

TENDER FILE / TERMS OF REFERENCE

(Competitive bidding procedure / Framework Contract)



Purchase of local communication and visibility consultancy services to support activities in the field of human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Georgia.

Contract N° 3995/03/2026

The Council of Europe Office in Georgia is currently implementing a variety of co-operation projects that support Georgia in upholding and promoting the Council of Europe's standards on democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, with activities requiring consultancy services on communications and visibility to aimed at targeting a large variety of stakeholders.

In this context, the Council of Europe is seeking providers for the provision of local consultancy services in the field of communication and visibility, including storytelling, content development, and audiovisual production, to be requested on an as-needed basis.

This Contract will primarily benefit the project – "Advancing gender equality, strengthening justice and support for women in Georgia." **The Contract resulting from this call for tenders will be available for use by all activities implemented by the Council of Europe in Georgia.**

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 Europe¹, the Organisation shall invite to tender at least three potential providers for any purchase between €2,000 (or €6,000 for intellectual services) and €171,000 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.

Tenders shall be submitted **by email only** (with attachments) **to the email address indicated in the table below, with the following reference in subject: Tender - Local consultants.** Tenders addressed to another email address **will be rejected.**

The general information and contact details for this procedure are indicated on this page. You are invited to use the CoE Contact details indicated below for any question you may have. **All questions shall be submitted (by 31 March, 2026) and shall be exclusively addressed to the email address indicated below with the following reference in subject: Questions _ Local consultants.**

Type of contract ▶	Framework contract
Duration ▶	Until 31 December 2026
Deadline for submission of tenders/offers ▶	07 April 2026 23h59 Georgia Time Zone
Email for submission of tenders/offers ▶	genderequality.georgia@coe.int

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](#).

Email for questions ▶	genderequality.georgia@coe.int
Expected starting date of execution ▶	04 May 2026

B. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

Background of the Project

While this contract will primarily support the project "*Advancing gender equality, strengthening justice and support for women in Georgia*," it may also be used, where relevant, for communication and visibility needs across other activities implemented by the Council of Europe in Georgia. The Council of Europe Office in Georgia is currently implementing a broad portfolio of co-operation projects supporting the country in upholding and promoting Council of Europe standards on democracy, human rights and the rule of law. These initiatives address areas such as democratic participation and civic engagement, freedom of expression and media, justice reform and court management, children's rights, drug prevention, civil dialogue, execution of European Court of Human Rights judgments, and the advancement of gender equality, including the prevention of violence against women and domestic violence. Given the diversity of these interventions, tailored communication and visibility support is required to effectively engage governmental institutions, civil society, professional groups, media, youths and the wider public.

The project "**Advancing gender equality, strengthening justice and support for women in Georgia**" aims to advance gender equality and to strengthen Georgia's response to **violence against women and domestic violence**, in line with the **Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention)**.

The project supports Georgian authorities, civil society and other key stakeholders in strengthening institutional capacities to advance gender equality, prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence, to provide victim-centred and gender-sensitive protection and support services, and to enhance access to justice and accountability. It focuses on addressing the **most urgent GREVIO** (the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence to the Istanbul Convention) **findings and recommendations of the Committee of the Parties to Georgia**, with particular emphasis on prevention, victim support, victim-centred access to justice and women's economic empowerment as a protective and preventive factor against violence.

Projects are implemented within the framework of the Council of Europe Action Plan for Georgia 2024-2027 and combines capacity building, policy support and research and multi stakeholder engagement to promote Council of Europe values.

The deliverables might address the following partners: Ministry of Justice of Georgia, Public Defender's Office of Georgia, Municipal authorities, National Agency for Crime Prevention, Execution of Non-custodial Sentences and Probation, Special Penitentiary Service, Interagency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, State Care Agency, Georgian Bar Association, Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia, Universities and academic institutions, civil society organisations, international organisations working on gender equality, violence against women and domestic violence, private companies, ICT sector representatives, youths and general public. This list is not exhaustive.

The Council of Europe is looking for a maximum of 18 Providers (provided enough tenders meet the criteria indicated below) in order to support the implementation of the project, with particular expertise in human rights, democracy and the rule of law, as well as strong professional experience in communication and visibility.

This Contract is currently estimated to cover up to 25 activities, to be held by 31.12.2026. 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 400,000 Euros and the total amount of the object of present tender **shall not exceed 55,000 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: Written Storytelling and Narrative Content	6
Lot 2: Digital Video Storytelling	6
Lot 3: Graphic Design for Communication and Visibility	6

Lot 1: This lot focuses on strengthening the visibility and clarity of the Council of Europe's work through high-quality written storytelling. It aims to support the communication of results and progress in clear, accessible, and human-centred language that makes complex work on human rights understandable to wider audiences. The lot is intended to identify and shape stories that illustrate what has changed, how change begins or develops over time, and why this work matters, particularly in advancing human rights protection. Narratives should be accurate, ethical, institutionally sound, and aligned with the Council of Europe's values and standards. The emphasis is on presenting processes, activities, and outcomes related to human rights in a way that is engaging, coherent, and consistent with the Council of Europe's communication and visibility requirements, while ensuring sensitivity to context and beneficiaries.

Lot 2: This lot responds to the growing need for contemporary, engaging video content that reflects how audiences today consume information. It focuses on modern video storytelling including short-form and digital-first formats to visually illustrate the Council of Europe's work on human rights in a clear, accessible, and compelling way. The aim is to move beyond static or overly formal audiovisual products and create dynamic, clear, and engaging video content that captures attention, conveys meaning quickly, and shows change as it unfolds. This includes showcasing lived experiences, evolving practices, and early signs of transformation, as well as documenting processes and results that demonstrate how human rights and democratic standards are promoted and implemented in practice.

Video narratives should help audiences understand why the Council of Europe's work matters, how change begins and develops over time, and what value it brings to individuals, communities, and institutions, while remaining accurate, ethical, non-partisan, and consistent with the Council of Europe's communication and visibility requirements.

Lot 3: This lot focuses on strengthening visibility through strong graphic design. Many results, stories, and messages require clear visual expression to be easily understood, remembered, and shared. The lot aims to support the Council of Europe in translating stories, messages, and results into visually compelling formats that are eye-catching, coherent, and aligned with institutional standards. This includes both print and digital materials used for communication, events, and visibility purposes, ensuring that the Council of Europe's work is presented in a clear, modern, and recognisable way.

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).

Scope of the Framework Contract

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

Under Lot 1: **Written Storytelling and Narrative Content**

Narrative development and scripting for video storytelling (written component)

- Develop written storylines, scripts, and narrative frameworks for short and medium-length videos highlighting human rights and democratic change.
- Shape beneficiary-centred narratives that explain what has changed, how change began, and why it matters, including early signs of transformation, shifts in practice, or improved access to rights and services.
- Translate project activities and results into clear, human-centred video narratives suitable for digital-first formats and non-technical audiences

Photo-Based and Visual Beneficiary Stories:

- Prepare written narratives to accompany **photo stories and visual materials** portraying individuals or communities involved in or benefiting from Council of Europe projects.
- Capture **personal experiences and outcomes**, illustrating how interventions have contributed to greater awareness, empowerment, access to justice, equality, or protection of human rights.
- Ensure that stories are respectful, ethical, and present beneficiaries with **dignity, agency, and voice**, avoiding harm or stereotyping.

Stories of Change and Positive Human Rights Narratives

- Develop **stories of change** that showcase positive developments linked to the Council of Europe's work on human rights.
- Highlight progress, learning, and good practices, including examples of institutional change, professional practice improvements, or community-level impact.
- Frame narratives in a way that strengthens **public understanding of human rights values** and the relevance of democratic standards in everyday life.

Cross-Platform Storytelling Concepts

- Create adaptable storytelling concepts that can be used across multiple communication formats, including written articles, video, visuals, and digital platforms.
- Define core messages and narrative angles to ensure consistency and coherence across communication products, in line with the Council of Europe's communication and visibility requirements.

Under Lot 2: **Digital Video Storytelling**

- Produce narrative-driven video outputs based on approved storytelling concepts, illustrating change over time through lived experience, shifts in everyday practices, or emerging outcomes related to human rights and gender equality.
- Develop short video stories using footage from project events, activities, or field work, combining selected visuals, interviews, and contextual narration to communicate key messages, learning, or early results, rather than documenting events in a purely descriptive manner.
- Adapt and finalise video content for digital-first communication, including editing and subtitling where required, while ensuring accessibility, ethical representation, and full alignment with the Council of Europe's communication, visibility, and quality standards.

Under Lot 3: **Graphic Design for Communication and Visibility**

- Develop visual communication packages that translate project results, progress, and change related to human rights into clear, coherent, and visually engaging graphic formats, such as infographics, timelines, visual summaries, or story-based visuals.
- Develop visual materials for both print and digital use, including communication and visibility materials for events.
- Support storytelling objectives through graphic design aligned with the Council of Europe's branding and visual identity.

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.

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 quote² (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 which is appended to this document or otherwise provided at the ordering stage.

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.

E. ASSESSMENT

Exclusion criteria and absence of conflict of interests

(by signing the Act of Engagement, you declare on your honour not being in any of the below situations)³

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 conflict of interest; 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 Lot 1, Lot 2, Lot 3	Document/s to be submitted
<p><u>Education</u>: University degree (first cycle or higher) or equivalent professional experience in communication, media, journalism, audiovisual production, graphic design, social sciences, or other relevant fields.</p> <p>In case of legal companies/organisations, CVs of employees/collaborators proposed for this contract must be submitted.</p>	CV
<p><u>Work experience</u>: At least 3 years of relevant professional experience in communication, content development, audiovisual production, graphic design, or related fields.</p> <p>In case of legal companies/organisations, tenderers shall submit a company profile demonstrating their specialisation and expertise in the field covered by</p>	CV

³ 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 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).

this call, together with a list of relevant projects implemented in recent years and a list of professional references.	
<p><u>Specific thematic expertise:</u></p> <p>Lot 1: Proven experience in written storytelling, narrative writing, editorial content, or similar communication work, including experience in developing content related to human rights, democracy, equality, or other public interest or social impact fields.</p> <p>Lot 2: Proven experience in video production for communication purposes, including scripting, filming, editing, and post-production, with demonstrated experience in producing audiovisual content on human rights, democracy, social issues, or comparable institutional or public interest themes.</p> <p>Lot 3: Proven experience in graphic design for communication and visibility purposes, including digital and print materials, with experience in designing visual content for human rights, democracy, or other values-based or institutional communication contexts.</p>	CV and portfolio (Samples of previous work, at least 3, max 5 for each Lot)
<p><u>Language skills:</u> Excellent knowledge of the Georgian language (oral and written) and good working knowledge of the English language (at least B2 level)</p>	CV

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 8** 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 12 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.

Award criteria

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
<p>Quality of the offer (70 points), including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Relevance of educational background, professional profile, and thematic expertise in relation to the scope of the lot applied for. (25 points) ○ Demonstrated experience in delivering similar types of activities and deliverables, in particular for international organisations or public institutions. (20 points) 	CV and portfolio (samples of previous work where applicable)

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.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Quality, relevance, and creativity of samples of previous work submitted, demonstrating the tenderer's ability to communicate clearly, effectively, and in line with the requirements of the lot. (25 points) 	
Financial offer (30 points)	Completed and signed 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 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 and signed copy of the Act of Engagement;⁶
- A detailed CV, preferably in Europass Format, demonstrating clearly that the tenderer fulfils the eligibility criteria.
- A list of all owners and executive officers, for legal persons only;
- Portfolio (Samples from the previous work)
- Registration documents, 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 other documents listed above, under Section E, necessary for the assessment of the bid under the eligibility and award criteria

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.

Documents may be submitted via file sharing services such as WeTransfer, Dropbox, OneDrive, etc.). In this case, the link must mandatorily remain active for at least 30 days after the deadline for the submission of the bids. Failure to ensure this may lead to the bid being excluded from the procurement procedure.

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

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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.