

Request for Proposals: Unlocking Finance for Black Carbon Mitigation in Key Sectors

Summary

Clean Air Fund is seeking expert support to help identify and unlock finance to reduce emissions from major black carbon emitting sectors.

The scope of this Request for Proposal will involve:

- a) Developing and implementing a curated convening with finance actors (including Multilateral Development Banks, Development Finance Institutions, and Private Finance) and allied black carbon solutions stakeholders, and
- b) Using the learnings from the scoping and convening to develop a brief working paper that maps pathways and near-term opportunities to accelerate the financing of black carbon mitigation solutions.

Applicants should have strong expertise and working knowledge of international, regional and national finance mechanisms as well as technical knowledge about black carbon emissions and its solutions.

This RFP has been initiated by the Clean Air Fund Super Pollutants Portfolio. Interested agencies are encouraged to submit a proposal for this funding answering the requirements provided in Section 6.

Proposal submission deadline: **26th June 2026, 17:00 BST**. Funding amount: Up to **US\$ 50,000**.

1. Background to Clean Air Fund and its Super Pollutants Programme

Launched in 2019, 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 Clean Air Fund can be found on our website:

www.cleanairfund.org.

Clean Air Fund has a programme of work targeting action on super pollutants (also known as short-lived climate pollutants). Through this work, we are supporting and advocating air pollution and climate change to be tackled together and

delivering high-impact projects to help mitigate near-term warming¹, avoid climate tipping points² and reduce the chronic health impacts of air pollution³.

A key focus of our work on super pollutants is on black carbon (see more details [here](#)). Black carbon plays a unique role at the intersection of climate and health as both a climate pollutant and an air pollutant. It is a key component of particulate matter air pollution, and it contributes to global warming. On a regional scale, it is also responsible for disrupting precipitation patterns and accelerating melting of snow and ice. Some measures to cut emissions from black carbon-rich sources present opportunities to deliver near-term climate change mitigation, avoid climate tipping points, and achieve clean air. Clean Air Fund has launched two reports: '[The Case for Action on Black Carbon](#)' and '[Tackling Black Carbon: How to unlock fast climate and clean air benefits](#)', highlighting feasible solutions to reduce black carbon emissions. More information about the programme and black carbon-rich solutions is available here: [Black Carbon Hub](#).

The vision of Clean Air Fund's three-year multi-million-dollar programme of work is to realise 35% global black carbon emissions reductions by 2030 from a 2010 baseline. As part of this program, Clean Air Fund is undertaking two complementary approaches. First, Clean Air Fund is committed to provide financial support to pilot implementation projects targeting black carbon and black carbon-rich emission sources. Second, it is working to catalyse and advocate for increased international finance, particularly from Multi-Development Banks, Development Finance Institutions, Inter-Governmental Agencies, Regional and National Banks, Philanthropy, Public and Private Finance, for black carbon mitigation solutions.

2. Context to the project

Black carbon (more commonly known as soot) is a powerful climate and air pollutant and comprises of visible, dark fumes emitted from incomplete combustion of carbon-based fuels, solid waste and biomass burning. It is a short-lived climate pollutant with devastating climate and health impacts and is one of the most significant contributors to historic global warming after CO₂. Its influence extends beyond temperature rise - black carbon accelerates snow and ice melt in fragile cryosphere regions, fuels Arctic amplification, and disrupts local weather systems. From a public health perspective, black carbon exposure is linked to severe cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, adverse birth outcomes, and premature deaths. Its broader economic toll is equally staggering, contributing to

¹ Dreyfus, Gabrielle B., et al. "Mitigating climate disruption in time: A self-consistent approach for avoiding both near-term and long-term global warming." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 119.22 (2022): e2123536119. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2123536119>

² Ritchie, Paul DL, et al. "Tipping points: Both problem and solution." *One Earth* 6.12 (2023): 1610-1613. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oneear.2023.11.016>

³ [https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ambient-\(outdoor\)-air-quality-and-health](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ambient-(outdoor)-air-quality-and-health)

the estimated \$8 trillion annual global cost of air pollution, with the poorest and most marginalized populations disproportionately affected⁴.

Reducing black carbon alongside other pollutants can be one of the fastest, most effective way to achieve near-term climate gains while improving air quality, public health and economies. There are proven solutions to reduce black carbon, making a 70% reduction in black carbon technically feasible by 2030 (against 2010 baseline levels)⁵. Yet progress remains constrained due to critical financing gaps - there is a lack of dedicated and targeted funding for black carbon mitigation which makes it challenging for countries, particularly those which are resource constrained.

According to State of Global Air Funding 2025⁶, international development funding targeting major sources of black carbon has fluctuated significantly between 2019 and 2023. The highest recorded funding was in 2019 at \$975 million, but by 2023 this figure had fallen to \$824 million, a 15% decline over five years. Moreover, the funding landscape is extremely concentrated - approximately 50% of total black carbon funding for 2019-2023 came from Asian Development Bank and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. This concentration indicates limited engagement from other major Multi-Development Banks, bilateral funders, and philanthropies, despite the pollutant's role in accelerating near-term climate change, driving glacier melt, and worsening health inequities. Total black carbon funding therefore represents only a small portion of the already limited climate finance and air quality funding.

Hence, this Request for Proposals aims to address the persistent shortfall in funding for black carbon mitigation by: a) exploring opportunities to scale international development and private finance within specific key black carbon-rich sources, and b) bringing together different finance and black carbon solutions stakeholders to translate finance ideas into action.

3. Project scope

Clean Air Fund is seeking expertise to develop a focused, application-oriented project that builds on existing Clean Air Fund-funded work on clean air finance (such as ongoing work on financing mechanisms for clean air, and an [air quality toolkit for development finance institutions](#)). The selected service provider will apply the existing knowledge on clean air finance to specific black carbon

⁴ Clean Air Fund (2025). Tackling Black Carbon: How to Unlock Fast Climate and Clean Air Benefits. London: Clean Air Fund. https://s40026.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/Tackling-Black-Carbon-How-to-unlock-fast-climate-and-clean-air-benefits_low.pdf

⁵ Clean Air Fund (2025). The State of Global Air Quality Funding Report 2025. London: Clean Air Fund. <https://s40026.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/The-State-of-Global-Air-Quality-Funding-2025.pdf>

⁶ *ibid*

mitigation opportunities and bring together relevant stakeholders to explore practical ways for financing and implementation.

The emphasis of this project is not to develop new financing instruments and pathways or develop fully formed ‘bankable projects’/investment deals. Instead, the focus of this project would be to:

- Demonstrate how realistic financing approaches can be applied to sectoral use cases for black carbon mitigation, and
- Convene relevant stakeholders to test, refine and advance the financial pathways.

Key activities include:

1. Black Carbon Finance Convening (Core Component): The central component of this project is the design and delivery of at least one curated convening that brings together key stakeholders in the finance and implementation domains to discuss the applicability and potential for future financing commitments with regard to the identified sectoral black carbon mitigation pathways.

- a) Pre-Read Development: As part of the convening preparation, the service provider is expected to develop a brief policy paper for the Black Carbon Finance Convening (not more than five pages), by utilising the information available from the work funded by Clean Air Fund on clean air finance. Key components of the analysis could include identifying a limited number of priority mitigation actions within black carbon-rich sources, illustrating how existing financing mechanisms could be applied to these actions in practice, and present indicative solution-finance pathways to anchor convening discussions. Indicative focus areas include but not limited to Heavy Duty vehicles, Off Road Machinery, Wildfires (other black carbon-rich sources are also available for consideration). Priority geographies are to be agreed upon after selection.
- b) Convening: The convening itself should bring together key finance and implementation stakeholders to discuss solution-finance pathways for black carbon mitigation, identify barriers and enabling conditions, as well as explore potential areas for follow-on collaboration such that some of these pathways can be developed into ‘bankable solutions’ in the future. The service provider would be responsible for delivering an end-to-end ‘convening package’ including participation identification and engagement (in collaboration with Clean Air Fund), development of the agenda and session design, preparation and circulation of the pre-read, venue identification and logistics, facilitation of the convening, along with synthesis of key insights and discussion points. The convening may take place as an in-person/hybrid side-event at a global forum to attract the attention of the key audience (e.g. COP 31, New York Climate Week etc.)

which is to be decided in close collaboration with the Clean Air Fund Super Pollutants Portfolio.

Key stakeholders include but not limited to: Multilateral Development Banks, Development Finance Institutions, and Private Finance, relevant Government bodies, technical experts on black carbon sectoral solutions, implementation partners (including those who have relevant ongoing or completed projects).

- 2. Post-Convening Synthesis:** Following the convening, the service provider is expected to produce a brief synthesis note (not more than 10 pages) with annexes containing additional information, for instance country and/or sector specific information. This note should capture the key, feasible solution-finance pathways discussed for the identified black carbon mitigation actions, varied stakeholder perspectives on feasibility, barriers and opportunities, and recommended next steps for Clean Air Fund.

4. Intended outcomes and timelines

The longer-term intended outcome from this project is increased financial flows to sectoral black carbon mitigation solutions, including from the private sector, resulting in 35% global black carbon emissions reductions by 2030 from a 2010 baseline.

The short-term intended outcome is improved clarity on how specific black carbon mitigation solutions in priority sectors can be financed, including credible financing pathways, relevant mechanisms, and the types of finance and implementation actors most likely to engage.

The service provider is expected to be identified by mid-July 2026 and to be contracted by end-July 2026/early August 2026. We expect to complete the project by end-December 2026/January 2027.

5. Who could apply

The service provider can be an individual(s) or a company (charity/legal entity/other organisation) or consortia of interested organisations. The organisation/individual(s)/company/consortia should possess relevant credentials and experience including deep knowledge of environmental economics and finance; experience working with international financing institutions; demonstrable expertise in financing mechanisms and platforms; experience and managing and monitoring financing of environment or nature-related programs; track record of producing clear, articulate and compelling reports in English. Preference will be given to organisation/individual(s)/company/consortia who have relevant and/or prior experience of working on air pollution, climate change and/or experience in the relevant sectors.

6. How to submit your proposal

Please compile your responses by answering the following requirements.

- Proposals should not exceed eight pages, excluding company profile and team profiles, setting out how the core deliverables will be approached.
- The proposal should demonstrate the service providers' proposed approach and understanding of the application-focused and convening led nature of this project. The service provider should outline their approach to this work by: a) providing a methodology for applying existing clean air finance knowledge to specific black carbon sectoral use cases, b) providing a structure for how the convening-led approach can be operationalised.
- The proposal should also clearly highlight a clear and well-structured plan for the Black Carbon Finance Convening including: the approach to the agenda and session design, facilitation approach to ensure engagement around the solution-finance applications, workplan and timeline. It would be also helpful to include a tentative stakeholder list, including indicative organisations or experts to be invited.
- Relevant experience, including work with finance actors and/or clean air/climate/super pollutant solutions should be provided. As and where possible, also mention ongoing or completed project descriptions that has been done by the organisation/individual(s)/company/consortia which is relevant to this scope – including sectoral finance work, finance pathway development, convening design and facilitation.
- Proposed Team Composition and Roles (CVs as annex)
- Summary budget breakup (e.g. fees, research costs, travel, convening costs, logistics and venue costs, and taxes). Please note that the budget is limited to \$50,000.

The deadline for submission is Friday **26th June 2026, 17:00 BST**. The proposal must be submitted via email to superpollutants@cleanairfund.org.

If you have any questions, please contact us on superpollutants@cleanairfund.org before the submission deadline by 19th June 2026.

7. Selection process

All submitted proposals will be reviewed and scored against pre-selected scoring criteria by a team of at least three reviewers. Only shortlisted organisations from the proposals will be contacted to discuss the potential for a full project proposal, including budget and/or interview.

Funding will be made available for only one project. However, the proposals with greatest potential will be kept in our records and shared with our broader network for future funding opportunities.

Please note that the final selected project is expected to **start ideally by end July 2026**.

8. Timeline

Activity	Deadline
Publishing of the Request for Proposal	29th May 2026
Questions/clarifications	19th June 2026
Deadline for Proposal submission	26th June 2026 (17:00 BST)
Review of proposals (including interviews with shortlisted consultancies)	27 th June – 12 th July 2026
Final CAF decision and notification	Expected by 13th July 2026