Information Note on the Procurement of Consultants for Decentralised Evaluations

Following the adoption of the Evaluation Policy and the revision of the Evaluation Guidelines, the DIO has developed a new quality assurance framework which foresees provision of support to MAEs in selecting consultants for decentralised evaluations.

The DIO has established an organisation-wide pool of evaluation consultants has been established through a Framework Contract (Contract No. 2024/AO/33) and a Framework Agreement (Contract No. 2024/AO/34), both valid until 31 December 2028. The new Framework Contract and Framework Agreement replace all previous framework contracts concerning evaluation-related services.

The pool of evaluators, established by the Directorate of Internal Oversight is part of the decentralised evaluations quality assurance framework, enabling all entities to select evaluation consultants with strong qualifications and experience, as well as thematic and geographic expertise.

The Framework Contract aims to support the implementation of evaluations/evaluation-related assignments with an evaluation budget **up to EUR 75 000** and is divided into the following:

- Lot 1 (evaluation specialists): implementation of or contribution to an evaluation.
- Lot 2 (quality assurance): provision of independent quality control of evaluation products.

Evaluation consultants from the pool can be called upon by submitting an order form to the selected Service Provider(s). MAEs are requested to follow the steps below when recruiting an evaluation consultant through the Framework Contract:

1. Send a draft evaluation ToR to the Evaluation division of the DIO (dio.evaluation@coe.int) for a quality check, indicating required qualifications of the consultant, including thematic and geographic expertise, minimum years of experience and a timeline and budget for the evaluation. Please bear in mind that the ToR should be sent to DIO **at least 3 months** and preferably 6 months before the evaluation report is due. As per Evaluation Guidelines, the evaluation budget should be **at least 1%** of the overall intervention budget.
2. Once the DIO has reviewed and approved the ToR, the DIO will propose suitable consultants, according to the qualifications listed in the ToR, including their CVs. In case none of the proposed consultants are available, the DIO will propose further consultants from the pool, if possible.
3. To recruit a consultant from the DIO's initial selection, share the evaluation ToR with the Service Provider and inquire on the consultant's availability for the assignment (please do not directly contact consultants who may be included within the Service Provider's offer). In case of confirmed availability, the Service Provider should prepare a methodological brief – outlining the proposed methodology – and a workplan.
4. **Please contact one service provider at a time**. Only if the provider you have consulted first is not available or the methodology/workplan proposed are not satisfactory, may you contact another one from the list provided by the DIO.
5. If the proposed methodology and workplan meet your needs, inform DIO of your choice and DIO will provide the signed Act of Engagement. Upon receipt, follow the usual Council of Europe's procurement procedure (creation of supplier in FIMS, VAT exemption etc.) in view of the issuing of an Order Form.
6. Prepare the Order Form (DLAPIL website) and the Note for File on the selection of the Service Provider and send to your CCM for approval through the standard procedure.
7. Send the final signed Order Form to dio.evaluation@coe.int.

The Framework Agreement aims to support the implementation of evaluations/evaluation-related assignments covering the Council's major programmes, strategies, initiatives, or organisation-wide transversal topics with an evaluation budget **over EUR 75 000**.

In case of the Framework Agreement, the same procedure is to be followed as for the Framework Contract, except a call-off procedure has to be initiated for each assignment. Please consult DLAPIL website on call-off procedure for more detail.

Once the offers are received, the assessment will be done by one representative of the commissioning entity and one representative of the DIO.

In exceptional cases where the MAE in charge of the evaluation expresses the need for specific qualifications of the consultant not available in the existing pools, please inform DIO and provide a justification, as well as the tender file for the new procurement procedure to be launched.
Once the offers are received, the DIO will assess whether:

- the selected consultants are qualified to carry out the evaluation in question;
- and there is no potential conflict of interest.

Staff are required to systematically apply the principle of impartiality when selecting consultants. Consultants should not have been previously engaged, formally or informally, in the programme activity they are evaluating nor expect to be so in the near future.

The DIO aims to respond to any request **within 10 working days** or sooner.