

TENDER FILE / TERMS OF REFERENCE (Competitive bidding procedure / Framework Contract)

Purchase of consultancy services on communications *Contract N°9147/2023/5*



Within the framework of the Action Plan for Ukraine 2023 – 2026, the Council of Europe is currently implementing and until 31 December 2024 will implement a Project on "Supporting democratic post-war elections in Ukraine" (hereinafter – 'the Project'). In that context, it is looking for Provider(s) for the provision of consultancy services on communication support for the Project implementation 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, a legal person or consortia of legal and/or natural persons.

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_COMMUNICATIONS.** 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_TENDER_COMMUNICATIONS.**

Type of contract ►	Framework contract
Duration ►	Until 31 December 2024
Deadline for submission of tenders/offers ►	31 March 2023
Email for submission of tenders/offers ►	REPU@coe.int
Email for questions ►	REPU@coe.int
Expected starting date of execution ►	04 April 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 1393 of 20 June 2019 on the procurement procedures of the Council of Europe](#).

B. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

Background of the Project

Within the framework of the Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine 2023 - 2026, the Council of Europe is implementing the project "Supporting democratic post-war elections in Ukraine" (hereinafter – the 'Project') aimed at ensuring that post-war national and local elections in Ukraine are democratic and held in line with international and European electoral standards and good practices.

Project activities are aimed at achieving the following outcomes:

- (1) The Electoral Administration at national and local levels organizes and conducts post-war elections in secure and level-playing environment in line with European electoral standards and good practices.
- (2) Ukrainian voters on and from de-occupied territories are re-integrated into political life of Ukraine by exercising their electoral rights within and beyond Ukraine.
- (3) Ukrainian voters participate in elections within and beyond Ukraine in accordance with established electoral and voting procedures.
- (4) Balanced participation of women and men in post-war political and electoral processes is streamlined in public debate.

In that context, the Council of Europe is looking for a maximum of *twelve* Provider(s) (provided enough tenders meet the criteria indicated below) in order to support the implementation of the Project with a particular expertise on communications.

This Contract is currently estimated to cover up to *sixty activities*, to be held by 31 December 2024. 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 950,000 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.

Scope of the Framework Contract

Throughout the duration of the Framework Contract, pre-selected Providers may be asked to provide communication advice, support and expertise to the Project team, that may include but not be limited to:

- developing, planning, implementing and coordinating Project's communication programmes and visibility activities in accordance with the Council of Europe communication strategy, visibility guidelines and requirements;
- organising, promoting and coordinating public and media events related to Project implementation;
- preparing relevant texts for publication (news items, articles, Facebook posts, press releases, interviews, newsletters, etc.) and distributing them among target audience, Project's partners and stakeholders;
- ensuring that all visibility actions are carried out in line with the Council of Europe communication policy and according to the Council of Europe Visual identity (Graphic Charter, Guidelines for use of social media, etc.);
- monitoring and informing the Project team about any relevant developments which should be considered in Project's communication and visibility activities;
- advising on appropriate action in order to raise visibility of the Project;
- monitoring, evaluating and informing about the results of Project's communication programmes and visibility activities;
- developing and maintaining contacts with key Ukrainian media to inform about Project's activities;
- monitoring, evaluating and informing about media coverage of Project's activities (TV, printed press, Internet, social media);
- maintaining close contacts and coordination with the Project team while carrying out the assignments under the contract.

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).

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 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 the required deadlines); 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 day 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);

² It must strictly respect the fees indicated in the Act of Engagement. In case of non-compliance with these fees, the Council of Europe reserves the right to terminate the Contract with the Provider, in all or in part.

- 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.

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 retired Council of Europe staff members or are staff members having benefitted from an early departure scheme.

Eligibility criteria

- Higher education degree in journalism, communications, public relations or a related field;
- At least three years of professional experience relating to media and communications, previous work with international organisations or in electoral field would be an asset;
- Excellent knowledge of Ukrainian (mother tongue level) and very good knowledge of English

Award criteria

- Quality of the offer (80%), including:
 - Professional experience in the field of media and communications proven by samples of previously prepared and published texts/news items/articles/blogs, etc.
- 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.

³ The Council of Europe reserves the right to ask tenderers, at a later stage, to supply 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, and a certificate issued by the competent authority of the country of incorporation indicating that the fourth criterion is met.

G. DOCUMENTS TO BE PROVIDED

- A completed and signed copy of the **Act of Engagement**⁴ (See attached);
- For legal persons and private entrepreneurs: Registration documents (scanned copy of originals in Ukrainian and/or English, proving the tenderer's ability to carry out the respective types of economic activities);
- For legal persons: A detailed professional portfolio in English, demonstrating clearly that the tenderer (proposed staff) fulfils the eligibility criteria;
- For natural persons, including private entrepreneurs: A detailed CV in English, preferably in Europass Format, demonstrating clearly that the tenderer fulfils the eligibility criteria;
- 10 – 15 samples and/or links to samples of previously prepared and published texts / news items / articles / blogs / posts / press releases / interviews / newsletters, etc; samples should be provided both in Ukrainian and in English.

All documents shall be submitted in English, except registration documents for private entrepreneurs and legal persons to be submitted in Ukrainian, and samples of previous work to be submitted as specified above, 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.

⁴ 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.