



CALL FOR TENDERS

FOR THE PROVISION OF CONSULTANCY SERVICES ON ROMA INCLUSION POLICIES IN ALBANIA

(ROMA INTEGRATION PHASE III PROJECT – THEMATIC CONSULTANTS)

2023/AO/78

Object of the procurement procedure ▶	Consultancy services for thematic consultants on Roma inclusion policies in Albania
Project ▶	EU/CoE Joint Project - Roma Integration Phase III
Organisation and buying entity ▶	Council of Europe Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity (DGII) / Directorate of Programme Co-ordination (DPC)
Type of contract ▶	Framework Contract
Duration ▶	Until 30 April 2026 With possible extension until 30 April 2027
Expected starting date ▶	11 December 2023
Tender Notice Issuance date ▶	18 September 2023
Deadline for tendering ▶	09 October 2023 23h59 CET

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The TERMS OF REFERENCE describe what will be expected from the selected Providers.
- **The TENDER RULES**..... 10
The TENDER RULES explain the procedure through which the tenders will be submitted by the tenderers and assessed by the Council of Europe.
- **The ACT OF ENGAGEMENT (See Document attached)** is the document formalising the consent of the Parties to be bound by the LEGAL CONDITIONS, which are the legal provisions which will be applicable between the Council of Europe and the selected Providers. It also contains the TABLE OF FEES, which indicates the applicable fees, throughout the duration of the contract.

HOW DOES A FRAMEWORK CONTRACT WORK?

STAGE 1:

SELECTION of qualified Providers through a call for tenders and signature of a framework contract with all the pre-selected Providers.

STAGE 2:

ORDER(S) are addressed, on an as needed basis, throughout the duration of the contract, to the designated Provider(s).

EXECUTION as from the date of signature of each Order, unless the Order concerned provides otherwise.

HOW TO SUBMIT A TENDER?

STEP 1: Read the **TENDER FILE**

STEP 2: Complete the **ACT OF ENGAGEMENT** and collect the required **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**, as listed in section G of the terms of reference (below).

STEP 3: Send your **TENDER**, in accordance with the Tender Rules

PART I – TERMS OF REFERENCE

CALL FOR TENDERS

FOR THE PROVISION OF CONSULTANCY SERVICES ON ROMA INTERGATION POLICIES IN ALBANIA (ROMA INTEGRATION PHASE III PROJECT – THEMATIC CONSULTANTS)

2023/AO/78

A. BACKGROUND

The Roma Integration Phase III joint project of the Council of Europe and the European Commission aims to strengthen the capacities of governments in the Western Balkans and Türkiye in addressing the challenges faced by the Roma community. The initiative focuses on enhancing public policies in areas such as housing, employment, civil registration, and facilitating the green and digital transition.

The project will work closely with the governments in Western Balkans and Türkiye to develop and implement effective strategies and policies that promote social inclusion, equal opportunities, and improved living conditions for the Roma population. By bolstering these key policy areas, the project seeks to foster positive changes and create a more inclusive society for the Roma community in the region.

The Roma Integration III project builds on the work done by the Roma Action Team within the Regional Cooperation Council from 2016-2022 under the IPA projects, Roma Integration first two phases. It corresponds to the thematic priorities of the IPA III Programming Framework and the EU Enlargement policy. The rule of law priority envisages integration of marginalised communities such as Roma and combating discrimination. It also recognises Roma under social protection and inclusion and combating poverty. In addition, the new [EU Roma Strategic Framework For Equality, Inclusion and Participation](#) provides for a comprehensive three-pillar approach which complements the on-going efforts towards the socio-economic inclusion of Roma while also fostering equality and promoting participation in the public service and public life. The project will support the implementation of the new Roma integration strategies adopted by the governments from the Western Balkans in 2021-2022 and in Türkiye in 2023. Lastly, the project will support the organisation of the national Roma Seminars, national Platforms and the support of the National Roma Contact Points participation in the EU relevant Roma inclusion fora (Annual DG JUST Roma Platform, European Parliament Romani week and Council Presidency Roma inclusion event).

The Roma Integration III project will work within three areas of support:

1. The **mainstreaming of Roma issues in relevant public policies** and the **fight against antigypsyism**: antigypsyism is recognised and addressed through legislation, communication tools and institutions; the institutional capacities of public servants are built on combating antigypsyism.
2. Support to Roma **socio-economic integration** and Roma equality in the areas of housing, education, employment, health, civil registration, and in the green and digital transition: employment of Roma is encouraged both in public and private sector; legalisation of informal settlements progresses in the Beneficiaries and is encouraged to be included among the priorities of the central-level governments; civil registration is resolved; the implementation of the Green Agenda Action Plan for the Western Balkans, the Green Deal Action Plan of Türkiye and the digital transformation agenda are progressing and ensure the Roma population's active involvement in green and digital initiatives.
3. The reinforcement of the **institutional capacities** of the governments to tackle challenges faced by Roma in the region: policies and institutional arrangements dealing with Roma issues exist in the region; relevant monitoring and reporting mechanisms are developed; budget for Roma planning and reporting is improved; regular regional co-operation is ensured and policies are mainstreamed in socio-economic spheres.

The first two areas of support are directly linked to the priority areas listed in the EU Roma Framework For Equality, Inclusion and Participation, focusing on employment and housing where the least progress has been noted during the past two decades, as well as antigypsyism, which is among the strategic priorities of the Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for the Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020 - 2025). The third area of support builds the capacities of the governments in the region to mainstream, programme, budget, implement, and monitor and report on the inclusion of Roma, which relies on the Council of Europe's on-going work on promotion of good governance and Roma empowerment at local level in the Western Balkans and Türkiye (2017-2024). Hence, the three outcomes of the project will contribute to enhancing the focus to include not only the socio-economic integration (education, employment, housing, health, civil registration) but also the effective inclusion and equality and meaningful participation of the Roma population in the Western Balkans and Türkiye.

Stakeholders

The main stakeholders of the project are: National Roma Contact Points, civil servants in the line ministries, National IPA Coordinators, European Union Delegation/Office, equality bodies, media representatives, Roma and pro-Roma civil society and organisation, Roma individuals and community representatives.

Project duration and beneficiaries

The project has a duration of 36 months (1 May 2023- 30 April 2026, with possible extension until 30 April 2027). It will consolidate and expand the efforts to improve the implementation of Roma inclusion policies in the following seven Beneficiaries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Türkiye and Kosovo*. This procedure covers only a single Beneficiary – Albania.

Budget

For information purposes only, the total budget of the project amounts to 3 million Euros and the total amount of the object of the 7 different calls for tenders published should in principle not exceed 440 000 Euros in total (for all Beneficiaries, for all lots, for the whole duration of the Framework Contracts). This information does not constitute any sort of contractual commitment or obligation on the part of the Council of Europe.

B. LOTS

The Council of Europe is looking for a maximum of 10 Providers per Lot (provided enough tenders meet the criteria indicated below) in order to support the implementation of the project.

The present tendering procedure is divided into the following lots:

Lots	Maximum number of Providers to be selected
Lot 1: "Mainstreaming Roma Issues in Relevant Public Policies" - Thematic Consultants	10 Providers
Lot 2: "Addressing Antigypsyism and discrimination" - Thematic Consultants	10 Providers
Lot: 3: "Employment policies and legislation" - Thematic Consultants	10 Providers
Lot 4: "Housing policies and legalisation of informal settlements" - Thematic Consultants	10 Providers
	10 Providers

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

Lot 5: "Enhancing the implementation of Green and digital agenda" - Thematic Consultants	
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Lot 1 "**Mainstreaming Roma Issues in Relevant Public Policies**" concerns provision of consultancy services related to the technical aspects of strategic planning, budgeting (according to the Manual for Roma Responsive Budgeting) implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the National Roma Action Plans and National Roma Integration Strategies. The consultants should provide support for mainstreaming Roma issues in relevant public policies of the Beneficiary, in line with fulfilling the recommendations from the reports of the European Commission, the Poznań Declaration, Roma seminars, and other milestone processes.

Lot 2 "**Addressing Antigypsyism and discrimination**" concerns provision of consultancy services related to the comprehensive assessment of the implementation of the international and European legal frameworks concerning discrimination and antigypsyism, building institutional capacities to effectively address and recognize antigypsyism as a form of discrimination through legislation, recommendations, and communication tools. Specialised expertise is required to work with media regulators, public relations departments, and relevant professionals, equipping them with knowledge and tools to combat antigypsyism and anti-Roma narratives. It also involves supporting the mentioned stakeholders in creation and dissemination of mass media products to combat prejudices and stereotypes aimed at the Roma community.

Lot 3 "**Emploment policies and legislation**" concerns provision of consultancy services related to developing a comprehensive policy and improving the existing accompanying legislation in the domain of employment, with focus on transformation of undeclared work into declared work. Provision of support to central-level institutions in developing funding proposals for the transformation of undeclared work into declared work with the aim of raising the percentage of Roma employability.

Lot 4 "**Housing policies and legalisation of informal settlements**" concerns provision of consultancy services related to central-level and international legal aspects and regulations linked to housing and the legalisation of informal settlements. Specialised expertise is required in maintaining the Regional Methodology for Mapping Roma Housing and building the capacities of the Municipalities and National institutions responsible for housing matters for updating the Roma housing platform (QGIS) at the local level.

Lot 5 "**Enhancing the implementation of Green and Digital Agenda**" concerns provision of consultancy services related to identifying the needs, barriers, and opportunities for the Roma community in relation to the green and digital agendas. The primary objective is to improve the current policies of the beneficiaries and enhance the implementation of the Green and Digital agendas for the Western Balkans and Poznań Declaration.

Tenderers may submit a tender for one or more lots.

The Council will select the abovementioned number of Provider(s) per lot, provided enough tenders meet the criteria indicated below including a minimum individual tender assessment score of 3. 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 F below), is equivalent to or higher than 3 will be selected under each Lot.

C. SCOPE OF THE FRAMEWORK CONTRACT

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

- Provide expertise to the Roma Integration Phase III project team, and the project's stakeholders on matters and in fields falling within the scope of the relevant lot, including and not limited to: elaborating documents, plans, conducting research, needs assessment, data collection and analysis, providing feedback, proposals, recommendations for policy improvement, and support for the implementation of project activities;
- Prepare proposals and recommendations to the Roma Integration Phase III project team for activities in the fields falling within the scope of the relevant lot;
- Provide coaching and training on matters falling within the scope of the relevant lot;
- Provide support in the monitoring process falling within the scope of the relevant lot;
- Assist and support the development of project proposals for submission to relevant calls for funding;
- Participate in and provide expert input to various meetings (at local, national level and regional level);
- Elaborate documents and relevant contributions as required by Project Team and relevant national actors.

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.

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.

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).

D. FEES

Tenderers are invited to indicate their unit fees, by completing the table of fees, as attached in Section A of the Act of Engagement. These fees are final and not subject to review.

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

Tenderers are informed that the daily fee they propose shall not be deemed to cover any travel, accommodation or subsistence expenses relevant for the execution of the contract. **No travel, accommodation or subsistence costs will be covered by the Council within the scope of the contract, unless explicitly agreed otherwise in Order Forms.**

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

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

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.

Pooling

For each Order, the Council will choose from the pool of pre-selected tenderers of 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.

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* (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 Service 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.

F. ASSESSMENT

Exclusion criteria (by signing the Act of Engagement, you declare on your honour not being in any of the below situations) †

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;

* It must strictly respect the fees indicated in Section A of the Act of Engagement as recorded by the Council of Europe. In case of non-compliance with the fees as indicated in the Act of Engagement, the Council of Europe reserves the right to terminate the Contract with the Service Provider, in all or in part.

† The Council of Europe reserves the right to ask tenderers, at a later stage, to supply the following supporting documents:

- 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 requirements listed above under "exclusion criteria" are met;
- A certificate issued by the competent authority of the country of incorporation indicating that the fourth requirement 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).

- 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 conflict of interest;
- are retired Council of Europe staff members or are staff members having benefitted from an early departure scheme;
- have not fulfilled, in the previous three years, their contractual obligations in the performance of a contract concluded with the Council of Europe leading to a total or partial refusal of payment and/or termination of the contract by the Council of Europe;
- are or if their owner(s) or executive officer(s), in the case of legal persons, are included in the lists of persons or entities subject to restrictive measures applied by the European Union (available at www.sanctionsmap.eu).

Eligibility criteria

Tenderers shall demonstrate that they fulfil the following criteria (to be assessed on the basis of all supporting documents listed in Section G):

- Completed at least first cycle of university education;
- Professional experience of at least three years at the national or international level in the fields mentioned in the relevant Lot(s);
- Oral and written knowledge of Albanian (at least level C1 of the CEFR[‡]) and knowledge of English (at least level B2 of the CEFR).

Only tenders submitted in English shall be deemed eligible.

Award criteria

- Criterion 1: Quality of the offer (70%), including:
 - Thematic knowledge and related expertise and experience in fields relevant to the appropriate Lot(s);
 - Capacity to meet the required deadlines;
 - Demonstrated ability to work in a team, strong interpersonal and communication skills.
- Criterion 2: Financial offer (30%).

Once the award criteria have been assessed, only tenders with a minimum individual assessment score of 3 will be considered for pre-selection in the pool per Lot.

The Council reserves the right to hold interviews with tenderers.

Multiple tendering is not authorised.

G. DOCUMENTS TO BE PROVIDED

- **One** completed and signed copy of the Act of Engagement;[§]
- A list of all owners and executive officers, for legal persons only;
- For natural persons only: a detailed CV, not more than five pages long, demonstrating clearly that the tenderer fulfils the eligibility criteria;
- For legal persons and consortia only:
 - a list of previous projects / activities in which the legal person / consortium has been involved, highlighting skills, experience and added value in the above-mentioned areas;
 - a CV of the persons who will be involved in the tender activities;

[‡] http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf

[§] The Act of Engagement must be completed, signed and scanned in its entirety (i.e. including all the pages). The scanned Act of Engagement may be sent page by page (attached to a single email) or as a compiled document, although a compiled document would be preferred. For all scanned documents, .pdf files are preferred.

- A motivation letter highlighting skills, experience and added value in the above-mentioned areas;
- Three contact details of referees.

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 are of such a quality that the documents cannot be read once printed.

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PART II – TENDER RULES
CALL FOR TENDERS
FOR THE PROVISION OF CONSULTANCY SERVICES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ROMA
INCLUSION POLICIES IN ALBANIA
(ROMA INTEGRATION PHASE III – THEMATIC CONSULTANTS)
2023/AO/78

ARTICLE 1 – IDENTIFICATION OF THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY

1.1 Name and address
COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Directorate General of Democracy (DGII)
 Directorate of Anti-discrimination
 Roma and Travellers Team

1.2 Background

The activities of the Organisation are governed by its Statute. These activities concern the promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The Organisation has its seat in Strasbourg and has set up external offices in about 20 member and non-member states (in Ankara, Baku, Belgrade, Brussels, Bucharest, Chisinau, Erevan, Geneva, Kyiv, Lisbon, Paris, Podgorica, Pristina, Rabat, Sarajevo, Skopje, Tbilisi, Tirana, Tunis, Warsaw, Venice and Vienna).

Council of Europe procurements are 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.

The Organisation enjoys privileges and immunities provided for in the General Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Council of Europe, and its Protocols, and the Special Agreement relating to the Seat of the Council of Europe.⁵

Further details on the project are provided in the Terms of Reference.

ARTICLE 2 – VALIDITY OF THE TENDERS

Tenders are valid for 120 calendar days as from the closing date for their submission.

ARTICLE 3 – DURATION OF THE CONTRACT

The duration of the framework contract is set out in Article 2 of the Legal Conditions in the Act of Engagement.

ARTICLE 4 – CHANGE, ALTERATION AND MODIFICATION OF THE TENDER FILE

Any change in the format, or any alteration or modification of the original tender will cause the immediate rejection of the tender concerned.

ARTICLE 5 – CONTENT OF THE TENDER FILE

The tender file is composed of:

- Technical specifications/Terms of reference;
- Tender rules;
- An Act of Engagement, including the Legal Conditions of the contract.

ARTICLE 6 – LEGAL FORM OF TENDERERS

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

ARTICLE 7 – SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

General information can be found on the website of the Council of Europe: <http://www.coe.int>

Other questions regarding this specific tendering procedure shall be sent at the latest by **one week before the deadline for submissions of tenders**, in English, and shall be exclusively sent to the following address: roma.team@coe.int

This address is to be used for questions only; for modalities of tendering, please refer to the below Article.

ARTICLE 8 – MODALITIES OF THE TENDERING

Tenders must be sent to the Council of Europe **electronically**.

Electronic copies shall be sent only to cdm@coe.int with reference no. **Call for Tenders Roma Integration III Albania 2023AO78** in the subject field. Tenders submitted to another e-mail account will be excluded from the procedure.

ARTICLE 9 – DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF TENDERS

The deadline for the submission of tenders is 09 October 2023 by 23:59 CET.

ARTICLE 10 – ASSESSMENT OF TENDERS

Tenders shall be assessed in accordance with Rule 1395 of 20 June 2019 on the procurement procedures of the Council of Europe. Assessment shall be based upon the criteria as detailed in the Terms of Reference.

ARTICLE 11 – NEGOTIATIONS

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

* * *

⁵ Available on the website of the Council of Europe Treaty Office: www.conventions.coe.int

FINAL CHECK LIST

1) BEFORE SENDING YOUR TENDER, CHECK THAT IT INCLUDES:

- **One** completed and signed copy of the Act of Engagement;⁶
 - A list of all owners and executive officers, for legal persons only;
 - A detailed CV, not more than five pages long, demonstrating clearly that the tenderer fulfils the eligibility criteria;
 - A list of previous projects / activities in which the legal person / consortium has been involved, highlighting skills, experience and added value in the above-mentioned areas as well as the CV of the persons who will be involved in the tender activities, for legal persons and consortiums only;
 - A motivation letter highlighting skills, experience and added value in the above-mentioned areas;
 - Three contact details of referees.
-

2) HOW TO SEND TENDERS?

Tenders must be sent to the Council of Europe **electronically**.

Electronic copies shall be sent only to cdm@coe.int with reference no. **Call for Tenders Roma Integration III Albania 2023A078** in the subject field. Tenders submitted to another e-mail account will be excluded from the procedure.

The deadline for the submission of tenders is 09 October 2023 by 23:59 CET.

⁶ The Act of Engagement must be completed, signed and scanned in its entirety (i.e. including all the pages). The scanned Act of Engagement may be sent page by page (attached to a single email) or as a compiled document, although a compiled document would be preferred. For all scanned documents, .pdf files are preferred.