



INSTITUTE FOR  
Sustainable  
Communities



# Request for Proposal

Institute for Sustainable Communities  
Human Centered Design Consultant

UPDATED December 9, 2024

**ISSUED BY:**

Institute for Sustainable Communities  
535 Stone Cutters Way  
Montpelier, VT 05602

**REPRESENTATIVE:**

Rebecca Kaduru, President  
Lauren Dennis, Associate Chief of Staff

# Introduction

The Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC), founded in 1991, is a climate organization with a mission to create equitable, climate change solutions around the world. We do this by forming collaborative, people-focused partnerships that support communities disproportionately impacted by the global climate crisis. For more than 30 years, ISC has utilized a unique, bottom-up approach to ensure solutions emerge from within communities, rather than being imposed from the outside.

Through a deep understanding of and commitment to communities that are the least likely to cause global climate change yet face the highest impacts, ISC develops creative and inclusive solutions, demonstrated in our work in the US and Asia. We actively partner with frontline organizations, subnational governments, and the private sector to co-create programs that support underinvested communities, women, and people experiencing poverty who comprise the global majority. ISC remains cognizant of communities' varying needs, and we tailor our approach to support those needs. We believe equity and inclusion are fundamental to building healthy, prosperous, and peaceful communities and are committed to furthering equitable climate action. ISC is implementing programs in the U.S. and Asia. Learn more at [sustain.org](https://sustain.org).



## Background & Project Description

This year ISC conducted an in depth review of its strategy and updated the Strategic Plan for 2025 - 2029. One of the major goals ISC has set to accomplish in this plan is to strengthen its impact and efficiency by standardizing, codifying, and consistently implementing its operating model. ISC has a long history of centering communities in its programs and working alongside them to create tailored solutions to the impacts of climate change, but has not prioritized systematizing those solutions in a way to make them easily replicable. The objectives of this project are to develop a human-centered design toolkit that supports equitable, efficient, and uniform implementation of ISC's process across many types of programs and geographies.



## Project Scope

Bidders will address the following key deliverables as part of their scope of work. We expect the successful bidder to:

1. Conduct a landscape analysis of organizations doing similar work, noting those with similar stakeholders, and identify ISC's niche.
2. Conduct an internal review of ISC's past and present programs to identify tools currently used to assess stakeholder needs and wants and co-create equitable climate solutions.
3. Build a stepwise system to map ISC's internal processes for engaging with program stakeholders to work equitably (the "ISC Way").
4. Develop a human-centered design toolkit that supports equitable, efficient, and uniform implementation of ISC's process across many types of projects, including discovery, design, delivery and measurement.
5. Develop a methodology for the toolkit to inform staff on how to tailor the resources for individual programs, user types, and project stages.
6. Develop training plans to inform staff, consultants and partners how to effectively utilize the toolkit and ensure quality implementation of the "ISC Way" across the organization and full program suite.

Please note, that this list is not meant to be exhaustive but a highlight of the steps we believe are most important to this work. Please include any additional steps or priorities you normally undertake.



# RFP & Project Timelines

The Request for Proposal timeline is as follows:

Request for Proposal Issuance	December 19, 2024
RFP Deadline	January 29, 2025 *Applications submitted before January 15 will be reviewed early and prioritized
Selection of Top Bidders	February 5
Interviews with Top 2-3 Finalists	February 10 - 14
Contract Award / Notification to Unsuccessful Bidders	February 19
Anticipated Project Start Date	March 3

ISC anticipates the timeline for project completion being between 8 to 10 months. **Please propose a timeline for the scope of work in your submission.**



## Budget

ISC’s budget for the project is \$225,000 for toolkit creation, process mapping and staff training plan. ISC has allocated an additional \$25,000 for continued staff training in 2026.



# Submission Guidelines & Requirements

The selected firm or individual will:

1. Has experience working with historically underrepresented communities, preferably in the United States and Internationally.
2. Have a project team that is certified or has demonstrated experience in Human Centered Design methodology.
3. Ability to work across multiple time zones, potentially working outside of the standard 9 AM - 5 PM.
4. Hold Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as central to their core values.
5. Ability to complete the scope of the project from March 2025 - December 2025.

Interested firms or individuals must provide the following information:

1. Qualifications demonstrating they can perform the requested activities.
2. A scope of work inclusive of the stated goals, activities, and deliverables along with the proposed timeline.
3. An initial cost estimate.
4. A representative sample of 3-4 similar clients that we may contact for reference.

**Deadline for Submission: January 29, 2025**

**To submit your proposal:** Interested consultants should submit the requested information via email to **Lauren Dennis, [ldennis@sustain.org](mailto:ldennis@sustain.org)** with RFP - Human Centered Design Submission in the subject line, by **5 pm ET on January 29, 2024.**



## Evaluation Factors

ISC will rate proposals based on the following factors:

1. Responsiveness to the requirements outlined in this Request for Proposal.
2. Relevant past performance/experience.
3. Samples of work.
4. Cost.
5. Expertise/experience of bidder and bidder's staff.