TENDER FILE / TERMS OF REFERENCE

(Competitive bidding procedure / Framework Contract)

Purchase of intellectual services in the field of strengthening capacities to address economic crime and implement AML/CFT preventive measures, within the framework of the project "Countering Money Laundering in Albania"

Contract N° ECCD-VC-CMLA-AL-2026-CBP 02

The Council of Europe is currently implementing the project on "Countering Money Laundering in Albania", jointly funded by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the Council of Europe and implemented by the Council of Europe. The project aims to strengthen the prevention of and fight against money laundering (ML) and terrorist financing (TF) in Albania through a strategic and risk-based approach, with a view to consolidating the implementation of anti-money laundering (AML) and counter terrorist financing (CFT) policies and strengthening the capacities of non-financial businesses and professions to manage economic crime risks

A. TENDER RULES

This tender procedure is a competitive bidding procedure. **In accordance with Rule 1395 of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on the procurement procedures of the Council of Europe[1], the Organisation shall invite to tender at least three potential providers for any purchase between €2,000 (or €6,000 for intellectual services) and € 184,000 tax exclusive.**

This specific tender procedure aims at concluding a **framework contract** for the provision of deliverables described in the Act of Engagement (See attached). A tender is considered valid for 180 calendar days as from the closing date for submission. The selection of tenderers will be made in the light of the criteria indicated below. All tenderers will be informed in writing of the outcome of the procedure.

The tenderer must be either a natural person, a legal person or consortium of natural and/or legal person.

Bids shall be submitted via the e-procurement platform. Any bids received by email or letter will be rejected automatically.

All questions relating to this call for tenders must be submitted via the e-procurement platform, in English, no later than 15/09/2026. Questions sent by e-mail or post will not be processed.

Answers will be published on the e-procurement platform. You will be notified by e-mail when answers have been published.

We recommend that you register on the platform as soon as possible and select the "interested" option in the tool. This will enable you to receive email notifications of any changes to the call for tenders.

Please be advised that your account must be created on the platform and validated by the Council of Europe. The validation process may take up to one working day. If you are submitting an offer for the first time, **please start the registration process as soon as possible.**

Type of contract ►	Framework Contract
Duration ►	Until 31 August 2029
Deadline for submission of tenders/offers ►	**21 September 2026** 16h00 (Strasbourg time)
E-procurement link for submission of tenders/offers ►	https://eproc.coe.int/callfortenders/11835#details
E-procurement link for questions ►	https://eproc.coe.int/callfortenders/11835#details
Expected starting date of execution ►	21 October 2026

[1] The activities of the Council of Europe are governed by its Statute and its internal Regulations. Procurement is governed by the Financial Regulations of the Organisation and by Rule 1395 of 20 June 2019 on the procurement procedures of the Council of Europe.

B. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

Background of the Project

The project "Countering Money Laundering in Albania", is co-funded by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) with a duration of 48 months, until August 2029. The project aims to strengthen the prevention of and fight against money laundering (ML) and terrorist financing (TF) in Albania through a strategic and risk-based approach, with a view to consolidating the implementation of AML/CFT policies and strengthening the capacities of relevant public authorities, supervisory bodies and private-sector entities to identify, assess and mitigate ML/TF risks.

The Council of Europe is looking for a maximum of 16 Providers (provided enough tenders meet the criteria indicated below) in order to support the implementation of the project with a particular expertise on strengthening the capacities of Albanian authorities and professionals in financial intelligence analysis, investigation and prosecution of ML/TF and related economic crimes, and the development and alignment of AML/CFT legislative, supervisory and compliance frameworks with EU and international standards.

This Contract is currently estimated to cover up to 10 activities, to be held by 31st of August 2029. This estimate is for information only and shall not constitute any sort of contractual commitment on the part of the Council of Europe. The Contract may potentially represent a higher or lower number of activities, depending on the evolving needs of the Organisation.

For information purposes only, the total budget of the project amounts to 1,177,778 Euros and the total amount of the object of present tender **shall not exceed 75,000 Euros tax exclusive** for the whole duration of the Framework Contract. This information does not constitute any sort of contractual commitment or obligation on the part of the Council of Europe.

Lots

The present tendering procedure aims to select Provider(s) to support the implementation of the project and is divided into the following lots:

Lots	Maximum number of Providers to be selected
Lot 1: Strategic analysis	2
Lot 2: Investigation and prosecution of economic crimes	8
Lot 3: AML/CFT policy, supervision and compliance frameworks	6

Lot 1: Strategic analysis concerns the provision of intellectual services aimed at strengthening the capacity of Financial Intelligence Agency (FIA) of Albania to conduct effective strategic analysis of money laundering (ML) and terrorist financing (TF) risks and trends. Experts are expected to provide gap assessments and capacity development on the design and application of methodologies, analytical tools and approaches for identifying emerging ML/TF threats, patterns and vulnerabilities. Their support will focus on enhancing FIAs' ability to analyse available financial and other relevant information, identify trends and typologies, assess risks and produce strategic intelligence to inform national AML/CFT policies and risk-based decision-making.

Lot 2: Investigation and prosecution of economic crimes concerns the provision of intellectual services aimed at strengthening the capacities of competent authorities to investigate and prosecute economic and financial crime, including ML, TF and related predicate offences. Experts will be expected to provide practical guidance, development of operational procedures and specialised training on financial investigations for law enforcement authorities (including customs, police service), modern investigative techniques and methodologies, good practices in prosecution and adjudication, as well as inter-agency cooperation and information exchange. Relevant areas may include, but are not limited to, ML involving virtual assets and virtual assets service providers (VASPs), online fraud and other technology enabled financial crime, cross-border movement of cash and high-value goods, ML by professionals, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, and laundering proceeds of corruption and tax fraud.

Lot 3: AML/CFT policy, supervision and compliance frameworks concerns the provision of intellectual services aimed at strengthening national anti-money laundering (AML) and counter terrorist financing (CFT) legislative, policy and institutional frameworks and their alignment with EU acquis and international standards.

Experts are expected to provide legislative reviews, practical guidance and capacity development on risk-based AML/CFT supervision of financial and non-financial sectors and compliance, including risk management methodologies and tools for supervisory authorities and obliged entities. Particular emphasis will be placed on strengthening the capacity of private sector professionals, particularly notaries, real estate agents, accountants and lawyers, to effectively implement AML/CFT obligations. This support will also cover beneficial ownership (BO) transparency and establishment of BO registries, through the development and enhancement of methodologies, guidelines and other practical tools.

The Council will select the abovementioned number of Provider(s) per lot, provided enough tenders meet the criteria indicated below. Tenderers are invited to indicate which lot(s) they are tendering for (see Section A of the Act of Engagement).

Only those Providers whose score, following the assessment of the Award Criteria (see Section E below), is equivalent to or higher than 60 will be selected under each Lot.

Scope of the Framework Contract

Throughout the duration of the Framework Contract, pre-selected Providers may be asked to:

Under Lot 1: Strategic analysis

- Drafting analytical reports (assessments, gap analysis, regulatory reviews)
- Delivering capacity building events (workshops, trainings, working meetings)
- Preparing training modules and training materials

Under Lot 2: Investigation and prosecution of economic crimes

- Developing or revising methodologies, guidelines, manuals, standart operational procedures and other operational tools;
- Delivering capacity building events (workshops, trainings, working meetings)
- Preparing training modules and training materials

Under Lot 3: AML/CFT policy, supervision and compliance frameworks

- Revising policy documents and legislative frameworks in the field of AML/CFT and providing recommendations for ensuring alignment with EU aquis and international standards.
- Developing or revising methodologies, guidelines and manuals on ML/TF risk management for supervisory authorities and obliged entities;
- Providing mentoring, coaching and specialised technical consultations;
- Delivering capacity building events (workshops, trainings, working meetings)
- Preparing training modules and training materials

The above list is not considered exhaustive. The Council reserves the right to request deliverables not explicitly mentioned in the above list of expected services, but related to the field of expertise object of the present Framework Contract for the lot concerned.

In terms of **quality requirements**, the pre-selected Service Providers must ensure*, inter alia*, that:

- The services are provided to the highest professional/academic standard;
- Any specific instructions given by the Council – whenever this is the case – are followed.

If contracted by the Council of Europe, the deliverables shall be provided personally by the persons identified in the offer of the Provider whose CVs have been presented to the Council of Europe (See section E. below), in accordance with the terms as provided in the present Tender File and Act of Engagement

In addition to the orders requested on an as needed basis, the Provider shall keep regular communication with the Council to ensure continuing exchange of information relevant to the project implementation. This involves, among others, to inform the Council as soon as it becomes aware, during the execution of the Contract, of any initiatives and/or adopted laws and regulations, policies, strategies or action plans or any other development related to the object of the Contract (see more on general obligations of the Provider in Article 3.1.2 of the Legal Conditions in the Act of Engagement).

Unless otherwise agreed with the Council, written documents produced by the Provider shall be in English (see more on requirements for written documents in Articles 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 of the Legal Conditions in the Act of Engagement).

C. FEES

Tenderers are invited to indicate their fees, by completing and sending the table of fees, as attached in Section A to the Act of Engagement. These fees are final and not subject to review. Tenders proposing fees above the exclusion level indicated in the Table of fees will be **entirely and automatically** excluded from the tender procedure.

The Council will indicate on each Order Form (see Section D below) the global fee corresponding to each deliverable, calculated on the basis of the unit fees, as agreed by this Contract.

D. HOW WILL THIS FRAMEWORK CONTRACT WORK? (ORDERING PROCEDURE)

Once the selection procedure is completed, you will be informed accordingly. Deliverables will then be delivered on the basis of Order Forms submitted by the Council to the selected Provider (s), by post or electronically, on **an as needed basis** (there is therefore no obligation to order on the part of the Council).

Pooling
For each Order, the Council will choose from the pool of pre-selected tenderers for the relevant lot the Provider who demonstrably offers best value for money for its requirement when assessed – for the Order concerned – against the criteria of:

- quality (including as appropriate: capability, expertise, past performance, availability of resources and proposed methods of undertaking the work);
- availability (including, without limitation, capacity to meet required deadlines and, where relevant, geographical location); and
- price.

Each time an Order Form is sent, the selected Provider undertakes to take all the necessary measures to send it **signed** to the Council within 2 (two) working days after its reception. If a Provider is unable to take an Order or if no reply is given on his behalf within that deadline, the Council may call on another Provider using the same criteria, and so on until a suitable Provider is contracted.

Providers subject to VAT
The Provider, **if subject to VAT**, shall also send, together with each signed Form, a quote[2] (Pro Forma invoice) in line with the indications specified on each Order Form, and including:

- the Service Provider's name and address;
- its VAT number;
- the full list of services;
- the fee per type of deliverables (in the currency indicated on the Act of Engagement, tax exclusive);
- the total amount per type of deliverables (in the currency indicated on the Act of Engagement, tax exclusive);
- the total amount (in the currency indicated on the Act of Engagement), tax exclusive, the applicable VAT rate, the amount of VAT and the amount VAT inclusive.

Signature of orders
An Order Form is considered to be legally binding when the Order, signed by the Provider, is approved by the Council, by displaying a Council's Purchase Order number on the Order, as well as by signing and stamping the Order concerned. Copy of each approved Order Form shall be sent to the Provider, to the extent possible on the day of its signature.

Delivery
Each deliverable has to be accompanied by the filled-out AI tool questionnaire.

E. ASSESSMENT

Exclusion criteria and absence of conflict of interests
(by submitting a tender, you declare on your honour not being in any of the below situations)[3]

[2] It must strictly respect the fees indicated in the Financial Offer attached to the original Provider's tender as recorded by the Council of Europe. In case of non-compliance with the fees as indicated in the original Provider's tender, the Council of Europe reserves the right to terminate the Contract with the Provider, in all or in part.
[3] The Council of Europe reserves the right to ask tenderers, at a later stage, to supply the following supporting documents:

Tenderers shall be excluded from participating in the tender procedure if they:

- have been sentenced by final judgment on one or more of the following charges: participation in a criminal organisation, corruption, fraud, money laundering, terrorist financing, terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, child labour or trafficking in human beings;
- are in a situation of bankruptcy, liquidation, termination of activity, insolvency or arrangement with creditors or any like situation arising from a procedure of the same kind, or are subject to a procedure of the same kind;
- have received a judgment with res judicata force, finding an offence that affects their professional integrity or serious professional misconduct;
- do not comply with their obligations as regards payment of social security contributions, taxes and dues, according to the statutory provisions of their country of incorporation, establishment or residence;
- are an entity created to circumvent tax, social or other legal obligations (empty shell company), have ever created or are in the process of creation of such an entity;
- have been involved in mismanagement of the Council of Europe funds or public funds;
- are or appear to be in a situation of an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest; a conflict of interests arises where any person has a personal interest which is such as to influence, or appear to influence, the impartial and objective exercise of their responsibilities under this procedure. A personal interest includes any advantage to themselves, their relatives or personal relationships (including based on political or national affinity), business or financial interests or any other interest shared with another party. If tenderers have any personal interests that are relevant to this tender procedure, **they must fully disclose these in a separate document submitted with the tender**;
- are retired Council of Europe staff members or are staff members having benefitted from an early departure scheme;
- are currently employed by the Council of Europe or were employed by the Council of Europe on the date of the launch of the procurement procedure;
- are subject to restrictive measures applied by the United Nations Security Council or the European Union. In the case of legal persons, the restrictive measures imposed on the tenderer's owner(s) or executives will also exclude the tenderer from participating in this tender procedure.

Eligibility criteria

The eligibility criteria determine the conditions for participating in a procurement procedure and define the essential requirements that each bidder must comply with. Bidders shall demonstrate that they fulfil the following criteria:

Eligibility criteria	Document/s to be submitted
Education (for all lots): University degree or professional certification in the field of law, political or social science, criminology; criminal justice; economics; information technology/cybersecurity or in a related field.	CV
Work experience: **Lot 1:** At least 5 years of relevant professional experience in the field of strategic analysis, ML/TF risk assessment, financial crime analysis or closely related areas. **Lot 2:** At least 5 years of experience in the field of investigation, prosecution or adjudication of economic crime, financial investigations, asset tracing and recovery, virtual assets/cryptocurrency-related investigations, cyber-enabled financial crime or closely related areas. **Lot 3:** At least 5 years of professional experience in AML/CFT risk-based supervision, regulation or compliance, including practical experience in applying risk-based approaches and assessing AML/CFT risks in line with international standards and EU requirements.	CV
Specific thematic expertise: **Lot 1:** confirmed expertise in providing consultancy to Financial Intelligence Units in the field of strategic analysis, including the design, review and/or implementation of methodologies, analytical tools and approaches for assessing ML/TF risks and trends, particularly in relation to the identification of emerging typologies and vulnerabilities and the drafting of strategic intelligence to support	CV Samples of previous work

- An extract from the record of convictions or failing that an equivalent document issued by the competent judicial or administrative authority of the country of incorporation, indicating that the first three and sixth above listed exclusion criteria are met;
- A certificate issued by the competent authority of the country of incorporation indicating that the fourth criterion is met;
- For legal persons, an extract from the companies register or other official document proving ownership and control of the Tenderer;
- For natural persons (including owners and executive officers of legal persons), a scanned copy of a valid photographic proof of identity (e.g. passport).

national AML/CFT policies and risk-based decision-making, as evidenced by the information included in the supporting documents. **Lot 2:** confirmed expertise in providing consultancy to law enforcement, prosecutorial and other competent authorities in the investigation and prosecution of economic and financial crime, including the design, review and/or implementation of financial investigation methodologies and investigative strategies, among others, in relation to ML/TF, asset tracing, virtual assets and cryptocurrencies, online fraud and other technology-enabled financial crimes, cross-border movement of cash and high-value goods, as evidenced by the information included in the supporting documents. **Lot 3:** confirmed expertise in providing consultancy on AML/CFT supervisory and compliance frameworks, including the design, review and/or implementation of AML/CFT legislation and policies, risk-based supervisory methodologies for financial and non-financial sectors, compliance tools, beneficial ownership transparency and registries, and AML/CFT obligations applicable to DNFBPs, as demonstrated by the supporting documentation provided.	
<u>Language skills (for all lots):</u> Written and spoken fluency in English (minimum level C1 on CoE CEFR), to be indicated in the CVs provided.	CV Samples of previous work

The above eligibility criteria will be assessed **on the basis of the documents listed in the table and, where relevant, on the basis of other supporting documents** listed in Section G.

For legal persons only: legal persons are requested to include in their bids the profiles of **a maximum of 2 (two)** natural persons proposed to be assigned to the contract. The status of each natural person included in the bid must be specified, and in particular whether they are employees or subcontractors. **Each natural person included in the bid will be assessed against the above eligibility criteria**. The Council reserves the right not to accept the inclusion in the contract of persons who do not meet the eligibility criteria or to reject a bid entirely if no profiles met the eligibility criteria.[4]

For consortia only: each consortium member **will be assessed against the eligibility criteria above**. Consortium members who are legal persons are requested to provide the profiles of a maximum of 2 (two) natural persons proposed to be assigned to the contract. The status of each natural person included in the bid must be specified, and in particular whether they are employees or subcontractors.

Each natural person included in the bid submitted by a consortium – whether as an individual consortium member or as a natural person attached to a legal person – will be assessed against the above eligibility criteria. The Council reserves the right not to accept the inclusion in the contract of persons who do not meet the eligibility criteria or to reject a bid entirely if no profiles meet the eligibility criteria.[5] For a consortium to be validly constituted, at least two consortium members must satisfy the eligibility criteria.

<u>Award criteria</u>

The award criteria aim at assessing the quality of a bid in order to **identify the bid/s offering the best value for money**. Eligible bids will be assessed against the following award criteria:

Award criteria	Document/s to be submitted
Quality of the offer (80 points), including: ○ Proven track record of practical achievements, knowledge and expertise in the area covered by the relevant lot, either by the natural persons or the persons assigned to the execution of the contract as a legal person (60 points); ○ Quality of samples of previous work submitted, including drafting skills (20 points)	- At least one sample of a previous written deliverable relevant to the scope of the tender, clearly evidencing its authorship and having been produced within the last five (5) years. Legal persons and consortia shall submit one such sample for each person assigned

[4] If awarded a contract, legal persons undertake to entrust the execution of order forms only to the persons approved by the Council for inclusion in the contract. If, during the period of validity of the contract, it becomes necessary to replace one or more of the persons included in the contract, the legal persons undertake to assign to the contract only persons who satisfy the eligibility criteria above and to inform the Council without delay.

[5] If awarded a contract, consortium members who are legal persons undertake to entrust the execution of order forms only to the persons approved by the Council for inclusion in the contract. If, during the period of validity of the contract, it becomes necessary to replace one or more of the persons included in the contract, consortium members who are legal persons undertake to assign to the contract only persons who satisfy the eligibility criteria above and to inform the Council without delay.

	to the execution of the contract; - Motivation letter demonstrating relevant experience, knowledge, and length of involvement in the area covered by the tender; - CV.
Financial offer (20 points)	Completed Act of Engagement

The above award criteria will be assessed based on the bidder's capacity, as outlined in the supporting document, or on the basis of a consolidated assessment of the combined capacity of all eligible profiles or consortium members if the bid is submitted by a legal person or a consortium.

Additional rules applicable to the submission and assessment of the bids

The bidders' attention is drawn to the following additional rules governing the assessment of the bids:

- The Council reserves the right to hold interviews with prima facie eligible tenderers;
- Unless expressly provided otherwise in the tender documents, a bidder may not submit more than one bid for the same procurement procedure. Bidding for more than one lot – where a contract is divided into lots – is allowed;
- In the same procurement procedure, natural person may not submit a bid on his/her own behalf and, at the same time, be included in a bid submitted by a legal person or a consortium. In such cases, the Council of Europe reserves the right to exclude the bid submitted by the natural person from the procurement procedure;
- In the same procurement procedure, a legal person may not submit a bid and, at the same time, be a member of a consortium also bidding under the same procurement procedure. In such cases, the Council of Europe reserves the right to exclude the bid submitted by the legal person from the procurement procedure;
- The Council reserves the right to reject any bid if, in its sole judgment, the financial offer is abnormally low or high. The Council may request clarification from the bidder before making its determination.

The Council reserves the right to hold interviews with tenderers.

F. NEGOTIATIONS

The Council reserves the right to hold negotiations with the bidders in accordance with Article 20 of Rule 1395.

G. DOCUMENTS TO BE PROVIDED

- **One** completed copy of the Act of Engagement;[6]
- A list of all owners and executive officers, for legal persons only;
- When relevant, a document disclosing the provider's personal interests that are relevant for this procedure, in compliance with the instructions laid down above under the 'Exclusion Criteria' above (Section 'Assessment');
- All the documents listed above, under Section E, necessary for the assessment of the bid under the eligibility and award criteria;
- A detailed CV, demonstrating clearly that the tenderer fulfils the eligibility criteria; legal persons and consortia shall submit CVs for each person assigned to the execution of the contract;
- Motivation letter demonstrating the tenderer's understanding of the Council of Europe needs as well as its compliance with the eligibility criteria listed above. The motivation letter shall also indicate the expertise of the Tenderer in the lots covered by the tender (1,5 pages maximum);
- At least one sample of a previous written deliverable in English, relevant to the scope of the tender, clearly evidencing its authorship and having been produced within the last five (5) years; legal persons and consortia shall submit one such sample for each person assigned to the execution of the contract.

All documents shall be submitted in English failure to do so will result in the exclusion of the tender. If any of the documents listed above are missing, the Council of Europe reserves the right to reject the tender.

The Council reserves the right to reject a tender if the scanned documents <u>are of such a quality that the documents cannot be read.</u>

* * *

[6] The Act of Engagement must be completed and uploaded, in Word format, on the e-procurement platform in its entirety (i.e. including all the pages).