

Breathe cities

Designing a Polling methodology

Request for Proposals (RfP) September 2025

Summary

The Clean Air Fund is seeking a global consultancy with specialist expertise to design a polling methodology for the Breathe Cities initiative. The appointed consultancy should have a proven track record of working with INGOs, businesses, cities and government bodies worldwide and demonstrated expertise in the design and delivery of multi-country surveys, with particular emphasis on ensuring comparability of results across diverse geographic contexts.

Purpose

Breathe Cities aims to reduce air pollution across its global network of 14 cities. Achieving this goal will require strong public support for action on air quality. To build this support, we must develop a mechanism to track shifts in public opinion over time, establish a robust baseline and deepen our understanding of public attitudes towards both air pollution action and specific air quality policy interventions.

To this end, this request for proposals aims to develop a consistent and replicable polling methodology to standardise our approach to how we collect, analyse and share polling data with various audiences.

The outputs of this project will, in the long-term, help the following audiences:

- a. **The Breathe Cities initiative** to track shifts in public opinion and attitudes towards air quality interventions over time,
- b. **City officials** to use polling as an important data source for city-level policy interventions,
- c. **Campaigning organisations** to measure the impact of their projects,
- d. **Media** to engage in a data-driven public discourse on air quality as a pressing issue in urban areas.

Project deployment

This project will help establish one of the core components of the Breathe Cities approach which focusses on increasing public awareness of the health risks associated with air pollution and will lay the ground for future roll-out of our polling approach.

The selected consulting firm will develop a fit-for-purpose polling methodology note for the Breathe Cities initiative in close collaboration with the Breathe Cities MEL Manager. This stage will also include a preparation of 1 questionnaire organised in sections relevant to the audiences listed above. The questionnaire will be prepared based on the know-how of the selected partners as well as the insights from each of the audience groups.

Term

We anticipate the project to commence in October 2025 and conclude in December 2025.

Detailed note

Background to Clean Air Fund (CAF)

Clean Air Fund is a global philanthropic organisation that brings together governments, campaigners, researchers, funders and businesses to create a world where everyone breathes clean air. From grassroots to government, Clean Air Fund provides support to accelerate action on clean air. We do this by:

- Working with organisations across the globe that promote air quality data, build public demand for clean air and drive action;
- Influencing and supporting decision-makers to act on clean air and to strengthen the air quality cause; and
- Working with communities that are disproportionately affected by air pollution.

Find out about our 'Clean Air For All' strategy [here](#). Learn more about where we work [here](#).

Background to the Breathe Cities initiative

Breathe Cities is a first-of-its-kind initiative from Bloomberg Philanthropies, Clean Air Fund, and C40 Cities to reduce air pollution, slash carbon emissions, and enhance public health.

The initiative has the ambitious goal of contributing to reducing air pollution by 30% across participating cities by 2030 compared to 2019 levels, which would prevent 39,000 premature deaths and avoid 284 megatonnes of CO₂e emissions – a monumental win for both people and planet.

Programme Scope: Breathe Cities is currently being implemented in [three cities in Latin America](#) (Rio de Janeiro, Mexico City, and Bogotá), [three cities in Africa](#) (Accra, Nairobi, and Johannesburg), [two cities in Asia](#) (Bangkok and Jakarta) and [six cities in Europe](#) (London, Warsaw, Sofia, Brussels, Milan and Paris). The programme was initiated in September 2023, with current funding running until June 2026.

Find out more about the initiative here: www.breathecities.org.

Objective of the assignment

This assignment builds on a recommendation from a baseline study conducted in 2024–2025, to design a replicable polling methodology including Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) measurement, to assess public opinions on air pollution, its health effects, clean air policy measures and effects on mobility patterns.

Consultancy Firm

The consultancy firm should have a strong history of working with international organisations, businesses, local governments, and city authorities to design reliable ways of gathering public opinions and behaviours. This includes surveys that are carried out at different stages of a project—at the beginning, middle, and end—using a mix of methods like interviews/questionnaires and focus group discussions/prompts.

They should be experienced in running surveys across multiple cities and countries, especially in ways that allow results to be compared across different regions. It is important that they know how to collect data from local communities in a way that accurately reflects the population.

The tools and methods they use must be practical and easy to adapt so that local research teams in all 14 cities can use them in the future. These tools should also ensure that results are consistent and comparable across different places and time periods, including for follow-up evaluations after the project ends.

Rationale for conducting polling

Using polling whilst incorporating measurement of knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP), the programme will benefit from broad, representative insights (polling) and in-depth, actionable understanding (KAP measurement).

This will help support:

- Measuring the impact of city-level campaigns.
- Potential design and targeting of interventions that are culturally and contextually relevant.
- Cross-city comparisons, using harmonised tools to generate insights that can be shared and scaled.
- Stronger engagement with local stakeholders, backed by credible, community-level data.
- Evidence to weave into external narratives and case studies, alongside headline-ready data for media engagement.

Ultimately, this approach ensures that air quality policies and programmes are not only evidence-based, but also people-centred, responsive, and effective.

Approach

This section outlines the proposed approach to deliver the assignment. The approach combines a **desk review**, **quantitative**, and **qualitative** methods, supported by one structured questionnaire and one FGD guide.

- **Desk Review**
 - Consultants will begin with a review of internal documents provided by the Breathe MEL Manager at the start of the assignment.
 - This will include previous CAF- and C40-commissioned polling reports, the programme's baseline study, and existing tools (e.g., questionnaires, approaches).
 - The review will help inform sampling methods, sample sizes, questionnaire design, FGD guide, and lessons learned from past efforts.
 - Consultants will also draw on their own experience and relevant external sector sources.
 - A short summary note outlining how internal and external documents were used will be submitted to CAF for approval before moving on to methodology design.
- **Quantitative Methodology**
 - Our preference is a representative stratified multistage sampling method but this will be confirmed and reviewed at the start of the assignment.
 - Sample size must be calculated to ensure statistical representativeness at a 95% confidence level with a $\pm 5\%$ margin of error, accounting for the design effect of multistage sampling.
 - Strata to be considered (depending on city context):
 - Sociodemographic factors (e.g., age, race, gender, disability, social class or grade, education level, protected characteristics).
 - Geographic factors (e.g., population size, adult residents 18+ within city boundaries, residential areas, informal settlements, educational institutions, commercial/transport hubs).
 - Sampling weights will be proposed to ensure results accurately represent target populations.
 - **Tool:** A structured questionnaire will be developed.

- **Qualitative Methodology**

- Our preference is a purposive sampling method, but this can be reviewed and confirmed at the start of the assignment.
- Consultants will work with programme staff to develop a typology of participants most likely to provide relevant, rich, and diverse information based on characteristics, experience, or knowledge.
- **Tool:** An FGD guide will be developed.
- The qualitative component will be used to triangulate and provide deeper insights into evidence and findings generated by the quantitative methodology.

Users and use of data, evidence and findings

We envision that future polling exercises conducted in all Breathe Cities will provide city officials, media, and founding organisations with timely, credible insights into public attitudes, awareness, and behaviours related to air quality and urban policies.

- **For city teams**, it will offer a rapid snapshot of public sentiment and deeper knowledge-attitude-practice (KAP) data, enabling data-driven decisions, tailored engagement strategies, and comparable evidence across the Breathe Cities initiative.
- **For city leaders**, it will fill gaps in behavioural insights and builds the evidence base for policy interventions tackling air pollution, helping build public trust and foster more responsive governance.
- **For regional and global media outlets**, the findings will show a regional and global snapshot linking action across different cities, provide headline-ready statistics and human-centred stories that make air quality issues relatable and accessible.
- **For founding organisations**, the data will demonstrate programme impact, inform strategic decisions, and strengthens advocacy by highlighting public support, challenges, and opportunities across cities.

By using harmonised and locally relevant methodologies, the exercise ensures insights are meaningful at both local and global levels, driving better communication, learning, and action.

Ethics, Safeguarding and Data Protection

Clean Air Fund is committed to ensuring that safeguarding, ethics, and data protection principles are embedded throughout the design and implementation of the methodology. All applicants must therefore describe the internal systems, processes, and tools they will mobilise to identify, prevent, and mitigate risks in these areas. Consultants should set out how their proposed methodology will guarantee non-discriminatory, safe, and appropriate participation of all individuals, including consideration of the specific needs of vulnerable groups. Applicants must also detail how the design will uphold confidentiality and anonymity, ensuring that ethical standards are maintained across all stages of the assignment.

Key timelines

We anticipate the project to commence in October 2025 and conclude in December 2025.

Anticipated deliverables and key dates

Deliverables: Please note that work on each deliverable can only begin after the preceding one has been approved.

Deliverable 1: Desk review note

(in Word; 5 pages)

Deadline: November 2025

Requirements: Summary note on past polling exercises conducted by CAF, C40 cities and plans and nature of insights and learnings from internal and external documents to be used and applied in methodology design and roll out.

Deliverable 2: Polling methodology note

(in Word; Note 5-7 pages)

Deadline: December 2025

Summary requirements

1. Design and sampling methods
2. Questionnaire and FGD guide (2 pages max each)
3. Estimated costs for rolling out methodologies

Technical specification (in annexes):

- Sampling design toolkit (sample size calculators, stratification templates, and guidance for cluster selection etc.).
- Weighting and analysis guidance (including scripts or templates for base weights, post-stratification).
- Standardised questionnaire, FGD bank (including core/mandatory questions)– note that questionnaires will need to be reviewed by intended users before finalisation: representatives from media, city officials, campaigners and staff.
- Cross-City harmonisation guidelines (to ensure comparability of data across all cities).
- Costing and implementation planning tools (budget calculator, timeline template, and stakeholder engagement/recruitment plan).

Proposal format and requirements

The successful consultancy firm will have a demonstrated track record of delivering similar activities for global organisations. We are looking for a consultancy firm with the following:

- Expertise and experience required: Environment, Climate change, Air pollution, Social/Political sciences, Statistics; demonstratable experience managing **large-scale polling, baseline, midline and endline surveys, evaluations including mix-method surveys and analysis.**
- Language skills: English
- Ethics, safeguarding and data privacy management: the consultant team must have internal processes and mechanisms for ethics, safeguarding and data privacy management for planning and implementing data collection exercises.

Interested applicants should provide a proposal covering the following aspects:

- Detailed response to the RFP including proposed methodology (maximum 3 pages, font 11, excluding annexes).
 - A set of proposed activities (desk review, quantitative and qualitative methodologies including questionnaire and FGD guide), and associated timelines for each activity, estimated number of days and resourcing considerations to meet the purpose and deliverables.
- In annex:
 - CVs and a cover letter detailing the skills and experience of the consultants relevant to this polling.
 - A budget with cost breakdown across different activities (e.g., costs to develop the methodology), including daily fee rates, expenses, and inclusive of all relevant taxes etc.
 - Note that proposals must specify time allocated per grade and per task. Proposals with staff whose time is budgeted but not attached to actual deliverables, specific activities or process delivery will not be considered.
 - Ethics and safeguarding approaches, including any identified risks and associated mitigation strategies in annex.
 - We are interested in receiving a relevant sample of previous work.

Timeline and submission

- Interested applicants will need to email the following staff to submit their questions and applications:
 1. Axelle Fidelin (afidelin@cleanairfund.org)
 2. Agata De Ru (aderu@cleanairfund.org)
 3. Niyati Tripathi (n.tripathi@cleanairfund.org)
- The deadline for submission of proposals to the email addresses above is 17.00 (UK BST) September 19th, 2025.

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

Activity	Dates
Publish Request for Proposal	September 1 st
Deadline for questions	September 12 th
Deadline for proposals submission	September 19 th
Deadline to review proposals submitted	September 24 th
Interviews with shortlisted consultancy firms	September 25 th , 26 th and 29 th
Decision on preferred applicant	September 30 th
Tentative deadline - due diligence on selected applicant	October 8 th
Contracting and project start	October 15 th
Deadline for completing the work	December 15 th