

*Pathways analysis to achieve AAQD Compliance in the most polluted regions of Germany***Request for Expressions of Interest (EOI)****March 2025****Project Summary**

This project aims to support the most polluted regions of Germany in meeting the Ambient Air Quality Directive (AAQD) standards on time, without relying on time derogations. It will achieve this by conducting a comprehensive analysis and developing actionable pathways to compliance.

The chosen supplier will conduct a detailed study of potential pathways to compliance, considering aspects including cost-effectiveness, political sensitivity, and social acceptance. The analysis will cover key pollutants such as PM<sub>2.5</sub> and NO<sub>2</sub> and will focus, at a minimum, on domestic heating and transport sectors. Based on the findings, the supplier will develop a short report containing policy recommendations to inform regional air quality plans required by the Directive. The outcomes will contribute to national and EU-wide air quality objectives, while also serving as a replicable model for other highly polluted regions in Europe.

**Background to the project****The problem**

The revised AAQD represents a significant milestone in European air pollution policy, setting stricter air quality standards to be achieved by 2030, more closely aligned with WHO guidelines. EU Member States have until December 11, 2026, to transpose the directive into national law. However, certain regions facing difficulties in meeting the targets by 2030 can apply for derogations of up to 10 years, which could delay progress.

In Germany, certain industrialized and densely populated urban areas face challenges. These regions experience some of the country's poorest air quality, along with higher rates of premature mortality compared to the national average, and significant socio-economic difficulties. Elevated unemployment levels and fiscal pressures on local governments fuel concerns among residents, trade unions, and businesses about potential job losses, especially in key sectors like automotive manufacturing and steel production.

**The solution**

This project will provide technical support through research and data to facilitate the effective transposition and implementation of the AAQD in Germany. It will contribute to dialogue in highly polluted regions to help identify pathways to meet targets while avoiding (or limiting)

derogation and reinforcing the existing air quality stakeholder ecosystem. Successful implementation in the most polluted regions in Germany will not only contribute to national objectives but also serve as a model for other EU Member States, supporting broader environmental and public health goals with a focus on justice and equity.

### Background to Clean Air Fund

Launched in 2019, the Clean Air Fund 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.

More information about the Clean Air Fund can be found on our website: [www.cleanairfund.org](http://www.cleanairfund.org).

Clean Air Fund's Europe portfolio supports a variety of projects and partners with the overall objective of supporting transposition and implementation of Europe's recently adopted Ambient Air Quality Directive.

### Project outputs and prospective activities

This Expression of Interest (EOI) invites experienced organisations to register their interest and provide a high-level summary of their approach, relevant experience and indicative budget. This will be followed by an invitation to an interview for authors of expected 3-5 best offers and preparation of a full offer by the selected partner. Further guidance is provided below.

#### Main project objective:

By July 2026, local, regional, and national stakeholders will demonstrate how they intend to meet the new AAQD limit values by 2030, without derogation, at least in one of the most polluted regions in Germany.

#### Expected project outputs:

**Output 1:** Modelling-based study of pathways for the most polluted region(s) in Germany to achieve the new AAQD limit values by 2030.

**Output 2:** Development of a recommendations document, including a set of recommendations to support the integration of proposed measures into regional air quality plans.

**Output 3:** Activities to foster stakeholder engagement.

*Activities should include especially:*

**Research:**

- Analysis of 5-10 different policy pathways to meet AAQD targets.
- The pathways included should, at a minimum:
  - o Consider economic criteria (cost-effectiveness); political sensitivity, and social acceptance.
  - o Meet simultaneously climate change and air pollution.
  - o Include heating and transport sectors (optional but desirable: include agricultural and industry).
  - o Include the following pollutants at the minimum: PM<sub>2.5</sub> and NO<sub>2</sub>.

**Report writing:**

- Preparation of a report, in German, summarising the study, the methodology applied, explanation of the policy pathways, key findings, and a set of recommendations to support the integration of the proposed measures into regional air quality plans.
- Translation of the report into English, including the set of recommendations and a summary of the remaining sections.

**Stakeholder engagement:**

- The supplier will participate in coordination meetings with another Clean Air Fund partner, as well as with other key stakeholders, to ensure alignment of research activities and consistency with the current air quality landscape, and enhance the communications and outreach impact of the report.

**Communications:**

- Promotion of the report through preparation of events and workshops in partnership with another Clean Air Fund partner.
- Preparation of press releases to introduce the recommendations report and highlight key workshop outcomes.

**Project duration and budget**

The project is foreseen to last between a period of 10 months, from 01/06/2025 until 30/03/2026.

Clean Air Fund has budgeted for a maximum contribution of circa EUR 148,000 (equivalent to \$160,000) for the entire duration of the project. Clean Air Fund will be receiving aligned funding from Stiftung Mercator for this project.

We request that bidders provide an indicative split of these funds in their proposal, based on the project activities and outcome proposed in this EOI.

### What is the Clean Air Fund looking for?

The following criteria will be used to assess the proposals submitted.

1. **Experience and technical suitability:** demonstrable achievements in leading successful research projects, ideally with modelling of pathways to achieve social/environmental targets and producing policy reports.
2. **Creativity:** in proposing an approach that meets the brief and ensures the success of the work.
3. **Value for money:** ensuring the long-term viability that can succeed without ongoing (long-term) Clean Air Fund support.
4. **Recommendations** provided by organizations and/or individuals which received similar support, especially environmentally focused NGOs, experts and public authorities.

### What to include in your expression of interest

Clean Air Fund is structuring this project by first inviting expressions of interest with the intention of understanding the range of different proposers and approaches that could deliver this work.

Please consider the following points in your EOI response:

1. **Strategic Approach:** How will you approach the project? Please outline your broad approach, including key activities, milestones, and the expected interim outcomes.
2. **Track record:** What are your relevant qualifications and expertise for delivering this project successfully? Please provide examples of previous projects that demonstrate your capability to produce technical research and reports, and to promote research through communications activities that reach and affect political decision makers, as well as communities and/or broader society.
3. **Equity and inclusivity:** How will your organisation ensure a participatory and equitable approach in building and managing the project?
4. **Budget and timeline:** What are the indicative costs and timeline of the activities you are proposing under each of the outcomes listed above?

### How to submit your expression of interest and process

To submit your expression of interest, please send your response to the five questions above and any additional information deemed relevant in document format to [cdelasota@cleanairfund.org](mailto:cdelasota@cleanairfund.org) cc: [elanyon@cleanairfund.org](mailto:elanyon@cleanairfund.org) by the deadline set out below. This should be limited to 3 pages, as we are looking for a high-level concept at this stage.

For the expression (s) of interest that are the best fit for this funding, we will invite the authors to an interview with a panel of experts.

## Timeline

Activity	Deadline
Publish Expression of Interest	04/04/2025
Deadline for questions	23/04/2025
Deadline for Expression of Interest	28/04/2025
Review of Expressions of Interest, Clean Air Fund decision to invite for an interview	29/04/2025 to 09/05/2025
Interviews to take place	12/05/2025
Clean Air Fund decision on the winning offer	23/05/2025
Deadline for submitting the full proposal	07/06/2025
Contracting	21/06/2025