

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

Purchase of international consultancy services on electoral assistance and cooperation in Ukraine *Contract N° 9337/2025/9*



The Council of Europe is currently implementing and until 31 December 2026 will implement a Project on "Supporting democratic post-war elections in Ukraine – Phase II" (hereinafter – 'the Project'). In that context, it is looking for Provider(s) for the provision of international consultancy services on electoral assistance and cooperation in Ukraine 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 €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 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_9337/2025/9_International_elect_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 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 _9337/2025/9_International_elect_consultants**

Type of contract ▶	Framework contract
Duration ▶	Until 31 December 2026, renewable until 31 December 2027
Deadline for submission of tenders/offers ▶	15 October 2025 23h59 CET
Email for submission of tenders/offers ▶	REPU@coe.int
Email for questions ▶	REPU@coe.int
Expected starting date of execution ▶	31 October 2025

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 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 – Phase II" aimed at ensuring that post-war national and local elections and referenda 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) Central Election Commission (hereinafter – 'CEC') and other national authorities concerned incorporate into the national legal framework the criteria and measurable indicators to assess democratic pre-conditions necessary for the organisation and conduct of post-war elections at national and local levels in Ukraine in line with European electoral standards and good practices.
- (2) CEC develops up-to-date solutions to ensure that first post-war elections in Ukraine are held in line with international electoral standards and good practices.
- (3) Ukrainian voters within and beyond Ukraine are timely informed on election related and voting procedures via efficient, gender sensitive and inclusive communication led and coordinated by the CEC during the preparation and all the way to the conduct of the first post-war elections.
- (4) Ukrainian voters benefit from a free and safe election process during the first post-war elections, as well as the protection of their electoral rights in line with European electoral standards and good practices.

The Council of Europe support within the Project will be mainly focused on capacity building of electoral stakeholders and public awareness raising about international electoral standards and good practices. In this regard, provision of the Council of Europe expert and methodological support to respective national authorities and civil society is implied.

The Council of Europe is looking for a maximum of *ten* Providers (provided enough tenders meet the criteria indicated below) in order to support the implementation of the project with a particular expertise on international consultancy services on electoral assistance and cooperation.

This Contract is currently estimated to cover up to *twenty 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 915,000 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 expert advice and support within the framework of electoral cooperation and assistance in Ukraine on issues related to international electoral standards and good practices, which may include but not be limited to:

- providing legal and policy advice;
- assessing and commenting on legal and policy documents, preparing overviews in line with the Council of Europe's standards and identified good practices;
- preparing analytical reports, assessments and recommendations;
- developing policy documents and other publications;
- developing training courses and workshops/seminars materials;
- conducting trainings / workshops / seminars;
- preparing and delivering relevant presentations to relevant electoral stakeholders;
- developing strategies, policy papers, methodologies, as well as providing follow-up for their implementation;
- conducting needs assessment and preparing summary reports on specific issues;
- providing other expert inputs and consultancy within the framework of Project activities (meetings, round tables, workshops, seminars, working groups, trainings, conferences, high level meetings, study visits, regional events, online events), preparing and making thematic presentations;

- moderating / facilitating thematic discussions.

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).

By submitting an offer in the framework of the present Call for Tenders, the Tenderer acknowledges that the persons involved in the implementation of the contract will be exposed to an increased risk of death and injury due to the ongoing war against Ukraine. The Tenderer also acknowledges that, if selected, it will carry out the implementation of the contract at its own risk.

The Tenderer confirms in addition that, if selected, it will perform systematic security assessments before implementing any activity related to the implementation of the contract. The Tenderer acknowledges that the Council of Europe does not assume any liability for the death, any injury or any damage that the Provider or persons involved in in the implementation of the contract may sustain in Ukraine.

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 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.

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 checklist which is appended to this document.

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)²

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;
- 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;
- 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 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	Document/s to be submitted
<u>Education</u> : University degree (1 st cycle/Bachelor's or 2 nd cycle/Master's or higher) in one of the following fields: law, international law, international relations, public administration, public policy, political science or other related field.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bidder's CV / CV of key team members.

² 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).

<u>Work experience</u> : At least five (5) years of experience in the field of law, national election administration, non-governmental organisations, international organisations in the field of elections, political participation, political and public decision-making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bidder's CV / Professional portfolio and CV of key team members.
<u>Specific thematic expertise</u> : confirmed expertise in international and European electoral standards and good practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bidder's CV / Professional portfolio and CV of key team members; • Samples of previous work.
<u>Language skills</u> : Knowledge of English (at least C1 level according to CEFR).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bidder's CV / CV of key team members indicating language proficiency; • Language certificates (if available).

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 5** 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.³

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 5 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.⁴

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
Quality of the offer (70 points), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ previous experience of providing legal and policy advice to state and/or regional and/or local authorities / international organisations / non-governmental organisations / election management bodies on election related matters; ○ previous experience in developing analytical reports / papers / researches / articles on election related matters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Samples of/references to previous work; • Bidder's CV / Professional portfolio and CV of key team members.
Financial offer (30 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

³ 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.

⁴ 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.

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.

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;⁵
- A list of all owners and executive officers, for legal persons only;
- All the documents listed above, under Section E, necessary for the assessment of the bid under the eligibility and award criteria:
 - For legal persons and private entrepreneurs: Registration documents (scanned copy of originals in English or French (if issued in another language, an English translation must be provided), proving the tenderer's ability to carry out the respective types of economic activities);
 - For legal persons and consortia: A detailed professional portfolio in English demonstrating clearly that the tenderer fulfils the eligibility criteria, and CVs of key team members in English, preferably in Europass Format, indicating language proficiency and demonstrating clearly that the tenderer's team members (proposed experts) fulfils the eligibility criteria;
 - For natural persons, including private entrepreneurs: A detailed CV in English, preferably in Europass Format, indicating language proficiency and demonstrating clearly that the tenderer fulfils the eligibility criteria;
 - A list of previous expert work of the tenderer (e.g. expert opinions, articles, legislation assessments, reports, researches and/or other alike materials) on the topics covered by this tender with active links to respective materials, if available.

All documents shall be submitted in English, except registration documents for private entrepreneurs and legal persons 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.

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.

* * *

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.