops to be delivered. These will share and ground truth emerging findings and evidence, enable collective reflection and insight generation, and ensure that strategic recommendations generated by the evaluation process are co-created, feasible and impactful.

We are open to other methodologies and suggestions which consultants/ firms think would be appropriate for effectively meeting the evaluation objectives and answering the KEQs.

### **Target audience and users**

- Primary users: CAF's India Portfolio, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Team, and members of Senior Leadership Team.
- Secondary users: Members of other country - and thematic Portfolios teams, fundraising team.

### **Timing**

### **Anticipated Deliverables and Key Dates**

<b><u>Phase</u></b>	<b><u>Key Deliverables</u></b>	<b><u>Tentative Date</u></b>
Inception and conceptual framework	Inception Report	October 2025
Data collection	Internal KIs and workshops	October 2025

	External KIs and workshops	October 2025
Data analysis and synthesis	Data analysis against KEQs	November 2025
	First evidence and sense making workshop	January 2026
Sense making and evaluation reporting	Draft evaluation report and recommendations	February 2026
	Drafts of at least two in-depth case studies showcasing the Portfolio achievement and possible future direction	February 2026
	Second evidence and sense making workshop	February 2026
	Final evaluation report, evaluation summary materials and presentation	February 2026
	Final case studies	February 2026

### **Costs**

The maximum available budget for this assignment USD 100,000 (inclusive of all applicable tax, travel, and other expenses).

### **Proposal format and requirements**

The successful consultancy company or individual(s) will have a demonstrated track record of delivering similar strategic evaluation activities for global organizations. We encourage proposals from organisations (consortium or otherwise) which reflect the diversity of the CAF network.

Please note, to maintain the independence of the evaluation, we cannot accept proposals from existing grantees or organisations receiving funding from CAF.

The consultancy firm or individual(s) must demonstrate:

- Experience in evaluating policy or systems-level interventions, ideally in India
- Proven track record of using Theory Based evaluation approaches
- Proven experience generating strategic insights
- Expertise in working with international philanthropic or development organisations
- Deep understanding of India's institutional and policy context
- Commitment to equity and ethical evaluation practices
- Ability to deliver clear, action-oriented reports within a tight timeline

Applicants should provide:

- A proposal for executing this assignment. This would include a short cover letter, your approach, an expanded set of proposed activities, methodologies, deliverables, and associated deadlines to meet the assignment objectives.

- A budget with activity and cost breakdown, including estimated days and day rates. The proposal and budget will not exceed 10 pages, with CVs of the proposed team members included as Annexes.
- An overview of similar assignments you may have conducted for other organisations (included as a succinct annex).

After the application deadline the Clean Air Fund will review proposals and engage with preferred suppliers to expand on the project objectives and approach, and to develop an agreed set of activities and associated budget before contracting.

Proposals will be scored against the elements within the RfP. We will also consider value for money.

Submissions may be shared with partner stakeholders such as the CAF Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Advisory Group.

### **Timeline and submission**

The deadline for questions is 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 2025.

The deadline for submission of proposals is **17.00 BST, Monday 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2025**. Proposals must be submitted via email to [tnelson@cleanairfund.org](mailto:tnelson@cleanairfund.org) and [kram@cleanairfund.org](mailto:kram@cleanairfund.org)

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Date</b>
Deadline for questions	22 <sup>nd</sup> August, 2025
Deadline for proposals	1 <sup>st</sup> September, 2025
Interview with shortlisted companies/individuals	Week of the 8 <sup>th</sup> September, 2025
Decision on preferred bidder	By the 17 <sup>th</sup> September, 2025
Proposal finalisation and agreement	Week of the 22 <sup>nd</sup> September, 2025
Contracting and project start	6 <sup>th</sup> October, 2025
Deadline for completing the work	28 <sup>th</sup> February, 2026