

Clean Air Fund AAQD Contribution Evaluation

Request for proposals March 2024

We are seeking specialist expertise to conduct an evaluation of the Clean Air Fund's contribution to the European Union Ambient Air Quality Directive (AAQD). The consultant/firm will have demonstrated experience working with INGOs or preferably foundations, to evaluate contributions to complex policy outcomes and developing results applicable to future policy engagement programming.

The consultant/firm will also have significant experience conducting evaluations using Process Tracing or Contribution Analysis methodologies. Familiarity with the Bellweather methodology would also be desirable. The consultant/firm should have an in-depth understanding of the political operating environment of the EU and the mechanics of how EU Directives are developed. Experience of working in the unique context of re-granting is also valuable.

Background to the 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](#).

Background to assignment

In 2022, the European Commission put forward a revision of the EU Ambient Air Quality Directive (AAQD) taking a series of recommendations to strengthen EU legislation. The Clean Air Fund recognised a window of opportunity to progress air quality, climate and health goals by working with stakeholders to encourage adoption of new, ambitious PM2.5 and NO2 concentration and emissions limits in a revised AAQD. As of March 2024, it is hoped that a final AAQD text can be agreed upon by the European Parliament and Council by mid-2024. Importantly, the agreement would be in place ahead of the next EU elections.

This AAQD revision is the world's first binding piece of legislation to mandate stronger alignment with WHO air quality guidelines in 27 EU countries, with the potential to impact substantial climate and health outcomes for 447 million people. The adoption of the AAQD is thus a core strategic outcome for the Clean Air Fund and its EU portfolio. The EU Portfolio has overseen more than a dozen grants to support efforts to ensure adoption of a strong AAQD. Further, the Portfolio developed relations with stakeholders in the European Commission, European Parliament, with Irish, French, Polish and Belgian officials working on the revision, as well as in Think Tanks and Philanthropy.

As with any legislative or policy change, success is dependent on an accumulation of efforts of many different actors coming together. It is often not possible to attribute changes to any specific action or stakeholder, but it is valuable for the Clean Air Fund to better understand how the change was achieved and to what extent our efforts contributed to this. It is important for the Clean Air Fund to be able to objectively

quantify its contribution towards this outcome. Lessons from this evaluation will inform our future EU strategy, and further advocacy and policy work across the Clean Air Fund.

Intended evaluation methodologies

There are several potential approaches which are suitable to give us the insight required to quantify our contribution to the outcome. We are open to consider different options but would like the evaluation to be based on either Contribution Analysis or Process Tracing, combined with at least one further methodology and agreed as part of the inception phase:

Contribution Analysis and Process Tracing

These methodologies are well suited to the evaluation of complex policy interventions and can help understand the relative contribution of a given set of actors within an area of change. Both options will seek to establish to what extent, and how, the Clean Air Fund and partner interventions influenced specific outcomes regarding the AAQD. This will be based on a hypothesised change process (expected to be reflected as a Theory of Change) with evidence generated to support or refute the theory and develop alternative or supplementary explanations for how change might have occurred.

Bayesian Confidence Updating

An integration of Bayesian Confidence Updating may also be used, to give further rigour to the evaluation results.

Bellwether Methodology

We would also like to consider - where possible and appropriate - introducing adapted elements of the Bellwether methodology. This would involve an update to the methodology to have a retrospective focus, while still giving room for a wide range of unprompted responses from carefully selected external stakeholders ('bellwethers'). This will further support the evaluation to form an objective judgement of the extent of Clean Air Fund's contribution.

Outcome Harvesting

Finally, the methodology may also include elements of outcome harvesting, if felt relevant.

We are open to any other methodologies and suggestions that would be appropriate for evaluation of complex policy interventions.

Scope of proposed evaluation

This evaluation will explore:

1. The contribution of the Clean Air Fund's direct delivery projects to the revision of the AAQD.
2. The contribution of grants/projects funded by the Clean Air Fund to the revision of the AAQD.
3. The contribution of these efforts combined to the adoption of the revised AAQD.
4. Lessons learned from the above, specifically, how the Clean Air Fund might replicate any successes/ avoid repetition of approaches that were less effective.

Out of scope will be assessment or modelling of the potential climate and health impacts of the future transposition of the AAQD into national legislation.

Evaluation objectives

The evaluation has four key objectives.

1. To determine and agree the outcome of the Clean Air Fund's work regarding the AAQD.

- In line with the proposed methodologies, the evaluation will first refine, finalise and obtain consensus amongst the Clean Air Fund team regarding an agreed outcome concerning the revised AADQ, against which to work from to understand our contribution. The development of this outcome will build on preparatory work undertaken by the Clean Air Fund staff and will include detail about the alignment of the AAQD to interim WHO limit values. This outcome will be objectively validated and an assessment made of how positive the outcome is.

2. To assess how and to what extent the Clean Air Fund's efforts contributed to promoting ambitions towards WHO alignment within the AAQD.

- The evaluation will develop evidence which enables an understanding of the relative role which the Clean Air Fund played, across direct delivery work as well as work in partnership with grantees, in promoting interim WHO limit values (10 µg/m³ for PM_{2.5} and 20 µg/m³ for NO₂) by 2030 within the AAQD and how our promoting the AAQD contributed to the outcome.
- The evaluation will assess how and to what extent the Clean Air Fund's interventions contributed to the timeline of the AAQD process and develop evidence which enables an understanding of the role which the Clean Air Fund played in a deal being reached ahead of the upcoming EU elections.

3. To identify lessons to feed into the EU portfolio strategy refresh and future EU advocacy work, including any potential field building outcomes and unintended consequences.

- The evaluation will detail lessons and insights relevant to future policy and legislative change programming from the Clean Air Fund or technical assistance (TA) for implementation of AAQD by Member States.
- It will also specify applications of the evidence generated to the development of the next iteration of the Clean Air Fund's EU strategy. Doing so will help answer questions such as: should we remain focussed on advocacy for legislative changes at EU level? Should the Clean Air Fund offer TA support to a few Member States to design national policies for implementation of AAQD or other policy directives in future? What types of grants (across data, demand and drive) should the Clean Air Fund prioritise and what types have proven to be less effective? What should the Clean Air Fund continue to do, adapt and change?
- A key strategic pillar of our work relates to building the clean air ecosystem. Anecdotal evidence suggests that work under this Portfolio has contributed to building capacity and enabling the wider work of partner organisations. Therefore, the evaluation will seek to document and evidence the Clean Air Fund's contributions to change relating to the wider clean air ecosystem in the EU and amongst grantee organisations.
- The evaluation will also capture any other indirect outcomes and consequences (positive and negative) of the Clean Air Fund's portfolio of interventions in this space.

Primary and secondary evaluation users

- The primary users of the evaluation outputs will be the EU Portfolio team, SLT members and funders.
- Secondary users will be other Portfolio team members which include advocacy and legislative change elements within their work.

Anticipated deliverables and key dates

The project is expected to be completed by June the 30th, 2024. A summary of the deliverables and key dates are outlined below:

Deliverables	Tentative date (week commencing)
A brief evaluation plan, outlining the proposed approach, timelines, and collaboration between the evaluation team and the Clean Air Fund team members	29 th April
Internal workshops and interviews	From May 6 th
External workshops and interviews	From May 13 th
Validation and recommendations workshop	June 3 rd
First draft report	June 17 th
Finalised evaluation report, 30 pages maximum length (excluding annexes) and including a standalone executive summary not exceeding 4 pages	June 24 th
Presentation to communicate the main finding and recommendations from the evaluation to SLT and the Clean Air Fund EU team	June 24 th (provisional)
Succinct summary presentation for wider the Clean Air Fund team	TBC

Evaluation budget

The budget ceiling for the evaluation is \$25,000.

Proposal format and requirements

The successful consultancy company or individual(s) will have a demonstrated track record of delivering similar activities for global organisations. We are looking for a consultancy company or individual(s) with the following:

- Experience of delivering successful Process Tracing or Contribution Analysis evaluations
- Strong understanding and experience of the EU policy environment
- Expert stakeholder management skills
- A track record of producing well-written, clear, engaging and action-focused evaluation reports and findings
- Strong strategic consultancy, planning, assessment and analysis skills
- Demonstrative experience of working with philanthropic organisations
- Comfort and experience with evaluation for complex advocacy programming

- Excellent communication skills (both verbal and written)
- Experience and a commitment to equity in MEL
- Ability to work to tight deadlines.

Applicants should provide:

- A CV and cover letter detailing the skills and experience of consultants relevant to this evaluation.
- An expanded set of proposed activities, deliverables, and associated deadlines to meet the evaluation objectives.
- A budget with activity and cost breakdown.
- We would be interested in receiving a relevant sample of previous work.

Timeline and submission

The deadline for submission of proposals is end of day (UK BST) April 19, 2024. Proposals must be submitted via email to tnelson@cleanairfund.org

After the application deadline the Clean Air Fund will review proposals and engage with preferred suppliers to expand on the project objectives and approach, and to develop an agreed set of activities and associated budget before contracting. Submissions may be shared with partner stakeholders such as the Clean Air Fund Monitoring, Evaluations, and Learning Advisory Board.

Activity	Date
Deadline for questions	12 th April 2024
Deadline for proposals	19 th April 2024
Interview with shortlisted companies/individuals	Week of the 22 nd April 2024
Decision on preferred bidder	Week of the 22 nd April 2024
Contracting and project start	29 th April 2024
Deadline for completing the work	30 th June 2024