

Building to Net-Zero Request for Proposal



Local Governments
for Sustainability
Les gouvernements locaux
pour le développement durable
CANADA

Voluntary Green Development Standards (GDS) training, design, and development

Proposals due September 26, 2025



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Requirement	ICLEI Canada is seeking consultants who will work with a municipal cohort to train and design draft Green Development Standards (GDS).
RFP Reference Name	ICLEI-BNZ-09-2025
Issued By	ICLEI Canada, 401 Richmond St W #204, Toronto, ON M5V 3A8
Issue Date	August 12, 2025
RFP Contact	Adlar Gross adlar.gross@iclei.org and Susan Morrissey Wyse susan.morrisseywyse@iclei.org
Bidder Questions	Questions related to this RFP must be submitted by email to the RFP Contact named above.
Deadline for Questions	ICLEI Canada will respond to questions received by 5:00 PM ET on August 26, 2025, via email. Questions and responses will be shared with all potential proponents.
Bid Delivery Location	All bids will be submitted via email.
Submission Deadline	Bids must be fully submitted no later than September 26, 2025.
Contract Budget	The maximum value for this contract is CAD \$200,000 (inclusive of HST).
Contract Award	ICLEI Canada anticipates that the contract will be awarded by November 2025.
Attachments	Part 1 – RFP Process Part 2 – Scope of Work Annex A – Submission Guidelines Annex B – Bid Content Requirements

PART 1: RFP PROCESS

Summary

ICLEI Canada is seeking a contractor to support its Building to Net-Zero (BNZ) Municipal Cohort through the delivery of tailored training sessions and the facilitation of a collaborative design process to develop draft voluntary Green Development Standards (GDS) for participating municipalities. The GDS developed through this process will serve as early drafts that municipalities can refine and bring forward to council for future adoption or endorsement.

Scope of Work

The deliverables in this RFP include the development and delivery of tailored training sessions, facilitation of a collaborative design process, and creation of draft GDS for participating BNZ Cohort municipalities.

Eligibility

Organizations eligible to submit proposals include organizations with a specific mandate or demonstrable relevant recent experience designing and collaborating with municipalities to create GDS.

Joint Ventures / Consortium

Organizations, including independent consultants, may submit as a joint venture or consortium to complement their respective areas of expertise, strengthen the responsiveness of their proposals and make available bigger pools of experts, provide better approaches and if possible lower prices. If using a joint venture, a single entity must be appointed to represent the association; all members of the joint venture shall sign the contract.

Bidder Questions

Questions on this RFP must be directed by email to the RFP contact at the email address specified on the cover page before the Deadline for Questions. All bidder questions and their responses will be shared with all proponents that have expressed interest in responding to the RFP (names and questions will be anonymized).

Bid Submission Instructions

Bidders must submit their proposal via email to Susan Morrissey Wyse, susan.morrisseywyse@iclei.org; and Adlar Gross, adlar.gross@iclei.org

Bid Evaluation

All compliant Bids meeting the requirements will proceed to the evaluation phase and be evaluated internally by a committee within ICLEI Canada.

Non-Binding Process

This is a non-binding bidding process and no legal obligations regarding the procurement of any good or service will be created until ICLEI Canada and the selected Bidder(s) have confirmed their acceptance of a contract for the goods and services. ICLEI Canada may choose to select or not select any Bidder and may cancel this RFP at any time. A Bidder may withdraw its bid at any time before confirming acceptance of the contract. ICLEI Canada reserves the right to issue more than one contract as a result of this RFP.

PART 2: SCOPE OF WORK

INTRODUCTION

About ICLEI Canada

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability is a global network of more than 2,500 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development. Active in 125+ countries, we influence sustainability policy and drive local action for low emission, nature-based, equitable, resilient and circular development. Our members and team of experts work together through peer exchange, partnerships and capacity building to create systemic change for urban sustainability.

About the Building to Net-Zero Project (BNZ)

Local governments across Canada are adopting ambitious high-performance and net-zero-ready building energy frameworks. This is a crucial component of local climate action as the building sector is a substantial contributor of national greenhouse gas emissions. While adopting building energy performance frameworks presents challenges for any municipality, smaller, rural, and Northern municipalities face heightened barriers and constraints.

With this in mind, the Building to Net-Zero (BNZ) project supports small to mid-sized municipalities by building local capacity and helping to overcome barriers along these municipalities' journey to a net-zero future. BNZ is a four-year training and capacity-building project designed to support municipalities in the adoption of building energy performance frameworks. Through the BNZ project, municipalities, community partners, and industry experts have been working collaboratively to identify and overcome municipalities' unique adoption challenges, outlining a clear pathway towards net-zero energy for buildings.

About the BNZ Municipal Cohort

The BNZ Municipal Cohort is an active collaboration of small to mid-sized municipalities working to adopt building energy performance frameworks for new construction that align with Canada's national model energy codes. There are 12 cohort members involved in the project—cohort members include municipalities from Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, and Saskatchewan. Through one-on-one support, group learning sessions, and access to subject-matter experts in high-

performance buildings, the cohort is building local capacity and accelerating progress toward net-zero building goals. With ICLEI Canada's guidance, Cohort members have identified specific goals, barriers, and capacity gaps that have informed the development of tailored tools and resources. For many of these Cohort members, a key strategy emerging from this process has been the intention to create and implement voluntary GDS.

Strategic Requirements

The consultant will be expected to work in close collaboration with ICLEI Canada and BNZ Cohort members to provide specialized training and guidance on the development of GDS tailored to the needs of 12 cohort members (comprised of small to mid-sized municipalities). These standards may vary by region and municipality, depending on local context, authority, and political readiness. The consultant should demonstrate:

- Familiarity with local government authorities and jurisdictional differences across Canadian provinces, including how municipalities may move forward despite uncertain and evolving policy landscapes;
- Understanding of national model codes (e.g., National Building Code, National Energy Code for Buildings) and how they relate to municipal powers;
- Expertise in green development standards, including strategies that enhance the effectiveness of voluntary approaches;
- Experience facilitating participatory design processes, preferably within a municipal planning or sustainability context; and,
- An ability to produce outputs that are practically implementable and politically feasible for smaller municipalities.

Contract Term

Winning proponents shall execute the deliverables beginning in January 2026 and ending in March 2027. Proponents should anticipate spending a maximum of CAD \$200,000 (inclusive of HST) over the course of the contract. Of this amount, \$123,000 must be spent by December 31, 2026, with the remaining funds to be used in early 2027. Proposals should reflect this phased spending schedule.

SERVICES

General Scope of Services

ICLEI Canada is seeking a contractor to design and deliver virtual training sessions, facilitate an in-person/hybrid collaborative design workshop, and work closely with BNZ Cohort municipalities to co-develop practical and locally relevant GDS. They will also provide strategic advice on implementation approaches and produce draft GDS documents and supporting materials tailored to each municipality's context. Collaboration with ICLEI Canada, cohort members, and project partners will be essential throughout the process.

In addition to these responsibilities, ICLEI Canada is coordinating with another partner organization to deliver parallel training for builders and municipal staff during the course

of this initiative. This complementary work will align with the consultant's scope and help reinforce the impact of the GDS development process. ICLEI Canada will also support delivery of the main workshop and facilitate coordination among cohort members and project partners.

Key Individuals

Successful proponents must ensure the individuals included in submissions are those completing the work, with accurate levels of effort in days or hours per key individual included in submissions. No substitutions will be permitted without the prior approval of ICLEI Canada.

Description of Service Deliverables

The following deliverables are expected as part of the consultant's work:

1. Training Design and Delivery

Development and delivery of training sessions (virtual) with the full cohort (1-2 sessions total) focused on the fundamentals of GDS, examples of effective voluntary and incentive-based models, and implementation considerations for small- to mid-sized municipalities.

→ These sessions will take place in early 2026.

2. Facilitated Design Workshop

Planning and delivery of one extended in-person or hybrid workshop involving full cohort, with breakout sessions organized by regional and jurisdictional similarities (4-5 groups total). The workshop will guide participants through a collaborative design process to inform the structure, content, and implementation pathways for their tailored GDS. ICLEI Canada will support this process by helping to facilitate, coordinate, and plan the workshop in collaboration with the selected consultant. Travel costs for cohort members will be covered by ICLEI Canada.

→ This workshop is anticipated for spring 2026.

3. Cohort Member-Specific Draft GDS

Development of a draft GDS for each participating cohort member (12 draft GDS total), incorporating input from training and design sessions. Each draft should be suitable for review and presentation at the council level.

→ Drafts will be developed over summer and fall 2026.

4. Policy Tools and Incentive Options Guide

A concise strategy document for each municipality that outlines recommended incentives and implementation approaches for their draft GDS (12 strategy documents total). Strategies will be informed by cohort discussions and should include actionable suggestions such as integration into development approval processes, permitting workflows, or planning policy updates.

→ Drafts will be developed over summer and fall 2026.

5. Municipal Advisory Sessions

One-on-one advisory sessions with each participating cohort member (12 cohort members total) to review their draft GDS and suggested implementation strategy. These sessions will provide municipalities with tailored feedback, answer questions, and offer guidance on next steps for refining or advancing their GDS toward council consideration. It is expected that consultants will incorporate two rounds of feedback per municipality—at least one of which may be written—to ensure that the final GDS products are well-tailored, actionable, and aligned with the needs of each cohort member.

→ These final sessions, as well as any revisions, will take place in early 2027.

Annex A: Associations between consultants

Consultants may apply as individual organizations or consortiums and are encouraged to associate with each other in the form of joint ventures or sub-consultancy agreements to complement their respective areas of expertise, strengthen the responsiveness of their proposals and make available bigger pools of experts, provide better approaches and if possible lower prices. If consultants choose to use a joint venture, the association should appoint one of the firms to represent the association; all members of the joint venture shall sign the contract.

Annex B: Bid Content Requirements

All sections of the proposal must be completed, including:

- A. Understanding of the Assignment (1-2 pages):** Summarize your understanding of the cohort's needs, the purpose of GDS, and the municipal and jurisdictional context.
- B. Firm Experience (1-2 pages):** Briefly describe your organization's relevant experience working with municipalities on GDS or related planning and sustainability initiatives. Please be sure to include references.
- C. Staff Experience (1-2 pages):** List key personnel, their roles, and highlight relevant experience in GDS development, facilitation, or municipal planning. CVs should be provided as appendices.
- D. Budget (1 page):** Provide a clear and concise budget, broken down by deliverable or activity, within the maximum project cap.
- E. Methodology and workplan (3-4 pages):** Outline your proposed approach, timeline, and how it responds to the needs of small to mid-sized municipalities.