

TENDER FILE / TERMS OF REFERENCE

(Competitive bidding procedure / Framework Contract)

Purchase of international consultancy services within the Action "Quality Education for All"- Montenegro *BH 5043*



The Council of is currently implementing and until 31 December 2026 will be implementing joint Council of Europe/European Union Horizontal Facility Action "Quality Education for All" in Montenegro. In that context, it is looking for Providers for the provision of consultancy services to be requested by the Council on an as needed basis.

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 €5,000 for intellectual services) and €55,000 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 120 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, or a legal person except consortia.

Tenders shall be submitted **by email only** (with attachments) **to the email address indicated in the table below, with the following reference in subject: *International consultancy services - Quality ED – Montenegro***. 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 at least 5 (five) working days before the deadline for submission of the tenders and shall be exclusively addressed to the email address indicated below with the following reference in subject: *Questions and clarifications: International consultancy (Quality ED – Montenegro)***.

Type of contract ▶	Framework contract
Duration ▶	Until 31 December 2026
Deadline for submission of tenders/offers ▶	31 August 2023
Email for submission of tenders/offers ▶	Education.podgorica@coe.int
Email for questions ▶	Education.podgorica@coe.int
Expected starting date of execution ▶	15 September 2023

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

Within the European Union/Council of Europe joint Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye Programme (phase III), which aims at assisting beneficiaries in South-East Europe to comply with Council of Europe standards and European Union acquis in the framework of the enlargement process, the Council of Europe is implementing the action **"Quality Education for All" in Montenegro**. The action is building upon the achievements and results from the previous HF actions in education ("Fostering a democratic school culture" and "Strengthen integrity and combat corruption in higher education" (2016-2019) and "Quality Education for All" (2019-2022)). The general objective of the project is fostering non-discriminatory quality education for all learners in Montenegro by promoting inclusive, democracy and ethics principles and related emergency responses at pre-university and higher education level. Specific objectives are to: (i) increase awareness of parents and the wider communities of student discrimination in digital settings, (ii) stimulate inclusive education environment both at pre-university and higher education level, and (iii) reinforce institutional capacities addressing ethics in higher education.

The main activities of the action focus on developing democratic culture competencies and digital citizenship skills among teachers, students and parents and promoting them through social media courses, outreach activities, and regional cooperation events. This includes training programmes and workshops to foster a culture of democracy, combat discrimination online, and raise awareness about environmental issues.

In addition, the project aims to improve inclusive education by enhancing the knowledge and skills of school management, teachers, and social services. Efforts will be made to increase awareness about accessibility and equity in education for children with special educational needs, promoting positive attitudes and equal rights. Higher education staff will also receive training to adjust learning processes for students with disabilities, and recommendations will be developed to build schools' resilience for potential education emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic. Lastly, the project focuses on fostering capacities of the Ethics Committee and university ethical bodies to address academic integrity issues more efficiently, and on promoting anti-corruption instruments and academic integrity policies among the student population through various channels. Main partners include the Ministry of Education of Montenegro, the Bureau for Educational Services, primary and secondary schools, the Ethics Committee, University of Montenegro, private universities, and students' organisations.

The action is building on the Council of Europe's standards, resources and forums such as the [Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture](#), the [Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education \(ETINED\)](#), the [Education Policy Advisors Network \(EPAN\)](#), the [Steering Committee for Education \(CDEDU\)](#) etc.

The Council of Europe is looking for 30 Provider(s) (provided enough tenders meet the criteria indicated below) to support the implementation of the project with specific expertise on the Council of Europe relevant standards including in the field of Human Rights Education and Democratic Citizenship Education, Digital Citizenship Education, inclusive education, social media literacy, building schools' resilience for potential education emergencies, and academic integrity standards and best practices.

This Contract is currently estimated to cover up to 60 activities, to be held by 31 December 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 850.000,00 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
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Lot 1: Fostering a democratic school culture and inclusive education at pre-university and university level	20
Lot 2: Promotion of a culture of academic integrity and institutional capacity building for addressing academic misconduct	10

Lot 1 concerns developing and promotion of digital citizenship skills and democratic culture competencies among teachers, students, parents and local communities. It also involves capacity building for school management, teachers, social services, and higher education staff to implement inclusive education principles, along with efforts improve schools' resilience during potential education emergencies.

Lot 2 concerns enhancing the Ethics Committee and university ethical bodies' capacities to address academic integrity issues effectively, while also actively promoting anti-corruption instruments and academic integrity policies among the student population.

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:

Provide institutional and grassroots capacity building, more specifically to:

- Deliver training to teachers, students, and parents on the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture and Digital Citizenship Education;
- Design an in-service teacher training programme on digital citizenship;
- Provide social media literacy courses to teachers, students, and parents;
- Deliver training on inclusive principles in education to teachers, students, higher education staff, social workers and other relevant target groups;
- Develop a survey on inclusion of vulnerable group of students in higher education;
- Design a model plan to build school resilience for potential education emergencies along with the school's survey;
- Design respective awareness raising initiatives on discrimination in digital settings, on respecting the rights of university students with special educational needs, and on inclusive principles;
- Implement workshops on democratic culture competence "Knowledge and critical understanding of the environment and sustainability"; and
- Contribute to the Steering Committee meetings.

Under Lot 2:

Provide training and technical expertise in drafting internal and strategic documents for the relevant national institutions including:

- Design of training of trainers' programme on academic integrity;
- Deliver certified training of trainers on academic integrity;
- Assist in implementing cascade training of university ethics boards members;
- Participate as a speaker on academic integrity topics in public debates or other events;
- Provide input to design of awareness-raising activities; and
- Contribute to the Steering Committee meetings.

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 3 (three) 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.

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.

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.

Should the Project end before the end date indicated in the Act of Engagement, the Council of Europe will cease ordering services and this Contract will not be used for any other Projects of the Council of Europe for ordering similar services.

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;
- 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 or are likely to be in a situation of conflict of interests;
- 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

Lot 1

- University degree in education, pedagogy, humanities or any related field;
- At least 5 years of professional experience at international level in areas related to human rights education, democratic school culture, digital citizenship education, anti-discrimination and inclusive education;
- Extensive background in conducting teacher training and facilitating workshops;
- Experience in developing manuals, handbooks, textbooks, and similar specific material;
- Excellent analytical, presentation, synthesis, and report writing skills;
- Excellent oral and written knowledge of English (at least level C1 of the CEFR for English).

Lot 2

- University degree in the area relevant to higher education;
- At least 5 years of professional experience working on higher education with particular focus on strengthening ethics in teaching, studying and research;
- Excellent understanding of education quality assurance and standards;
- Excellent analytical, presentation, synthesis, and report writing skills;
- Excellent oral and written knowledge of English (at least level C1 of the CEFR⁴ for English).

Award criteria

- Quality of the offer (80%), including:

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 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).

⁴ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages>

- Relevant experience of the tenderer in the areas covered by this call (60%);
 - Motivation and/or assignment methodology to be acknowledged in the motivation letter (10%);
 - Understanding of the Montenegrin educational context and/or previous cooperation experience with the Council of Europe or relevant national institutions (10%);
- Financial offer (20%).

The Council reserves the right to hold interviews with eligible tenderers.

Multiple tendering is not authorised.

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

- A completed and signed copy of the **Act of Engagement**⁵ (See attached);
- 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;
- Motivation letter describing how the tenderer meets the requirement of the expected service (see Section B above) including indication of the specific and/or preferred fields of expertise (max. 2 pages)

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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⁵ 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.