CLEAN
AIR
FUND

**Request for Proposals (RFP): Diagnostic on the Economic Case for Clean Air**

## 1. Background

The Clean Air Fund (CAF) is a philanthropic initiative working to accelerate action on air pollution globally. Air pollution causes almost 8 million premature deaths annually and costs the world economy over 6% of global GDP in health and productivity losses. Yet investment in clean air remains far below the level justified by its benefits.

To help close this gap, CAF is launching a strand of work to strengthen the economic and financial case for clean air. The initiative will generate compelling evidence and create tools to support politicians; policymakers, with a focus on finance ministries; and donors to analyse the costs of air pollution and the benefits of investments to address it. It aims to make the case for air quality to be treated as a smart investment which generates a high economic return.

The work will be delivered in three stages:

1. **Stage 1 – Diagnostic (this RFP):** Identify the key economic, institutional and financing barriers preventing policies to support investment or greater investment in clean air, as well as effective approaches that have enabled policies and investment. Use this diagnostic to shape future work on this topic.
2. **Stage 2 – Annual "Value of Clean Air" report:** Quantify and communicate the costs of inaction and the returns on investment in cleaner air, using transparent, global and country-level economic analysis that incorporates welfare-related costs (based on VSL) but also separately quantifies key market / fiscal impacts (both at global and national levels). This will likely require an impact pathway approach. This might be combined in future iterations with integrated assessment / general equilibrium modelling (recognising that this is ambitious).
3. **Stage 3 – Clean Air Economics Toolkit:** Provide policymakers and, in particular, finance ministries, analytical tools to conduct their own cost–benefit and fiscal-impact assessments for clean air policies and investments.

**This RFP covers Stage 1 only – the Diagnostic**. However, the successful delivery partner may be well placed to deliver stages 2 and 3.

## 2. Diagnostic Objective

To produce a cross-country diagnostic that identifies and analyses the barriers to public and donor investment in air quality (AQ) improvement and the policies to facilitate it, in developing countries and recommends practical steps for overcoming them.

### 3. Scope of Work

The Diagnostic should:

- Analyse how policy and, in particular, investment decisions for AQ projects are made, and why many viable proposals do not progress through public investment or MDB pipelines. This should focus on the role of finance ministries, in particular. In countries where there is little or no history of AQ investments / policy decisions, analysis should be broadened to consider environmental or other investments / policies that involve similar contexts and / or look at investments / policies with major AQ co-benefits.
- Identify institutional, analytical and financing barriers along the project cycle - from proposal development through appraisal and disbursement.
- Map existing evidence and typologies of barriers and solutions.
- Examine the role of fiscal, regulatory and incentive frameworks that affect investment decisions.
- Offer recommendations to CAF and partners around how to shape Stage 2 and 3 of the work to address these barriers.
- Provide a stand-alone output, which can be presented at one or more multilateral events to raise awareness about the barriers to tackling air pollution and / or be included in future Clean Air Fund publications.

**Core activities (indicative):**

1. **Design and scoping**
    - Agree the detailed research framework, country selection (approx. 10–15 low- and middle-income countries), and stakeholder map. Note that we propose a focus on countries where CAF has a presence: South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, Thailand, Indonesia, Brazil and Colombia but with the addition of others in Africa and Asia. The goal is, as far as possible, a representative sample from across LMICs.
    - Define “air quality finance” and a typology of finance mechanisms to be assessed.
2. **Evidence gathering**

- Conduct desk review of appraisal and investment processes by country.
- Undertake 3–5 key informant interviews per country across ministries of finance, line ministries and MDB/donor country teams. Note that we do not have contacts in finance ministries (and often outside of one specific ministry) in most of these countries. You will need to draw on existing relationships or develop these.
- Include at least one recently stalled or declined air quality investment per country to trace decision logic and bottlenecks (if the country has no air quality investments, similar investments in climate or other environmental projects may be considered).

3. **Analysis and synthesis**
    - Develop a barrier typology by stage of the investment cycle.
    - Produce 6–8 short case studies tracing investable pathways for common interventions.
    - Map feasible financing routes at a high level (domestic budget, concessional, blended, commercial) and their prerequisites.
4. **Reporting and engagement**
    - Produce a comprehensive diagnostic report and an executive summary (20–40 pages).
    - Prepare a concise policy brief (<10 pages), slide deck and talking points for use at multilateral and policy forums.
    - Present findings to CAF in at least one session as well as presenting with CAF on at least one multilateral / international meeting.

**4. Deliverables**

| **Deliverable** | **Description** | **Due date (negotiable)** |
|---|---|---|
| **Inception Note** | Project plan including final scope, research framework, joint governance approach and stakeholder list (this need not be long). | Within 2 weeks of contract start |
| **Evidence base** | Brief summary slides + discussion: Initial conclusions from desk review and proposed approach to | Midway (approx. 6 weeks) |

| Deliverable | Description | Due date (negotiable) |
|---|---|---|
| | interviews (key questions etc.) as well as any other initial findings worthy of discussion. | |
| **Draft Diagnostic Report** | Full synthesis including barrier typology, case studies, and recommendations in draft | After 3 months |
| **Final Report & Policy Brief** | Incorporating CAF feedback; includes slide deck and talking points | End of month 4 |

**5. Working with CAF**

The selected delivery partner will need to agree a joint governance approach with CAF, including regular update meetings (suggested at every other week).

Deliverables will be quality assessed by CAF prior to project sign-off.

**6. Timeline**

The project will ideally run for **3-4 months (Until April 2026)**.

**7. Budget**

Total available budget: up to **USD 100,000** (inclusive of fees, travel and taxes).

Note that interviews and engagement with CAF need not be conducted in person but need to be high-quality.

**8. Expected Qualifications**

The selected delivery partner will have:

Essential

- Demonstrated international reach and networks across relevant governments (more important), MDBs and donors.
- Proven technical credibility in economic and policy analysis related to air quality, climate, or public investment.
- Familiarity with finance ministry processes

Desirable

- Familiarity with donor processes (especially MDB appraisal processes).
- Experience conducting multi-country diagnostics, ideally in developing countries.
- Strong communication capacity to translate technical findings into clear messages for policy and finance audiences.

**9. Proposal Submission Requirements**

Applicants should submit:

1. **Technical proposal** (max 5 pages, 1-2 pages is fine initially) outlining:
    - Understanding of the task and proposed approach
    - Work plan and timeline
    - Proposed country coverage
    - Name(s) or project lead(s) and expertise
    - Examples of relevant past work
2. **Financial proposal** with overview budget and day rates.
3. **CVs** of key personnel.

Please send proposals by **email to [insert CAF procurement contact]** with the subject line:
**"RFP – Economic Case Diagnostic"**

**10. Evaluation Criteria**

| Criterion | Weight |
|---|---|
| Technical approach and understanding of the task | 20% |
| Relevant experience and expertise | 20% |
| Value for money | 20% |
| Geographic reach and stakeholder access | 30% |
| Communications capability | 10% |

**11. Contact for Clarifications**

Questions should be sent by email to Andrew Beirne **(abeirne@cleanairfund.org)** and Jenaina Irani **(jirani@cleanairfund.org)** no later than **21 November 2025**. Responses will be shared with all prospective applicants.

**Issued by:**
Clean Air Fund (CAF)
11 November 2025