



## **Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance Innovation Fund Request for Proposals 2017**

*Issued 1 March 2017*

### **BACKGROUND AND 2017 STRATEGIC CONTEXT**

The Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance (CNCA) Innovation Fund (IF) invests in high-potential, city-led projects that develop, test, implement and amplify deep urban de-carbonization strategies and practices. The long-term objective of the CNCA IF is to support projects that build a portfolio of tested practices, policies, and tools for cities to use to achieve deep carbon reduction goals. Taken together, these projects, tested in the differing contexts of participating CNCA cities, address cross cutting urban sustainability issues identified by most CNCA cities.

The growing CNCA IF portfolio ([here](#)) is meant to define the most effective pathways for significant urban greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction, and help CNCA and other cities consider, communicate and advance potential pathways that will achieve their aggressive GHG reduction goals.

The CNCA Innovation Fund is made possible by generous support from the Kresge Foundation, Barr Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Summit Foundation, Rockefeller Brothers Fund and Bullitt Foundation.

The Round Three (2017) objectives of the CNCA Innovation Fund are to strengthen CNCA cities in the following ways:

- Increase ability to develop, test, implement and amplify deep GHG reduction strategies
- Increase collaborations among cities and with partners to advance urban carbon neutrality goals locally and globally
- Strengthen the position of CNCA cities as thought leaders for global carbon neutrality
- Foster the next generation of cities formally adopting carbon neutrality goals
- Attract additional investment to strategically grow and sustain the CNCA IF

In 2016, CNCA adopted a new strategic plan and approved the concept of expanding the CNCA IF. In 2017, CNCA begins to implement this Strategic Plan and the accompanying Fund Expansion Strategy. Fundraising is currently underway. Implementation of the Fund Expansion is anticipated to begin in mid-to-late 2017. The current CNCA IF expansion plan is [here](#).

In the meantime, there is \$510,000 USD for 2017 CNCA grant making and investment in innovation development—\$480,000 for Grants and up to \$30,000 for “Project Development Mini-Grants.”<sup>1</sup>

### **HOW FUNDING DECISIONS ARE MADE**

The CNCA IF Project Selection Committee, staffed by the CNCA Director and Fund Manager, reviews and

---

<sup>1</sup> An additional \$20,000 is available for “Quick Turnaround Grants,” which involves a separate application process, [here](#).



selects proposals for funding<sup>2</sup>. The Selection Committee is comprised of five CNCA members who volunteer to serve for this round of project selection. Round Three Selection Committee members are:

- Jørgen Abildgaard (Copenhagen)
- John Lee (New York City)
- Michael Armstrong (Portland)
- Nik Midlam (Sydney)
- Matt Horne (Vancouver)

## **TYPES OF ELIGIBLE PROJECTS**

---

**Grant Size:** In Round Three, the CNCA IF Selection Committee (“Selection Committee”) is open to projects of up to \$250,000 USD. This means that they will consider projects that remain in the historically funded range (\$60,000-\$100,000 USD), as well as larger projects up to \$250,000 USD. Depending on the strength of proposals received, the Selection Committee may elect to set aside some funds for commissioned work later in the year.

**Project Timeline:** The Selection Committee will consider grants with timelines of between 6 months to 3 years. On grant proposals that describe a scope that spans multiple years (a maximum of 3 years), budgets should be phased by year, to allow the Selection Committee to determine potential investment points in the work. For longer timeline projects, the Selection Committee may elect to either commit the full funding at the time of an award, or only fund the phases of the work it feels are the most promising.

**Project Types:** The CNCA IF Selection Committee will consider three kinds of projects:

1. Projects that test and assess the feasibility of **new deep decarbonization innovations** (i.e., **concept development, prototyping, refinement**). These projects are similar in design to the types of projects funded in previous rounds of CNCA IF funding, and are typically implemented in 12 months.
2. Projects that **begin or advance a multi-year effort** (i.e., **concept development, prototyping, refinement, standardization, and / or scaling**). These projects are expected to be implemented over a multi-year timeline (a maximum of 3 years).
3. Projects that **define and commission a sectoral market analysis** (i.e., what it will take to **standardize, and / or scale** the innovation). This analysis will be useful to a collaboration of Alliance cities, and will be used to inform and refine the strategic priorities for the Fund in the relevant sector. Such market analyses are expected to take no more than 6 to 8 months to conduct. Examples of sectors include: energy supply, building energy efficiency, transportation, solid waste, and land use.

## **SELECTION CRITERIA**

---

Proposals will be evaluated against the following criteria:

- **Problem Being Addressed** – Is this topic important to CNCA members? Is the expected impact important? Did the applicant clearly identify expected project impacts and make a clear linkage

---

<sup>2</sup> Proposed funding decisions will be brought before the **CNCA Steering Committee** before being finalized into award agreements



between how the proposed project activities/outputs will lead to the intended impact? Did the applicant clearly identify how they will use, apply and/or scale the results/impacts? Has the applicant clearly stated why this project is needed? Are the objectives of the project clear?

- Transformational:
  - Is it clear where the idea falls in the concept / prototype / launch / scaling process? Does the proposing team exhibit a strong grasp of the work that has been done on the idea to date, by whom, and the nature of CNCA involvement, if any?
  - Is it clear what market or system the innovation seeks to influence and what the barriers are to market adoption? Is it clear what the innovation consists of and how it will work to influence these barriers? Is it clear who would play what role in its implementation?
  - Is it clear what work is needed to take the innovation to the next stage of development? Does the proposal identify the scale of the capital required for this, as well as some potential capital sources? Does it state how a next stage of investment could be organized, including who would be involved; what the role of cities would be; and how the process would be staffed?
- Potential for Impact – Is it clear what role cities play in implementing the innovation? Does the proposing team clearly state what the business model is and how the economics of the innovation work? Does the proposal state the potential pathways to scale (market transactions; policy mandates; voluntary standards; etc.)? Does it state what features the innovation needs to be successful in the targeted pathway?
- Collaboration – Are other CNCA member and/or non-member cities participating in the project? If not, is there good potential for collaboration with other cities?
- Potential for Success – Has the applicant clearly identified what success will look like and how success will be measured?

## APPLICATION PROCESS AND DEADLINES\*

### Key Due Dates:

- 13 April 2017 – Letters of Interest (Form 1) due by **15:00 EDT**. If you are requesting a Project Development Mini-Grant, it must be requested with your Letter of Interest.
- 22 June 2017 – Short project description “Pitches” (Form 2) due by **15:00 EDT**. You must submit this if you plan to submit a proposal.
- 31 August 2017 – Proposals (Form 3) due **by 15:00 EDT**.

The table below provides more detail:

1 March 2017	RFP and call for Project Development Mini-Grants issued
1 March – 10 August 2017	<p>Technical Assistance Opportunities: 2 calls are scheduled to discuss ideas and learn how to craft a winning proposal. Add them to your calendar:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23 March 2017 at 10:00 EDT: add it to your calendar, <a href="#">here</a></li> <li>• 30 March 2017 at 18:00 EDT: add it to your calendar, <a href="#">here</a></li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Johanna Partin</a> (CNCA Director) or <a href="#">Susanna Sutherland</a> (CNCA Fund Manager) are available for one-on-one phone calls with anyone who wants to test ideas before submitting. Applicants are strongly encouraged to do this. For opportunities to join Proposal Project teams, see a Matchmaking List <a href="#">here</a>.</p>



<b>13 April 2017</b>	<b>Letters of Interest / Project Development Mini-Grant applications (Form 1) are due by 15:00 EDT</b>
27 April 2017	CNCA Selection Committee Feedback to LOI submitters
<b>22 June 2017</b>	<b>Short project description “Pitches” due by 15:00 EDT. You must submit this if you plan to submit a proposal. See Form 2 for the Project Pitch format.</b>
11 July 2017	Project Pitches in Melbourne (at 2017 CNCA Annual Meeting)
<b>31 August 2017</b>	<b>Proposals due by 15:00 EDT. See Form 3 for Proposal format</b>
14 September 2017	Selection Committee scores and determines awards
19 September 2017	Steering Committee Review of Selection Committee Recommendations
20 September 2017	Awardees Notified
31 October 2017	Target Date to have Award Agreements Executed

*\*All dates and times are in Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)*

## **PROJECT DEVELOPMENT MINI-GRANTS**

At the time they submit their Letter of Interest, applicants may—but are not required to—request up to \$5,000 USD<sup>3</sup> in a “Project Development Mini-Grant” that enables the development of strong projects and proposals. Project Development Mini-Grants may be used to conduct research, convene participating cities/teams, work with experts/consultants to more fully develop the project concept, obtain assistance in project development (i.e., facilitating meetings of the proposal team), or to commission any other service that is needed to develop the strongest project and proposal possible. CNCA is able to provide these mini-grants either directly to the city, directly to a contractor of the city’s choice, or by reimbursing for travel (flights, hotels) or conference registration fees. The applicant’s desired payment structure should be indicated in the application.

## **PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS**

### Letters of Interest and Project Development Mini-Grant Applications – Due 13 April 2017 by 15:00 EDT

- Letters of Interest and Project Development Mini-Grant applications (Form 1) are due 13 April 2017 by 15:00 EDT.
- This year, **Letters of Interest will not be evaluated by the Selection Committee; all who submit Letters of Interest may submit full proposals.** The Letters of Interest (LOIs) are simply to let the Selection Committee know which proposals are under development. The Selection Committee will provide comments on the LOIs that will be shared with applicants to take into consideration during the proposal development process.
- Letters of Interest and Project Development Mini-Grants must be 2 pages or less (with at least 11-point font) and follow the format provided in Form 1 appended to this document.
- All Mini-Grant funds must be expended and invoiced by the time Proposals are submitted on 31 August 2017 by 15:00 EDT.

### Project “Pitches” – Due 22 June 2017 by 15:00 EDT

- Short project description “Pitches” (Form 2) are due 22 June 2017 by 15:00 EDT. You must submit this if you plan to submit a proposal.

<sup>3</sup> More than \$5,000 USD for a single TA mini-grant may be considered with compelling justification, such as international travel costs exceeding the \$5,000 cap.



- **Project “Pitches” will not be evaluated by the Selection Committee; all who submit Project Pitches may submit full proposals.** The Project Pitches will be provided to the CNCA membership in advance of the Project Pitch session to be held during the CNCA Annual Meeting in Melbourne on 10-11 July 2017.

#### Full Proposals – Due 31 August 2017 by 15:00 EDT

- **Proposals are due no later than 15:00 EDT on 31 August 2017.** Proposals should be emailed to [Susanna Sutherland](#) (CNCA Fund Manager). [Johanna Partin](#) (CNCA Director) should be copied.
- Proposals must be **10 pages or less** (with at least 11-point font) and follow the format provided in **Form 3** appended to this document.
- Only a CNCA primary member may submit a Proposal. This person takes responsibility for project leadership, deliverables review and approval, and fiscal management.
- Non-CNCA member cities may also participate in the project if invited by a CNCA city.
- Proposal narratives must be accompanied by a completed Grant Budget; see the excel spreadsheet budget template provided with this RFP, [here](#).
- Applicants are encouraged to identify other CNCA cities to collaborate with on the project. [Johanna Partin](#) (CNCA Director) or [Susanna Sutherland](#) (CNCA Fund Manager) are happy to assist lead cities in identifying other CNCA cities that may be interested in collaborating. A running matchmaking document is [here](#).
- Cities may conduct the funded work themselves or hire a consultant / firm to do the work on the cities’ behalf. In either case, the primary CNCA member from the applying city must bear ultimate responsibility for the project. They may designate a project manager on their behalf.
- Technical assistance in developing proposals is available through one-on-one calls with the CNCA Director. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to do this.** Contact [Johanna Partin](#) (CNCA Director) or [Susanna Sutherland](#) (CNCA Fund Manager) to schedule a proposal technical assistance call.

#### **GRANT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

---

There will be four reporting requirements for successful grantees:

1. **Quarterly Updates.** A quarterly one-paragraph (250 words or less) progress update describing progress to date on deliverables, due one week after the end of each quarter.
2. **CNCA Webinar / Conference Call on Project Results and Lessons Learned.** The Grantee may be asked to present on a CNCA teleconference or webinar or at an in-person meeting about Project results, lessons learned, key takeaways, etc.
3. **Final Report.** At the end of the grant period the Grantee will submit to the CNCA Director a Final Report consisting of the following components:
  - a) **Project Narrative:** Describing outcomes, impacts of the work on the Grantee, other participating cities and implementing partners, follow-on work planned, funds leveraged, and lessons learned.
  - b) **Project Products / Outputs:** The Grantee will provide all substantial “products” or outputs produced.
  - c) **Grant Budget and Expenditures:** The Grantee will submit a detailed record of grant funds budgeted and expended.
4. **Debriefing Call.** The Grantee and relevant participating cities and other implementing partners



will make themselves available for one or more debriefing calls with the CNCA Director and Fund Manager to understand what worked, what could be improved, and any insights from the work that CNCA can learn from. The Grantee will also make themselves available to the CNCA IF Selection Committee and / or CNCA Steering Committee when it assesses CNCA funded projects.



**Form 1**  
**Letter of Interest / Project Development Mini-Grant Application Form**  
**Due 13 April 2017 by 15:00 EDT**

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Letters of Interest are required. Mini-grant requests are optional. This Form should be used for both.

Requirements:

- **Letters of Interest (LOI) and Project Development Mini-Grant applications are due 13 April 2017 by 15:00 EDT.**
- Letters of Interest / Project Development Mini-Grants must be **2 pages or less** (with at least 11-point font) and follow the format provided in **Form 1** below.
  - **This year, LOIs will not be evaluated by the Selection Committee. All who submit LOIs may submit full proposals.** The LOIs are simply to let the Selection Committee know which proposals are under development.
  - Applicants submitting an LOI will receive written feedback from the CNCA IF Selection Committee to help develop a strong proposal.
  - At this point in the proposal development process, it's fine to not know all of the details. Flesh them out to the fullest extent possible, and note areas that are still in development.
- For those LOIs that include an optional Proposal Development Mini-grant Request:
  - Applicants may request up to \$5,000 USD<sup>4</sup> in a Project Development Mini-Grant that enables the development of strong Projects and Proposals.
  - Project Development Mini-Grants may be used to conduct research, convene participating cities/teams, work with experts/consultants to more fully develop the Project concept, obtain assistance in Project development (e.g., facilitating meetings of the Proposal team), or to purchase any other service that is needed to develop the strongest Project and Proposal possible.
  - All mini-grant funds must be expended and invoiced by the time your Proposal is submitted on 31 August 2017 by 15:00 EDT.
  - CNCA can contract directly with technical assistance providers to insure this process can move quickly.

---

<sup>4</sup> More than \$5,000 USD for a single Mini-grant may be considered with compelling justification, such as international travel costs exceeding the \$5,000 cap.



## 1. PAGE 1: LETTER OF INTENT (one page or less)

Please submit this form by 13 April 2017 by 15:00 EDT. Delete all of the instructions above before submitting. You must submit this if you plan to submit a full proposal in August.

In 1 page or less, please describe:

- Name, title, address, email and phone number for the CNCA primary member
- Consultant / partner to provide the services (if not the City): Name, title, address, email and phone number
- Other participating cities:
  - Core (will also receive funding)
  - Observing (will not receive funding but will participate in some way)
- Describe the Project concept to be proposed, and the main objectives the Project seeks to achieve. This is not a Project Proposal, which is not due until 31 August 2017. However, applicants are strongly advised to review the Proposal format (Form 3) and highlight the key elements of what the proposed Project will do, and the key objectives it will seek to achieve.
  
- Is a Project Development mini-grant requested? Yes / No.  
**If Yes, please complete the following section.**  
**If No, please only submit Page 1 described above.**

## 2. PAGE 2 (optional): PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT MINI-GRANT APPLICATION (one page or less):

- Name, title, address, email and phone number for the CNCA primary member
  - This person will approve and forward invoices to CNCA for payment. This person will approve invoices if they are coming from a consultant or if CNCA is contracting directly on behalf of the City. In short, no payments are made without this person's approval.
- Consultant/partner to provide the services (if not the City): Name, title, address, email and phone number
- Entity to receive the mini-grant (if different from either City or consultant/partner): Name, title, address, email and phone number
  - *Note: If designating direct payment to an entity other than the City, the City will approve all invoices prior to CNCA issuing payment*
- Instructions for Payment:
  - Can funds be received in USD? (yes/no)
  - Would you prefer to be paid via check (issued from U.S.-based bank), or via wire transfer?
  - For check: Please provide the following:
    - Make check payable to:
    - Mailing address:
    - Tax ID number:
  - For wire transfer:
    - Bank information
    - Other necessary information





- A 1-paragraph description of what the Project Development Mini-Grant funds will be used for.
- A 1-paragraph description of why these Project Development Mini-Grant funds are important to the development of what will ultimately be a Project to be proposed for funding under Round 3 of the CNCA Innovation Fund.

*Note: Neither of the above paragraphs should be a description of the proposed Project, which is to be described in the Letter of Intent.*

- The following table, listing the task(s), entity receiving the funds, deliverable(s), due date(s) and dollar amount:

Task(s)	Entity Receiving Funds	Deliverable(s)	Due Date(s)	Amount (in USD)
<i>Example: Travel for Cities A and B to attend Project development strategy session</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Airfare</li> <li>● Hotel</li> <li>● Etc.</li> </ul>		Airfare & hotel receipts		
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>up to \$5,000</b>



## **Form 2**

### **Pitch Format Form**

**Due 22 June 2017 by 15:00 EDT**

Please submit this form by 22 June 2017 by 15:00 EDT. This should be an updated version of Form 1. It is a short project description for annual meeting project “Pitches”. You must submit this if you plan to submit a proposal. In 2 pages or less, please describe:

- Name, title, address, email and phone number for the CNCA primary member
- Consultant / partner to provide the services (if not the City): Name, title, address, email and phone number
- Other participating cities:
  - Core (will also receive funding)
  - Observing (will not receive funding but will participate in some way)
- Describe the Project concept to be proposed, and the main objectives the Project seeks to achieve. While this is not a Project Proposal (which is not due until 31 August 2017 by 15:00 EDT), to the extent possible at this point, applicants are strongly advised to highlight the key elements of what the proposed Project will do, and the key objectives it will seek to achieve. Review the Proposal format (Form 3) as you create your project pitch for content pointers.



**Form 3**  
**Proposal Format Form**  
**Due 31 August 2017 by 15:00 EDT**

***Proposals must be 10 pages or less and follow this format - due 15:00 EDT on 31 August 2017***

1. **Project Title.** (one line)
2. **City Lead.**
  - **Project Lead:** Must be primary CNCA contact for lead city (name, title, department, city, email, and telephone)
  - **Project Manager** (if other than the primary CNCA contact listed above)
3. **Partners.**
  - **Cities:** List all cities and partners that will be involved in the Project. In addition to the lead city, list any other cities participating in the Project. Categorize each as one of the following:
    - “Core” – Other cities actively engaged in the Project and will receive and/or benefit from funding
    - “Observing” – Other cities that will not receive funding but will serve as observers or advisors to the Project
  - **Other Partners:** List any Project partners (NGOs, customers, industry groups, etc.), if relevant
  - **Consultants:** List any consultancies and/or other services to be engaged to deliver this Project and the role of each
4. **Grant Amount Requested (in USD).** Amount requested in USD. *(Full budget should be attached as Appendix using budget template provided.)*
5. **Project Term.** State how much time is required to complete the Project. Why is this the right amount of time to successfully implement the Project?
6. **Project Type:** Which type of Project is this? (See descriptions on page 2 of this RFP)
  - New Deep Decarbonization Innovation – Concept Development
  - Multi-Year Effort
  - Sectoral Market Analysis
7. **Project Summary:** One paragraph summarizing the key elements of what the proposed Project will do, and the key objectives seeks to achieve. This paragraph should state the most compelling case for why the Project is necessary, what it seeks to achieve and what it will do. This description will be publicly shared via the CNCA website.
8. **Project Narrative.** Provide one paragraph on each of the following (unless otherwise stated):
  - a. **Problem Statement:** Why the Project is needed (1-2 paragraphs). In the first sentence, state what the problem is that needs to be solved. Then, go into detail.
  - b. **Problem Description:** Describe the specific barrier that is currently preventing progress toward a solution.
  - c. **Proposed Solution:** What is the proposed solution to the problem? What interventions will be employed to move any barriers to this solution? How will the proposed solution address the problem? What system will be impacted? What is known about that system’s leverage points (where small input can have a large impact)? Why does the applicant think this leverage point can be targeted with the proposed Project? What research has the applicant conducted or consulted to determine potential value and feasibility of the proposed Project? How will the



proposed approach lead to the intended impact? Why is it efficient for this to be a city-led initiative? *(These questions provided for guidance only.)*

- d. **Project Impacts.** Who will be impacted, and what will be impacted? What will success look like? In other words, how will this project lead to quantitative and / or qualitative systemic change? How will you use, apply and/or scale the results for greatest impact in the City?

*Questions 9-12 are designed to assess how the proposed Project will be “transformational:”*

- 9. **Stage of Development.** Describe where the idea is in the concept/prototype/launch/scaling stage-gate process; the work that has been done on the idea to date, and by whom; and the nature of CNCA involvement, if any. Include a description of the cities that are providing leadership on this idea.
- 10. **Innovation Hypothesis.** What is the market or system that the innovation seeks to influence and what are the barriers to market adoption? What does the innovation consist of and what is the “unit” of innovation (process; product; practice; enterprise; system; etc.)? How would the innovation work – who would play what role in its implementation? In particular, who are the “operating entrepreneurs” that would make it happen?
- 11. **Scaling/Replicability.** What is the role of cities in implementing the innovation? What is the business model – how do the economics of the innovation work? What are the potential pathways to scale (market transactions; policy mandates; voluntary standards; etc.)? What features does the innovation need to be successful in the targeted pathway?
- 12. **Potential Next Stage of Investment.** What work is needed to take the innovation to the next stage of development? What is the scale of the capital required for this? What are some of the potential capital sources? How would a next stage of investment be organized – who would be involved; what would the role of cities be; and how would the process be staffed?
- 13. **Activities, Deliverables and Timeline.** Complete the table below to list and briefly describe the main activities and deliverables that will be produced by the Project, and by when. Assume an October 2017 start date. *(A sample is provided in the first row.)*

Activity	Deliverable	Timeline / Due Date
<i>Example: Assess existing building typologies appropriate for proposed intervention</i>	<i>Building typology assessment report</i>	<i>31 Dec 2017</i>

- 14. **Project Management.** Who will receive funds and provide oversight? How will Project decisions be made, and who will do which tasks?
- 15. **Impact and Progress Measurement.** What is the expected impact of the innovation on GHG emissions? On “co-benefits?” How will this impact be measured and quantified? List the key performance indicators to be used to gauge success.
- 16. **Sustaining the Project.** Describe your plan for sustaining the project (if it is intended to continue / be maintained) or potential additional phases that the Project might lead to. Also, identify if the CNCA funding may catalyze other revenue sources – pending successful Project delivery.
- 17. **Budget.** Complete and attach “CNCA Innovation Fund Grant Budget” excel spreadsheet. Please use the template provided.